

First Community Church

Newsletter

January – February 2012



Our Mission Statement

We are a community of faith believing in the power of prayer and seeking earnestly to deepen our spiritual life and share the love of God with others.

The Pastor's Message

As I write this newsletter message we are approaching Epiphany, also known as Three King's Day, which is celebrated the twelfth day after Christmas (January 6). Technically, Epiphany is the end of the Christmas season. Although the liturgical color (for the paraments and my stole) remains white for the First Sunday after Epiphany, because in addition to the celebration of the visit of the Magi to the manger it is also set aside as the celebration of the Baptism of Christ, churches generally take down their Christmas decorations on Epiphany.

Apparently some of the people who live on our street do not feel a burning need to be liturgically correct, for Darlene and I were surprised to note that when we drove up our street on the evening of the day following Christmas, two families had already stripped their Christmas tree bare and had left it out on the curb for pickup. Wow! I can just picture them saying, "Let's get all that Christmas stuff out of here as soon as we possibly can! I can't wait to move on to January and February!" I suspect that these couples are missing the real point of the Christmas season. I also can't imagine why anyone would want to hasten into January and February, the coldest, snowiest, and (they feel like) the darkest months of the year.

After sharing this observation with some of the "pillars of the church" this past Sunday, we made the executive decision to leave up our Christmas decorations for just one more week. For one more Sunday our sanctuary will be graced by the tree, the wreaths, the candles in the windows, the crèche and the Advent candles that have been the central focus of our worship throughout Advent. I, for one, feel no need to hurry out of the Christmas season.

In a lot of ways this Christmas felt special to me. It was so nice to have Corey and Nathan in from Michigan; Jay, Ann-Marie, Zach, Charlie, and Emily Kate in from South Carolina; and Kristen home from Florida. Our house was truly bursting at the seams – but it was great! Our

Christmas Eve candlelight service, with our sanctuary almost full, felt especially powerful and meaningful. It was also great to be able to celebrate Christmas Day by being in church. I'm glad that we did not follow the lead of many churches and cancel church on Christmas.

I know it's time to move on, but I always feel a little sad at the end of the Christmas season. The Incarnation, the birth of Jesus the Christ is such a powerful theme to compress into the season of Advent that I wonder if I have missed something again this year. In the busyness of preparing worship services, giving final exams at school and doing my own Christmas shopping, did I really experience the birth of the Christ child within? Did I help others connect with the Presence as well as the presents?

Here we are stepping forward into the New Year. As you have probably noted, this edition of the newsletter is for both January and February. This really forces us to look ahead. We need to remind you that our Annual Meeting will be held Sunday, February 12 right after worship and a potluck luncheon. One of the items that will be on the agenda is a recommendation from the Diaconate and the Stewardship & Growth Committee that we consider changing the time of our Sunday worship service from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. In the weeks to come we will be outlining the rationale and the possible pros and cons of such a change. So be sure to come to the Annual Meeting to participate in the discussion and cast your vote!

In our Sunday morning Bible study, which will resume this coming Sunday, we will be continuing our study of the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John is quite different from the synoptic gospels; its focus is not so much on what Jesus did and said as who he was. In our study, whenever possible we compare the way a particular event or interaction is described in John with how it is described in Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Our Tuesday afternoon study group will explore how Lao Tsu's collection of eighty-one poems known as the *Tao Te Ching*, the central articulation of ancient Chinese mysticism, parallels and illuminates our own understanding of God, our inner spirituality, and how this outlook can shape the way we relate to life.

Our Thursday evening study group will begin its exploration of the relationship of Jungian psychology to the Christian faith. The first book we will study will be Robert Johnson's book *Owning Your Own Shadow*. The focus this spring will be on the archetypes of persona and shadow, how they relate to our authenticity, and how they can guide our understanding of both sin and the demonic.

It looks like it is going to be a very busy next few months! Here we are just emerging from Christmas and we are already preparing for Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22. I hope you will be present with us in worship, will attend the United Parishes' Lenten series, the Sunday morning Bible study, the Tuesday afternoon Spiritual Exploration Reading Group, and/or the Thursday evening Spiritual Study and Growth Group as a preparation for the celebration and experience of Easter.

Perhaps we can prepare for Easter and still hold onto a little bit of Christmas. As the poet Ann Weems has put it,

It is not over,
this birthing.
There are always newer skies
into which
God can throw stars.
When we begin to think
that we can predict the advent of God,
that we can box the Christ
into a stable in Bethlehem,
That's just the time
that God will be born
in a place we can't imagine and won't believe.
Those who wait for God
watch with their hearts and not their eyes,
listening,
always listening
for angel words.

Christmas is not over. God can still be born into our lives in the year to come in ways that we can't imagine. We can still glimpse the mystery and hear the angel voices – if we watch and listen with our hearts. If we can do this in the months to come, we will prepare ourselves for the spiritual awakening of Easter.

Faithfully yours,
The Reverend Paul D. Sanderson

Adult Bible Study

We continue our study of the Gospel of John, a poetic and mystical gospel account of not only what Jesus said but who he was.

The Bible study is open to all. No background in biblical knowledge is required. Please join us for a time of fellowship, study, and sharing as we seek to strengthen not only our understanding of our religion but also our personal faith.

The Adult Bible Study group meets on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays of every month from 9:15 – 10:30 AM in the Vestry.

