



The Evangel

The Congregational Church of Westborough, United Church of Christ

Westborough Massachusetts

1724-2011

Embodying Compassion, Embracing Change, Growing Together in Faith and Love

Volume 32, Issue 2

January 25, 2012

*Join us for
Sunday Worship and
bring a friend! 10 am*

February 5th
Holy Communion
Rev. Legerstee Preaching

February 12th
Special Jazz Service



February 19th
Rev. Gaetani preaching

February 22nd
Ash Wednesday
Labyrinth Worship
7:30pm

February 26th
First Sunday of Lent
Rev. Legerstee Preaching

Tuesday, February 28th
All Church
Safe Church Training

7pm



FROM OUR INTERIM MINISTER

Dear Friends,

February leaps this year with an extra day! To leap, is to rise, to jump, or to soar. Friends at the Cape invited their entire West Parish Church community to take a twenty-foot leap into Scorton Creek from a bridge on route 6A. Dozens of members, all ages, took a leap of faith!! You too have leaped into a new year with the exuberance of work well done, and with faithful anticipation of a bright future ahead.

Leaping, bodily or in Spirit will be acceptable behavior for all ages this February, as Willie Sordillo, Sara Purcell and others join in the vibrant sound of Jazz on the 12th. Be sure to bring a neighbor or a friend with you.

Ash Wednesday inaugurates the forty days of Lent inviting us to let go of who we have been to move into the reality of who we might become. God sings through the prophets calling to each of us; *"Come back to me with all you heart, don't let fear keep us apart...Long have I waited for your coming home to me and living deeply our new life."* During the Ash Wednesday Service you will have the opportunity to walk the Labyrinth as a means of preparing for the Lenten journey ahead.

It is my joy to share with you that we will walk on your very own canvas labyrinth this year, a wonderful gift to the community!

Another way the church walks together is in the Way that Jesus taught, of right relationship. As a people of God our Safe Church policy is a behavioral covenant that protects the most vulnerable in the church as well as our life together. Please attend the vital All-Church Safe Church Training on the 28th. We will be led by Susan Dickerman from MACUCC.

It is said, "Leap and the net will appear!"

May we leap forward turning and returning toward our God.

Blessings- *Rev. Dirkje*

FROM OUR ASSOCIATE MINISTER....

LENTEN ADULT EDUCATION BOOK STUDY!

When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times

By Pema Chodron

SAVE THE DATES!

Wednesday Eve's, Feb. 29- March 21st

6:30 pm – 8 pm

Historical Room – Kirkside

Lead by Rev. Elaine S. Gaetani

Offered Through Christian Education

We are excited and delighted to be offering this wonderful book study group during the season of Lent. So much of what the disciples expected in the end, had “fallen apart” and all too often this is the case in our own faith journey and life in general.

God, however, had something “Even Better” in mind for that band of disciples, even when they thought that they had “lost Jesus” to death.....God Was and Continues to Do A New Thing! God has something “Even Better” in mind for each of us in our daily losses, chaos and life difficulties.

Author and American Buddhist nun, Pema Chodron has written a seminal book on this topic and one that I believe will become a classic. Having had the good fortune of spending a retreat with her, I highly recommend any and all of her books/works. She reminds me of Jesus.

So please think about joining with us for these five Wednesday Eve's and if you are not able to attend in person please speak with Brenda Lord about a possible way to join in on this study “on-line.”

May God bless our time together, challenge us in new and appropriate Ways and create in us a true and deep sense of Christian Community.

Questions? Elaine S. Gaetani 508-366-2000. Nancy Cavanaugh 508-544-2880

Cost of Hard copy of book is \$20.00 and will be ordered by Nancy Cavanaugh.

“Life is a good teacher and a good friend. Things are always in transition, if we could only realize it. Nothing ever sums itself up in the way that we like to dream about. The off-center, in-between state is an ideal situation, a situation in which we don't get caught, and in which we can open our hearts and minds beyond limit.” –Pema Chodron

from *When Things Fall Apart*

FROM OUR STUDENT MINISTER....

A View from the Mountain by Pedro S. Silva II

I can honestly say that I don't know if I would even be a Christian if it were not for Martin Luther King Jr. Even though I was raised with the Bible and church, MLK Jr. was the greatest example of Christianity that I have known in modern times. He lived out his calling and gave his life for it. He was a true Christian who stood on the side of justice and believed in the power of love. He said, “Hatred paralyzes life; Love releases it. Hatred confuses life; Love harmonizes it. Hatred darkens life; Love illumines it.”

In many ways, I look at Dr. King as a prophet. In my opinion a prophet is someone who sees reality as it is and not as they are told to. If you listen to his words and then look at the world around us, compassion will cause you to see that his message is still relevant today. Another description that suits Dr. King is healer. I learned from an African proverb recently that a meaning for healer is “an awakener of those who have slept too long.” If that isn't Dr. King, I don't know what is. We still revere Dr. King the way we do, because many of us are still asleep. We'd rather hear an easy lie than the hard truth. But Martin had been to the mountain and he knew that this world of separation that we cling to is a lie. I believe that he knew that God's reality is one of Unity and that all things that work to divide are false.

I am aware that like most people Martin Luther King Jr. had his weaknesses as well. But I cannot say that they were any more than other prophetic figures in the Bible or elsewhere. I think the point is that he made the choice to live by an ideal that transcended the “what's in it for me” mentality that is rampant in this society. In fact, I don't think that he would have cared too much about the memorial that is up in his honor. I am not saying anything against it. I just think that he would have felt that the best memorial that we could erect for him would be in our hearts where we too can commit to an ideal.

Martin King Jr. was an adherent of Gandhi's satyagraha teachings. Gandhi taught that we must be the change that we want to see in the world. That's what Dr. King was striving for. I feel that Martin chose to look at the world with a view from the mountain and lived as if everyone should be able to see it too. He walked among us with the belief that the “Promised Land” is a present reality. In so doing he lived into the Lord's Prayer that God's will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Personally, I don't think that you have to be a religious person to see the value in treating others as you would like to be treated. And essentially that was Dr. King's simple message to the world. That's all it takes to wake up and live into God's reality—where every land can be and in actuality is the Promised Land.

This post and others can be viewed on Pedro's blog,
<http://therooflesschurch.com>

PRAYERS & CELEBRATIONS

Bereavement: Shirley Hero and family upon the passing of Jack on Jan. 21st; the memorial service to be held at the church Fri, Jan 27th at 11 am.; Janice Makris and family upon the death of her mother; Betty Gray and family upon the passing of her great-nephew; The family of Patrica Goodhall (friend and co-worker of Myra Appleby, passed away Dec. 18th; Shirley Salah passed away on Dec. 4th.

New Prayers: Jen Keeler; Monica Osborn and son Christopher; Amy and daughter Lily (friends of Gen Benton); Susie Moore (Carol Moore's sister).

Continued prayers: Jeremiah & Jayson Goodall (Wendy Roberts' nephews); Bill Goodall (Wendy Roberts' brother); Parker Uhlman (Nancy Uhlman's husband, Doug Uhlman's Dad); The family of Bruce Blackmer (friends of Justine Lovely); Audrey Birch (Dick & Linda's sister-in-law); Michael Black (good friend of the Steve & Diana Swets; Michael Newton; Sheila Currie (dear friend of Mary McLeod); Renee Jansen (sister of Deb Boucher's sister-in-law); Kathleen (Susan & David Cochrane's sister-in-law); Fran Kelly (Megan Huber's mom, facing surgery); Beverly Campbell (friend of Nancy Walker); James Hight; Jose and Zoila Del Cid (friends of Carolyn Bent); Ruth Burke and her children (friends of Kathy and Gabe Leblanc); Kyle Motta (age 1) facing heart surgery; Jean Newton; Christopher Doyle (Pam Faustine's brother-in-law); Adam Bent and his wife Amanda (Carolyn Bent's nephew); Thalia Genes and Susan Tobias (friends of Phyllis Newton); Donna and Tony Marge (friends of Serena Leiser); Joanne & Jim Gingras (friends of Kathy Todd); Joan Jacobs;
Hospitalized: Justine Lovely; Louise Tyler; Richard Clapp.