Missions Offering For January

Straight Ahead Ministries is our Mission for the month of January. Dr. Scott Larson and his wife Hanne founded and direct Straight Ahead Ministries where hundreds of trained volunteers lead weekly Bible studies in more than 200 juvenile institutions each week throughout twelve states in USA. They also run aftercare programs such as the Urban Church



Network and discipleship homes like the one the Larsons lived in for nine years. In addition, Scott has authored five books. Two are for workers, one for teachers and social workers, one for youth, and one for parents. These and many other resources for working with troubled teens can be accessed through their website www.straightahead.org.

THEIR MISSION

To see Jesus Christ transform the lives of juvenile offenders.

THEIR VISION

To create an international movement whereby every juvenile offender has the opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel and grow in his or her relationship with Jesus Christ.

THEIR GOALS

- Every juvenile institution opened to ministry;
- Every juvenile offender given the opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel;
- Every Christian called to juvenile offender ministry trained;
- Every believing juvenile offender offered discipleship;

THEIR PHILOSOPHY

Straight Ahead Ministries is faith-based (God is in control), prayer-centered (we seek his wisdom and guidance prior to any undertaking), grassroots-oriented (those called by God into the ministry), and local church-based (trained and equipped volunteers come alongside youth as Bible study leaders in juvenile jails, pen pals, mentors, tutors, and other roles where kids need positive adults from the community).

THEIR STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe the Bible is the inspired, authoritative Word of God. We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, in his virgin birth, in his sinless life, in his death on the cross, in his bodily resurrection, in his ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in his personal return. We believe people receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life through a relationship with Jesus.

Editor’s Note: The following article was taken from the December 2011 Straight Ahead Ministries Newsletter. After you read it, visit the Straight Ahead Ministries website @ www.straightahead.org and follow the link to the Lynn Daily Item newspaper to read more about the event.

Gang Reconciliation at Ready4Life Event

Leaders of Bloods, Crips and Latin Kings
pledge to live in peace

Tension was high as rival leaders of the Bloods, Crips and Latin Kings came together to participate in our Ready4Life 3-day event at Essex County Correctional Facility in Middleton, MA earlier this month. Anticipating trouble, guards with leashed German Shepherds surrounded the room to supervise the men, who are normally held in separate tiers and kept segregated at all times.



Anticipating reconciliation, our staff and volunteers forged ahead, surrounded by your prayers and trusting God to reach these rival leaders. On the final day of the event, the walls of anger, fear and frustration that separated the men came crashing down. With hugs and tears, they asked for forgiveness for the harm that they've done. With hands clasped, they pledged to live in peace.

In one unforgettable moment, a young man approached Sokahn Prak who serves on our Lynn staff, and asked him to step into the circle. Six years ago, this young man had violently stabbed Sokahn 26 times and left him lying on the street in Lynn; now he wanted to publicly ask for Sokahn's forgiveness and express his admiration for the way that Sokahn has left the gang life behind. Another young man stated that he had been searching for someone in the room for over a year following his gang's instructions to kill this person. Now, he said that he no longer wanted to harm him, but had come to see him as a role model and a brother.

Please continue to pray for these young men. We are still seeing the powerful results of the reconciliation between Bloods and Crips following our 2009 Ready4Life event, and we hope that these young men will also help transform the city of Lynn.

Missions Offering For February

Our Mission Offering for February is given to the Assabet Valley Pastoral Counseling Center (AVPCC). The center was founded in 1979 by the clergy of the greater Westborough community. Their Mission Statement is "To provide counseling to all persons seeking wholeness and renewal from a spiritual perspective."

A fundamental aspect of AVPCC's mission is to provide pastoral counseling for all who want to take advantage of this unique ministry. It is our local faith communities and charities that have faithfully provided funds each year to help offset the cost of providing this vital ministry to those who otherwise would not be able to afford the cost of pastoral counseling.

More and more persons are finding the level of clinical expertise combined with the compassion and redemption of the pastoral perspective as found here at AVPCC, are the qualities most likely to affect their healing and growth.

Assabet Valley Pastoral Counseling Center offers:

"A PLACE FOR HEALING AND GROWTH"

- ⌘ The Assabet Valley Pastoral Counseling Center (AVPCC) provides quality therapeutic services, child, adolescent, adult, couple, family and group psychotherapy, testing and assessment, and preventative education programs, serving over 60 communities in the greater Central/Metro West Massachusetts area.



PASTORAL COUNSELING

Where Extraordinary Human Pain and Suffering Meet the Holy

- ⌘ Pastoral Counseling is available for all people and draws on the rich traditions of both psychology and spirituality.
- ⌘ We provide counseling to individuals, couples, children, adolescents, families and groups.
- ⌘ We welcome all to our center regardless of religious affiliation.
- ⌘ Working from an interfaith perspective, we respect everyone's journey as he or she faces difficult life experiences.
- ⌘ The pastoral counseling relationship provides a person with a direct and personal connection to their religious community and the values it represents.
- ⌘ The pastoral counselor's role and function as representative of the story of faith enables a person to reinterpret his or her story in the light of the faith and understanding of whom a person related to God is. This allows one to experience and interpret new possibilities of selfhood, relationships and behavior.
- ⌘ The clinical staff includes Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists, Mental Health Counselors, Psychologists and a Certified Spiritual Director.
- ⌘ Six of the staff has taught undergraduate and graduate courses in psychology, marriage & family, and pastoral counseling
- ⌘ AVPCC is unique in that its therapists are doubly trained in the behavioral sciences and religion.