Hospice: Robert Turbidy (Habitat construction supervisor).

Westboro Health Care Center: Bea Ladner.

Beaumont: Shirley Hero; Marge Lightbody (awaiting surgery).

Celebrations: Gerda & Dick Clapp on the birth of their Great Granddaughter, Irene Constance Sullivan, born Dec. 19th.

Let us remember to pray for the Search Committee and all those who serve our church.

You can place prayer concerns on the church's email distribution list at epayers@uccwestboro.org. To add or renew an ongoing concern, please call the church office 366-2000 or westboroucc@verizon.net.

ALL CHURCH SAFE CHURCH TRAINING EVENT - FEBRUARY. 28th 7:00 PM



Perhaps the most famous promise in all Christendom is heard in the 23rd Psalm. Here the Psalmist expresses confidence of God's protection when he ends with: "and I shall dwell in the house of God forever". It is no coincidence that so many families request this Psalm at the funerals of loved ones. People want and need assurance that there is some place of safety here on earth and beyond. It is no accident that the worship space in a church is called a sanctuary...a place for refuge, of hope, of safety. For hundreds of years the church, the sanctuary, was sacred space that could not even be invaded by kings, anyone who entered was safe in God's hands.

The Congregational Church of Westborough affirms that our church will provide a safe, secure environment for all who worship and participate in fellowship and ministry. What does it mean to provide a "safe church" in actual practice? To learn the answer to this question, the Congregational Church of Westborough with the help of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ will be offering a learning / training event on the evening of Tuesday, February 28, 2012 in our church; specifically in the Fellowship Hall; starting at 7:00pm. The well being and safety of our Church depends on everyone's participation. Subsequently, we are asking everyone to attend, including youth and workcamp participants.

Please put this important date on your calendar today!
Your Safe Church Committee, **Dana**

2012 ANNUAL FISCAL MEETING SUMMARY

The Annual Fiscal Meeting of The Congregational Church of Westborough was held on Sunday, January 22. The call had previously announced updates, discussions and votes on a number of topics. As a quorum was present, all votes were conducted according to church By-Laws.

- **2011 budget:** The meeting began with a review of 2011 financial results and the encouraging news that we ended the year with positive net income of \$2,007.

A SUMMARY FOR THOSE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL FISCAL MEETING

- **2012 budget:** The congregation unanimously approved the proposed budget for 2012. The budget, essentially level-funded from 2011, will be revisited at the May Boards and Committees Annual Meeting when more information on the financial implications of the search for a new settled pastor, final information on 2012 pledges, and some early data on trends for planned expenses are available.
- **Capital Campaign:** An update was provided on the current status of the Capital Campaign and a vote taken on the disbursement of the remaining funds on hand in the Campaign checking account. The congregation unanimously approved payments of up to \$19,000 for Missions and \$11,000 for the Church Savings Account (CSA). Both were part of the Campaign's original commitment. The payment to the CSA will also reduce the outstanding balance of the prior Capital Campaign from \$60,000 to \$49,000
- **Financial update:** An update from the Financial Oversight Committee on a number of ongoing topics was provided. This included (1) completion of the 2011 Audit (1st quarter 2012), (2) the conclusion of negotiations with the IRS over reporting issues on previous tax returns (a payment to the IRS of \$4,800 spread over 2 years), (3) the refilling to our return for the year 2006 with a hoped for rebate due to overpayment of taxes (4) An update on balances owed to other accounts and funds in the church from the Operating Account and (5) an updated balance for the Church Savings Account and a discussion on practices related to use and management of funds in the account.
- **Sale of a building:** The congregation completed a year-long discussion of the background, approach and need to sell a building as well as the pros and cons of selling each structure (Kirkside and 7 Church Street) and voted on the recommendation to place Kirkside up for sale. The vote of 51 "for" and 9 "against," with 1 abstention, followed presentations by Jack Wilson, co-chairperson of the Property Task Force, and Dennis Rieske, the architect engaged by the church to help with the review and planning process, as well as discussion and comments by the approximately 90 people in attendance. Updates and details on arrangements to sell Kirkside will be presented to the congregation on an ongoing basis for review and any offer for purchase of the building will be thoroughly discussed prior to the approval of the sale.