PREVENTATIVE EDUCATION

- ⌘ The staff is available for church/synagogue and community programs on a wide variety of issues pertaining to mental health and preventative education.

CHILDREN

- Child/Adolescent Counseling
- ADHD Evaluations and Strategies
- Behavioral Problems
- Divorce, Grief and Loss
- Parent-Child Conflict
- Parenting Concerns

COUPLES

- Pre-marital Counseling
- Marriage Enrichment
- Communication Concerns
- Relationship Issues
- Marriage and Family Problems
- Parenting Issues

SELF

- Anxiety, Panic and Stress
- Depression
- Abuse and Shame
- Loss and Grief
- Low Self-Esteem
- Alcohol Abuse and Dependence
- ACOA Issues
- Co-Dependence
- Anger Management
- Chronic Illness
- Eating Disorders
- Academic & Vocational Issues
- Relationship Concerns
- Separation & Divorce

Let The Games Begin



It's a social event -- It's a party -- It's a blast!

Are you ready for another fun night of playing games and being a kid again? After a successful game night last year, David Sickles and Cheryl Holmes are planning another great night of just being together to laugh and play Bunco.

If you have never played Bunco before, you are in for a real treat! Our game hostess for the evening will be none other than the "Bunco Queen" Jill Bisbee. Jill, Cheryl's daughter, has run many Bunco nights and has become the Master of the game.

Mark your calendar for Saturday evening, February 4 at 6:00 PM. Anyone over the age of 7 can play. Bring your friends, kids, or grandkids! Pizza, desserts, and drinks will be on the menu. No work involved. Just come and enjoy the fun and the game.

For those of you who do not drive at night or do not want to attempt any winter weather conditions, please call Cheryl & Jim Holmes at 508-460-0142 for a ride – We don't want you to miss out on the fun!

Spiritual Exploration Reading Group

Exploring The Relationship Between Chinese Mysticism And The Christian Faith

Begins Tuesday Afternoon, February 7 with Rev. Sanderson

The theme of our Tuesday afternoon Spiritual Exploration Reading Group this winter/spring will be how the insights of ancient Chinese mysticism can shape our understanding of God. We will read Lao Tsu's collection of eighty-one poems, the Tao Te Ching. Lao Tsu was a contemporary of Confucius. When Mahayana Buddhism moved into China from India in the 5th century C.E. it discovered a strong resonance with the teachings and meditative practices of Taoism, the spiritual path or Way that was articulated by Lao Tsu. These two religious streams merged in a spiritual path that was called C'han. C'han, when it was brought to Japan centuries later, evolved into what we know as Zen.

Since there is quite a variation in the various translations of this work, the one we will be using in class is a relatively new one by Stephen Mitchell, one of my favorite translators. Please make sure to obtain this translation, which is available in paperback.

The Tuesday afternoon study group meets every Tuesday from 2:30 – 4:00 PM in the Vestry. Everyone is welcome!

Annual Meeting



Come for worship; stay for the luncheon, fellowship, and our Annual Meeting, which we are planning to begin at 1:00 PM on Sunday, February 12.

After lunch, we will openly discuss the “Business” of our Church. Remember, although all are welcome to come and speak on the various issues that come before the Annual Meeting, only official members of the church may vote on the budget and nominations for the coming year, as well as any other business that comes before us. If you have not yet become a member of our church, stay after worship for the meeting and discover what our church is all about. New members are usually received into the church every spring.

At this Annual Meeting, in addition to a review of the past year, the election of officers and the establishment of our budget for the coming year, we will be discussing whether or not we should change the time of our Sunday worship from its present time at 11:00 AM to 10:00 AM.

The suggestion that we consider changing our worship service to an earlier time has been discussed in meetings of the Diaconate, the Stewardship and Growth Committee, and the Church Council. Through these discussions we have become aware of a number of pros and cons to the proposed change, which we will be communicating to you by personal mail (since there will not be another Newsletter before the Annual Meeting). Please be sure to attend our Annual Meeting so you can share your thoughts on this matter and also participate in the vote.

The luncheon will be hosted once again by Women’s Fellowship. Look for the sign-up sheet that will be posted in the Vestry as a guideline to what you might bring.

This will be a very important meeting. We encourage all members to attend.

Report Of The Diaconate

This Christmas we were blessed with two beautiful services – Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The Christmas Eve service was beautiful and very well attended. The Christmas Day service, while not so well attended, was very beautiful and meaningful. And everyone who was able to attend felt it was good to be there on that very special day.

The Tuesday and Thursday study groups will resume in February. Read more about them elsewhere in this edition of the Newsletter.

In continually striving to meet the spiritual needs of the congregation, the Diaconate has been discussing the pros and cons of having our Sunday service earlier than 11:00 AM. We don’t know if that would be more helpful or less helpful for the congregation. Please come to the Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 12 and let us hear your views, thoughts and preferences.

The next Diaconate meeting will be Tuesday, February 7 at 6:00 PM.

From The Desk Of The Collector



2011 is now in the rear view mirror, left for historians to interpret. One thing is for sure, our faithful pledgers came through again, exceeding the \$47,456 pledged. THANK YOU!

Bring on 2012, our 148th year! 24 pledges to date total about \$45,465. We've seen 9 pledges increase, 2 have decreased, 12 remained constant and 1 past pledger returned. The Trustees and Diaconate, in conjunction with the Treasurer will present a 2012 budget at our February 12 Annual Meeting.

2012 pledge envelopes have been given out and the Collector's books are in the faithful hands of the auditor. Once they are returned, the final pledge statements will be prepared and distributed by January 31 to all who pledged.

The first several months of the calendar year are always the most difficult for the Treasurer. Heating season and other factors often result in expenses exceeding income.

Collector's friendly reminder: it is not necessary to put an extra, unused, folded, mission or otherwise envelope inside your weekly offering envelope. Simply mark the outside of the envelope how you would like your check divided and toss out the other envelope.

Thank you!

Jim Holmes, Collector

Calendar Girl

Thank you so very much to everyone who has donated a 2012 calendar for the patients on my unit at the hospital. I was lucky enough to be off on New Year's Day but I was able, thanks to your generosity, to give 21 calendars to one of the nurse's aids who happily hung one up for every patient on the unit.

It is hard to keep track of the days when in the hospital and the calendars help patients keep track of where they are in the spectrum of time. It helps them feel more orientated and less insecure. So I thank each and every one of you who donated calendars.

Dianne Simmons

PS If you should happen to come across more calendars in the next few months, I will be glad to take them off your hands!



Women's Fellowship

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philipians 4:13

On behalf of the Women's Fellowship, I would like to extend a hearty "Happy New Year" to all who read the First Community Church Newsletter and pray God's rich blessings to be with you all in the new year.

On December 7 many were able to attend our special program night with guest speaker Joanne Koenig Coste. We were all inspired and enlightened by her talk on the subject of Alzheimer Disease (AD).

If you missed this very informative program, Joanne has a book out, *"Learning To Speak Alzheimer's"* that is a very helpful tool for anyone whose life may be touched by this disease.

Though we were few in number, we all had a wonderful time together at our Christmas Party on December 11. In the Yankee gift swap, Arlene Williams ended up with a delicious and very large apple Bundt Cake, which she cut up and shared with all of us. Barbara Crane was not able to attend but left some devotional materials that we read and some caroling books, giving us an opportunity to sing some of the old favorite carols of Christmas.

Our Christmas Table Fundraiser was a joy for all. Thanks to all who donated items, baked, manned the tables, and helped in any way with this effort. We raised \$294.50 from the table items, and another \$50.00 for the chance to win the raffle prize, a basket filled with all sorts of goodies.

If you made or donated item(s) for the Christmas Table and they were not sold, would you please pick them up no later than Sunday, January 29. All leftover items will be packed up after that date.

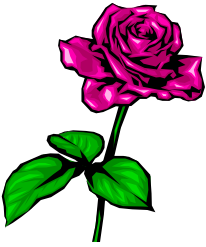
Looking ahead, plans were made for the Annual Meeting Luncheon that will be held on Sunday, February 12. It was decided we would have hot soup and sandwiches. Below is the updated menu.

Soup	Sandwiches	Dessert	Misc
Helen Varney Corn Chowder	Beverly Lees Egg salad	Thelma Oakes Apple crisp	Sandy McKeen Crackers
Karin Farmer Potato Leek	Martha Hubley Chicken salad	Mattie Cummings TBD	
Marlene Joe Minestrone	Mattie Cummings Tuna salad		
	Beth Hook Ham & Cheese		

See you all at the Annual Meeting.

Mattie Cummings, Secretary

With Our Sincerest Sympathies



We were all deeply saddened at the recent loss of Ethel (Nelson) Armstrong, our dearest friend and longest time member of First Community Church of Southborough, joining in 1930. Ethel died on Monday, December 19, 2011 at her home. She was the wife of the late Hamilton Armstrong, who passed away in 1988.

Ethel was known as our “Tab Lady.” Many Sundays you would see her walking around Sunday mornings with plastic baggies full of “Pull Can Tabs” that people had collected over the weeks and would bring in for her. These tabs were eventually redeemed at a recycling center with all the proceeds going to the Shiner’s Hospital for Children in Boston, one of Ethel’s’ nearest and dearest causes. Years ago, Ethel had volunteered for the Visual Education Department for Children’s Hospital. During that time she would see many children, burn victims, in pain beyond belief. As Ethel related these stories to you about these children, you could see the pain and the sadness in her eyes.

During her many years at First Community, you would see Ethel greeting at the doors on Sunday morning or hosting one of many coffee hours. In the summer of 2006, Ethel was a very welcomed addition to the staff of the FCCN (First Community Church Newsletter for those of you who might not realize what the letters stand for).

She is survived by her brother Wallace M. Nelson of Newport, ME and 4 nieces and 3 nephews. She is pre-deceased by 2 brothers Alec N. Nelson and Robert R. Nelson.

A funeral service, officiated by Rev. Paul Sanderson, was held on December 21 at the Morris Funeral Home in Southborough with a collation held at the First Community Church.

Our deepest and heartfelt sympathies go out to Ethel’s family members for their loss. She will be missed by each of you, and to each of us, her long time family at the First Community Church of Southborough.

Our love and prayers are with you.

Have You Seen It?

The Church’s “Memorials Book” that usually sits on the lectern just in front of the choir, has been missing for some time. It might have been put somewhere for “safekeeping” during a funeral or memorial service or when the sanctuary carpet was being cleaned several months ago.



Because the book is our only record of many memorial gifts to the church that go back a number of years, we are very anxious to locate it. If you have seen it or have any idea where it might be, please speak with the pastor or any member of the Diaconate.

**S O U T H B O R O U G H
FOOD
PANTRY**

Please help us help others!