Submitted by Steve Swets, Moderator

I have put both my introductory comments planned for the Annual Meeting and my written report here in the Evangel to reach out to the many members and friends of the church who were unable to attend the Annual Meeting, held last Sunday, January 22. I would be happy to receive any feedback on the health and direction of the church you might care to send by email to me at saswets@aol.com.

Thank you. Steve Swets, Moderator

2012 Annual Meeting – Moderator's Comments

Welcome to the 2012 Annual Fiscal Meeting of the Congregation Church of Westborough. Thank you for supporting your church by staying to participate in important discussions and votes, listen to updates and offer your thoughts on a variety of subjects.

Before we start the meeting I'd like to acknowledge the youth for serving lunch – I hope you made a nice profit – and begin with a prayer.

2012 was a very interesting year for the church. In many ways it was a great year:

- We managed our financial operations better and made huge progress on cleaning up some pesky issues
- We gained a lot of visibility and supported a wonderful mission activity through the Farmer's Market held in conjunction with Dismas House. How nice it was to have many people in the community comment on the positive and visible energy this event brought to us
- We spruced up a substantial portion of the lower level of the church in time for a very successful Church Fair – many of you have noticed and commented on how clean the church looks these days
- We nominated and launched an energetic Pastor Search Committee
- We loosened and limbered up as a congregation – a key objective of the interim pastor period

While we accomplished a lot, in some ways it was also a stressful year. A great deal of change can be hard to manage. Part of our above average pace of change was due to the fact that we had initiated very little change in the last 5 or so years, change that should have been started and completed by now and which could have lessened our current load.

During our interim period we have tested a lot of new ideas in the service and in other areas of our theology, as we limber up for a new pastor. This has been easy for some to embrace and very difficult for others. There are joys and there are struggles here, and sometimes they are on the same topic.

We became a slightly leaner operation in 2011 in order to offer a balanced budget. In doing so, we grappled with some difficult budget cuts. It can be a difficult process to balance our business needs and act like a church and we do the best we can to not let the tail wag the dog here. Managing our operations is all about sustaining our spiritual community and being able to focus more on the real reasons we all come to church.

Sacrifices caused by our belt tightening were born by many, including the congregation as a whole, various boards and committees, and by our buildings which could have, as always, used some additional maintenance. However, the most painful of these impacts were probably those visited on the staff, including stipended volunteers, who saw their incomes reduced or eliminated. Unlike groups that could fall back on each other, find work-arounds or defer projects, these folks took the hit head on and individually. And they did it with grace. We understand how difficult this was and would like to acknowledge their ongoing hard work, devotions and contributions to the church.

I am pleased to report that the budget we have presented offers to restore some of the salary reductions and offer one time "appreciation gifts" to individuals affected by the 2011 cuts.

We also rolled with the punches on the 12 month conversation on the sale of a building. While we used the year of dialogue, and there was a lot of it, to help to sharpen our thinking and polish our plans, there were moments of difficulty for probably everyone.

We have spent some very attentive listening time with everyone we could find that might be involved in the potential move, either as a movee or as a current user of space in this building, like CE and their need for classroom space and Women's Fellowship and their management of the Fair. If you voiced unhappiness with some aspect of this project we tried to sit down with you to hear your point of view and see if we could factor it in to our thinking. We did make some changes to the original plan as a result. We haven't made everyone happy but it has not been for lack of effort.

There is a temptation to look around at a smaller budget, flatter pledges, the idea of selling a beloved building and wonder how did all this happen. Why us. What did we do? Or not do?

The answer is we did nothing to create the situation we now find ourselves in. We are a strong community and the difficult things we are wrestling with are happening not only in churches across the state and the country but in many other highly visible organizations whose resources and control of their destinies dwarf ours.