First Community Church Shopping List for January & February



For the month of January and February, we will be collecting all donations that are appropriate and you are willing to give. Choose from the list below or consider making a check out to First Community Church of Southborough with a note earmarking it “Southborough Food Pantry.”

Parmalat Milk



Goldfish



Cheez It



Cookies



The collection box is located next to the L'il Shoppe for you to drop off your items.

Spiritual Study & Growth Group

**Exploring Jungian Psychology And The Christian Faith
Begins Thursday Evening February 9 with Rev. Sanderson**

The theme of our Thursday evening Spiritual Study and Growth Group this winter/spring will be the relationship of Jungian psychology (the psychology of Carl Gustav Jung) to the Christian faith. We will begin our study with an overview of Jung’s understanding of the psyche and then explore the archetypes of persona and shadow. We will read and discuss two books in particular: Robert Louis Stevenson’s short novel, *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*, and Robert Johnson’s *Owning Your Own Shadow*. Johnson, who is both a Jungian psychoanalyst and an Episcopal priest, is especially gifted in being able to take Jung’s profound insights into the grounding of religious beliefs and doctrines in the archetypal structures of the collective unconscious and present them in a way that makes them easy to grasp.

The Thursday evening study group meets every Thursday from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. in the Vestry. Everyone is welcome!

**Celebrations
Celebrations**



February marks the 43rd anniversary of Reverend Paul Sanderson’s ordination into the Christian ministry.

All of us at First Community Church thank Paul for his service to us and we congratulate and celebrate with him on the anniversary of his ordination.

A Blast From The Past

100 Years Ago

1912 -- January

- ◆ The Ladies home circle of the Congregational church was entertained in a most delightful way by Mrs. Howard Clark at her home Wednesday afternoon. A large number were present and after the routine business was transacted in the midst of savory odors from the kitchen, the ladies were invited to the dining room, where a genuine old-fashioned boiled dinner with a delicious accompaniment of pie was served to them. Favors with Japanese indoor fireworks were beside each plate. A hearty vote of thanks to those who had a part in preparing the supper was passed by the ladies. In the evening the ladies brought their husbands to partake of the regulation hash, which is the necessary complement of every well ordered boiled dinner. All present voted it a most delightful occasion.
- ◆ At the Thursday evening prayer meeting it was voted that the Sunday evening prayer meeting committee take charge of the meetings again. The committee to be the same as the previous year. Mrs. Works; Mrs. Chickering; Mrs. Rogers; Mrs. Day; and W. Boutilier.

1911 -- February

- ◆ Southville – The Stork left an infant daughter at the home of Mr. & Mrs. John Stockwell last Saturday.
- ◆ The entertainment and chicken pie supper given by some of our prominent young people at the vestry of the Southville Congregational Church Tuesday evening was well attended and was a decided success. The farce “Jumbo Jum” was presented.
- ◆ Wm. Flynn, who was killed by a switching engine of the B & A Division at Beacon Park one day last week, was a former resident of this vicinity and formerly engineer and craftsman in the old south stone quarry at Hopkinton and later manufactured soap at Southville.

75 Years Ago

1937 -- February

- ◆ Officers of the Ladies Circle of the Southville Federated Church for 1937: President: Mrs. Wendell Hayward; VP: Mrs. Wm. Brownell; Secretary: Mrs. Gardner Boutilier; Acting treasurer: Mrs. Susie Jones; Trustees: Mrs. Evelyn Warner; Mrs. Florence LeGay; Directresses: Mrs. Fannie Clark; Mrs. Susie Jones; Mrs. Clara Babbitt.

50 Years Ago

1962 -- January

- ◆ The Women’s Fellowship meeting was inspired by their missionary speaker, Mrs. Paul Gregory, who spoke of their missionary work in the Orient. Arrangements were made for replacing dishes badly needed in the kitchen.

1962 -- February

- ◆ On Feb. 4th a caravan to Norfolk was conducted for all persons interested to see the new educational addition erected by the Federated Church there. Twenty-one were in attendance. Our host, Rev. Donald Menzel, was most cordial in showing us the building and offering future advice if requested. It was the consensus of all present that the same basic arrangement would be well suited for our building needs. Mr. Ernest Williams secured the floor plans and drew up proposals for the Men's Club's consideration.
- ◆ Mr. George Knight acted as chairman for an evening's fellowship and entertainment in February. This evening proved most entertaining for those attending but most disappointing in number. New members were introduced, and a fine program enjoyed followed by refreshments.
- ◆ The women's fellowship extended words of welcome to guests from Ashland Federated Church. An unusual program was presented "Music from near and far." The B-Longers presented American favorites in contrast to German folk songs sung by Mrs. Hartman and Mrs. Sisson.

25 Years Ago**1987 -- January**

- ◆ Amanda Lynn Masterman was baptized on January 11th.

1987 -- February

- ◆ The Annual meeting was held on Saturday February 7th following a Pot Luck supper. The members were asked to consider the revised and updated constitution and by-laws. A recommendation proposed by the Deacons and Elders regarding Church Polity was presented. Discussion followed on the return to a Church Council form of government and whether it would be more workable. The changes to the By-laws were voted, as amended and a motion made that we accept the new constitution and By-laws as amended and written. The Pastor will get 100 copies printed.
Under "other business" the Sunday coffee hour was brought up. Some folk felt it unnecessary, others that it was a good time for fellowship, not only with each other, but with visitors and/or those that do not get out regularly. It was decided to refer the subject to the Church Council for recommendation.

10 Years Ago**2002 -- January**

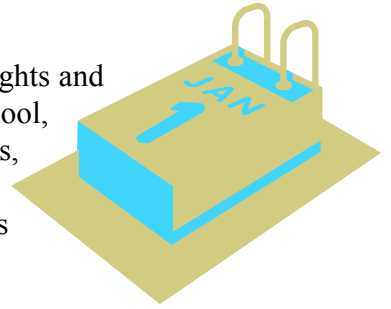
- ◆ The Epiphany event was hosted by the choir.

2002 -- February

- ◆ The Annual Meeting was held on Saturday February 9th. Meeting began at 7 pm with 25 members and friends present. A new budget item of \$250 was added for "donation to United Church of Christ." It was explained very clearly that this in no way alters the fact that First Community has been, is, and shall remain a non-denominational Church.
The Pastor's salary was increased from a total of \$30,000 to \$32,000. The organist's salary was increased from \$130 to \$140/week. The Choir director's salary was increased from \$80 to \$90/week. The Sexton's salary was increased from \$3,600 to \$3,780. annually.
The total 2002 budget was \$66,657. Pledged income was \$46,378.

New Year Thoughts

The joy of family meals, gift giving and receiving, beautiful decorations, lights and the Christmas tree, offer a visual celebration. Buoyant spirits, no school, holidays observed so close together, special music and faith based messages, all closing out the old year with a high of warm feelings, happy thoughts, positive memories and a strong reassuring spiritual connection. The year is completed!



Now we say hello to the next year. Here comes January and February, our wintertime. It's cold, snowy and dark, even though the daylight hours are lengthening. I'd like to hunker down to wait out the bleak and chill of a New England winter. Hibernating sounds really good! Why do we start our new year in winter?

Well, first we have come off a twelve-month cycle, called year 2011 AD. The next cycle, 2012 AD, has to start with a couple of months called something, we know them as January and February. Whoever figured out this 12 month cycle eons ago, gave them names after ancient gods. But start off with winter?? Really??

This planet earth is divided into two halves, the northern and southern hemispheres (half circles). The southern one is like a mirror image of the northern one, but upside down. If we lived there, we would have January and February as summertime, but we don't, so we get to welcome the new year during a cold and unappealing season.

Speaking of season, we have four of them, taking us from the colder winter solstice in December to the hottest summer solstice in June and back again. The axis, north to south, tilts toward the sun as we move around it in our orbit, making it appear to be closer or further from the sun, depending on our position in our orbit relative to the sun. Confused??? Suffice to say, when we tilt close it's hotter and farthest away, it's colder. And in between that, spring and autumn which are called equinoxes.

This seasonal rotation completes the yearly 12 month cycle and we are back to January and February in the northern hemisphere that we call home, and it's winter.

But do not despair; winter does have some redeeming qualities.

Winter

Marks a new beginning and most beginnings have endings forming completions. We like that – We like thoughts, ideas, tasks, games, projects, problems, etc. to come to completion – it feels right!

Winter

Prompts New Year resolutions, which are always popular and show resilience. Every year we make them and though we are seldom faithful to them, we continue to make some effort towards self-improvement. Nonetheless, we are likely to make more of them this year. “Try, Try Again!

Winter

Slows us down, gives us R & R (rest & recuperation) after a busy, sometimes stressful time of year, both in the secular and in our faith-based lives.



Shows promise and hope. Lengthening daylight is the portent of warmer days. Things will get better, and incredibly, on February 2nd a groundhog named “Punxsutawney Phil” will predict the end of winter!



Reveals our adaptability. Snowbirds (human variety) head south and snowboarders and skiers head for the snow slopes to enjoy all of nature’s aspects.



Brings us a beacon of optimism, giving us a sense of survival and new beginnings. We are OK! We keep trying to improve ourselves and we are worth it!

So bring on January and February, we are up to them. We will generously measure snowfalls and the lengths of icicles, count lost school days and power outages. It provides us with conversation fodder for months to come.

God in His wisdom, gives us incredible variety and diversity in every facet of the life we enjoy 24/7. It is January and February that start it all each year. Perhaps that is the real reason for winter. A slower pace that builds throughout the year, letting us savor the power and glory of God and His creation.

Enjoy all of God’s good gifts every season and prayerfully thank him!

Martha Hubley
Guest Columnist

United Parishes Lenten Series

The United Parishes of Southborough Lenten series theme has been tentatively set as an exploration of interfaith dialogue among the three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Several of the relatively new clergy to town will share their thoughts about this theme.

The dates of the gatherings will be March 6, 13, 20, and 27. Palm Sunday is April 1 and Easter will be celebrated on April 8 this year. Our own church study groups will continue to meet throughout Lent.

The meetings begin at 6:00 PM with worship. This is followed by dinner, the presentation, and discussion. We end promptly at 8:00 PM.

Since this schedule is tentative, and we do not presently have a schedule of where the meetings will be held, please check our website or contact the Pastor for up-to-date information.

The complete details will be printed in the March 2012 Newsletter.

Oh The Weather Outside Is Frightful....



Our general policy as a church is to try to hold worship whenever we can, if only for a few people. We believe that if you want to make the effort to attend on a snowy day, we should be there for you. However, we wouldn't want you to be hurt either walking or driving to church in inclement weather. We also need to remember that our Pastor and our Organist come from quite a distance. It may be a lot easier for some of us to get to the church than it would be for them. Above all, we don't want you to end up driving to church on a snowy or icy day only to find that church has been cancelled.

In anticipation of snowy or icy days, when we would not want people to go out, the Diaconate and the Minister have put together a policy and procedure for the cancellation of our Sunday service. The decision of whether to hold or cancel church because of weather will be made by the Pastor, who lives in Foxborough; the Moderator – Lou Dundin, who lives in Grafton; and Bob L'Heureux, Chairman of the Diaconate who lives in Southborough.

We will not post the cancellation on the telephone tape at the church number because that would entail someone trekking to the church and re-recording the message. We will also not be posting it on our website.

Notice of the cancellation will appear on the three Boston television stations:

Channel 4 (WBZ) -- Channel 5 (WCVB) -- Channel 7 (WHDH)

In addition, WBZ News Radio will read the list of cancellations twice every hour – at :05 and at :35 past the hour. We are listed as “First Community Church – Southborough.”

The decision will be made and the cancellation will be called in to these stations by 8:30 AM Sunday morning by the Pastor, who alone has the secret, encrypted code numbers that enable our church to appear on the cancellation list for each station.

From The Editor

The deadline for the March 2012 Newsletter is **Sunday, February 19, 2012.** Remember to include any dates for meetings or events you would like listed on the calendar. Articles may be submitted to Cheryl Holmes by:



(508) 460-0142



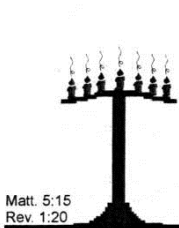
244 Flanders Road
Westborough, MA 01581



caholmes@charter.net

Thank You

From Our Missions



"His Royal Ministry"

I Pet. 2:9

*Working with Haitian Pastors and Leaders
to Build Up Christ's Church in Haiti*

Mattie L. Cummings, Director
20 Flagg Road, Southborough, MA 01772

Tel. (508) 481-2086

Dear Members and Friends,

*"For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper."
Psalm 72:12*

As we move toward entering into the new year, I am looking over my shoulder at 2011; I am counting my blessings of which there are many.

Thanking the Lord for good health, a warm house and of course, Christmas with all its surprises and good things to eat. Thankful for friends and family (my precious husband) that bring joy in sharing life together with all of them.

Remembering Ethel Armstrong as we pass by her driveway each day and thankful we had such a wonderful neighbor for so long.

Ever on this list are my church and the church family there in Haiti. As Director of His Royal Ministry and its work in Haiti, I want to take this end of the year opportunity to again thank all of you and let you know how grateful I am for your love, your fellowship, your compassion for the people of Haiti and your faithful giving to help them in their great times of need.

One of your best gifts to me is the hope you have built in them (the Haitian people) to go forth in the new year with a renewed spirit to lift up their lives that they may build a better way forward in their personal lives and for their country.

You are now and remain a blessing to all the ministries that are touched by your generosity. Thanking you again for all the blessings.

His servant and yours,

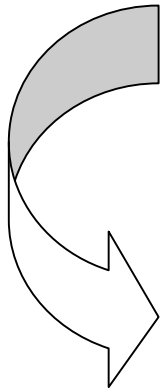
Mattie L. Cummings
Director - "His Royal Ministry"

With Our Special Thanks To –

- ◆ David Sickles and the Choir for hosting the Advent Event. It was a great evening of fantastic food, fun, entertainment, and fellowship. Thanks to all who brought in their favorite foods. The addition of the Tree Lighting Sing-A-Long was a big hit with everyone.
- ◆ The Women's Fellowship for hosting the Alzheimer's Presentation. Many thanks to Sandy McKeen for her efforts to organize the program and bringing in Joanne Koenig Coste, world-renowned expert on Alzheimer's Disease. We all learned so much from Joanne and her real life experiences with this disease. Thank you Joanne for sharing your life experiences and your thoughts, as well as your skills, to help make us more aware of the effects of Alzheimer's on the person as well as their Carepartner.
- ◆ Bob and Dan L'Heureux for setting up and taking down our Nativity for all to see every Sunday during this Christmas season. Thanks also to Rev. Paul and Corey Sanderson for delivering it and taking it back to Paul's house to store until next year.
- ◆ David Sickles for this year's magnificently decorated walls and windows in our sanctuary for Christmas. The Christmas tree stood gracefully lit, adorned with the angel atop and soft white ribbons twirling down. Just when you think it can't get better, you add a new touch that brings out "the beauty of the season" at First Community Church.
- ◆ Pat Grogan for making all the arrangements to collect, purchase, deliver, and place the Christmas Poinsettias in all the right places to grace the altar for Christmas Sunday and the Christmas Eve Service.
- ◆ Michael Larson, David Sickles, and the members of our Choir for their inspirational music throughout the Advent season and Christmas Eve.
- ◆ The Advent Candle lighters: Barbara and David Crane; Nancy, Patrick, and Jonathan Mantos; Anne and Lila Mato; Angie DeCormier and Zachary Bird; and Garcia, Roy and Nigel Pinnock.
- ◆ The Christmas Eve readers: Bob L'Heureux, Dianne Simmons, Bob Farmer, Karin Farmer, Nancy Mantos, and Darlene Sanderson. Thanks also to our Greeters, Sharon and Skip Willman.
- ◆ The Women's Fellowship for organizing and providing for the collation following Ethel Armstrong's Memorial Service.


LOOKING AHEAD


United Parishes Lenten Series
Begins Tuesday, March 6

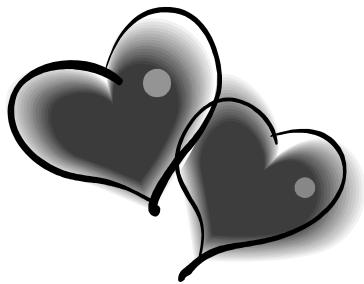


Write down these dates!!



	
Birthdays	
Mitch Hansberry	5 th
Jill Bisbee	6 th
Nigel Pinnock	17 th
Susan Hansberry	25 th
Jennifer Dundin	28 th
Michael Larson	31 st

	
Birthdays	
Lois Jacobson	8 th
Bob Farmer	8 th
George Nutting	9 th
Evelyn Till	10 th
Joan Brunelle	10 th
Thelma Oakes	11 th
Caroline Willman	12 th
Reggie Lirette	12 th
Jim Holmes	13 th
Helen Varney	14 th
Holly VanderSluis	16 th
Jason Elias	19 th
Arlene Williams	21 st
Diane Sickles	22 nd
Cody Willman	24 th
Wendy Willman	28 th
Anniversaries	
Helen and Dick Varney	16 th
Marlene & Gil Joe	19 th



CELEBRATIONS



Letting Go

To let go doesn't mean to stop caring, it means I can't do it for someone else.

To let go is not to cut myself off, it's the realization that I can't control another.

To let go is not to enable, but to allow learning from natural consequences.

To let go is to admit powerlessness, which means the outcome is not in my hands.

To let go is not to try to change or blame another, I can only change myself.

To let go is not to care for, but to care about.

To let go is not to fix, but to be supportive.

To let go is not to judge, but to allow another to be a human being.

To let go is not to be in the middle arranging all the outcomes, but to allow others to effect their own outcomes.

To let go is not to be protective, it is to permit another to face reality.

To let go is not to deny, but to accept.

To let go is not to nag, scold or argue, but to search out my own shortcomings and to correct them.

To let go is not to adjust everything to my desires, but to take each day as it comes and to cherish the moment.

To let go is not to criticize and regulate anyone, but to try to become what I dream I can be.

To let go is not to regret the past, but to grow and live for the future.

To let go is to fear less and love more.



These are reminders on how to let go. . . . Perhaps it is letting go of a rebellious child, or a burden of sorrow, losing a loved one, or learning to live with a heartache, which we just cannot let go of.

Read this over. . . . Study it. . . . Pray over it. . . . and you will find that letting go of your load will release a peace within you which will allow your spirit to soar. . . to be free. . . to completely give it to God. . . and let a work be done within you where the need is anyway.

Blessings,

*Karin Farmer
Guest Columnist*

For we are laborers together with God...(1 Corinthians 3:8)

Lay Leaders

January 1 - Dianne Simmons
January 8 - Bob L'Heureux
January 15 - Garcia Passley
January 22 - Sandy McKeen
January 29 -



Greeters

January 1 - Beverly Lees
January 8 - Joyce Harrington
January 15 -
January 22 - Cathy Ten Eyck
January 29 - Karin Farmer

Coffee Hour Hosts

January 1 - No Coffee Hour
January 8 - Marlene Joe
January 15 -
January 22 - Karin Farmer & Helen Varney
January 29 - Mattie & Lee Cummings



Memorial Flowers

January 1 -
January 8 - Garcia & Roy Pinnock
January 15 - The Sickles & Willman
Families
January 22 - Cathy Ten Eyck
January 29 -



Deacons for January

Scott McKeen and Dianne Simmons

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>HAPPY NEW YEAR</p> <p>10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service <i>Sacrament of Holy Communion</i> Coffee Hour following Worship Service January-February Newsletter Deadline</p>	2	3	4	5	6	7
		6:00 PM Diaconate Meeting			 <p><i>Epiphany</i></p>	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9:15 AM Adult Bible Study 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service Coffee Hour following Worship Service						
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
9:15 AM Adult Bible Study 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service Coffee Hour following Worship Service		5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal		6:15 PM Investment Committee		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
9:15 AM Adult Bible Study 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service Coffee Hour following Worship Service		5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal				
29	30	31	<p>January 2012 Missions - Straight Ahead Ministries</p>			
10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service Coffee Hour following Worship Service		5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>February 2012</h1> <h2>Missions - Assabet Valley</h2> <h3>Pastoral Counseling</h3>			1	2 	3	4 
5 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service <i>Sacrament of Holy Communion</i> Coffee Hour following Worship Service	6	7 2:30 PM Spiritual Exploration Reading Group 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 6:00 PM Diaconate Meeting	8	9 7:00 PM Spiritual Study & Growth Group	10	11
12 ANNUAL MEETING 9:15 AM Adult Bible Study 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service Lunch and Annual Meeting following Worship Service 	13	14 2:30 PM Spiritual Exploration Reading Group 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 	15	16 7:00 PM Spiritual Study & Growth Group	17	18
19 DEDICATION OF CHURCH OFFICERS 9:15 AM Adult Bible Study 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service Coffee Hour following Worship Service March Newsletter Deadline	20  President's Day	21 2:30 PM Spiritual Exploration Reading Group 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	22 	23 7:00 PM Spiritual Study & Growth Group	24	25
26 9:15 AM Adult Bible Study 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service Coffee Hour following Worship Service	27	28 2:30 PM Spiritual Exploration Reading Group 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	29			