In a recent report on 10 year trends in the Mass UCC we have seen drops of 25% in membership and 32% in Sunday School enrollment. Yet attendance and

pledges are flat and current expenses are up 20%. There may be fewer Congregationalists around but we are giving more as individuals to keep our churches as healthy as possible.

David T. Olson, director of the American Church Research Project has collected data from more than 200,000 churches. He notes that the country continues to grow in terms of population, but the percentage of Americans attending church on any given weekend keeps declining. In 1990, it was 20.4 percent. In 2000, it was 18.7. In 2007, it was 17

He goes on to say that "Churches tend to stay pretty stable. So even though the community around them may be growing or be in transition with new people coming in regularly, churches often don't notice those things happening and are pretty happy to just stay the same. From 1990 to 2006, there were 68 million new births in America and a net gain of 23 million immigrants, but churches a lot of times are really not looking outside their doors to think about how to connect with those new Americans."

We are seeing change on a lot more fronts than religion and it is a broad sweeping change that is altering many aspects of our social landscape.

People who follow web sites and email technology know that their friends have abandoned AOL in droves in the last 5 years – to the tune of 31 million lost customers from 2002 to 2010.

The Metropolitan Opera turned around a serious slide in attendees and revenues with edgy programming and new distribution options (broadcasts through movie theatres) which were sure to be difficult for the remaining traditional core members

Newspapers and wrist watches are finding that new business models and drastic organizational changes are needed to prolong their lives as they lose anywhere between 8 and 18% of their customers annually.

The Boston Herald is now printed by arch rival The Boston Globe.

American Airlines may have a new owner and a new name by the time we get home today.

Change is all around us and I believe that we as an organization are doing a reasonably good job of managing during this upheaval. But we need to do, and will do, better as we are required to focus less attention on the logistics of our existence and more on where we are headed as a spiritual community.

Moderator's Report

In addition to being an account of this year's Cabinet activities, this is also a report on behalf of the broader church leadership team and the congregation. Few of the many accomplishments we can point to this year could not have been done without massive amounts of preparation and careful attention by many individuals, boards and committees and the willing consideration and

support of the congregation. In a year rich with worship, music and spiritual growth, missions and outreach, pastoral care and prayerful support for each other, and a wide range of community activities, we pitched in and found substantial time and elbow grease to work on putting the administrative side of the church in better order.

We updated financial systems and operations and their oversight and reporting. The many hours devoted to these tasks and their significant results and accomplishments are documented elsewhere in this report, including the Financial Oversight Committee's report of activity during the past year. The order and strength we brought to our financial matters was a huge step towards achieving our goal of devoting a more substantial portion of our time, thought, energy and focus towards the activities and rewards of being a strong and robust spiritual community. This is, after all, the real reason we are all here.

As part of this financial overhaul we offered a balanced budget for the first time in many people's memory. This was a difficult process but the groundswell of demand and support for putting the constant attention to, and day-to-day drudgery of, budget issues behind us made it necessary. We once again thank those, who though affected adversely by needed changes, worked ever harder to pull us through what has been in most respects a year of progress and accomplishment.

During the year we also began a strong program of personnel and organization management. We revived our Safe Church Policy. We accomplished one of the more complete updating of the By-Laws in church history. And, in some of the best outreach we have ever had, we opened our church grounds to the community this summer and fall during the weekly Farmer's Market. It was exhilarating to note how many people in the community mentioned that they could tell from all the activity on the front lawn that something great must be going on in our church. It took a little extra effort and no small dose of faith in the project to pull this off but it is just one more reminder that by occasionally sticking our necks out we reap many wonderful benefits.

We also found time to address some issues of wide ranging significance to the church and its future. We changed our name and carried on a year-long dialogue about right-sizing our real estate holdings. Neither of these was a simple, easy process but we rose to the occasion and, in our best congregational form, listened to different points of view and debated the merits of pros and cons while making

or working towards decisions that will move the church forward.

Late in the fall, we devoted a lot of time to sprucing up the lower level of the Church. From Brad Ridley's single musing about fixing up the music room before the Fair arrived, came brigades of people to wash, scrape, paint and generally enliven the Chapel and the lower level. Buildings are less important than people in a church but that does not diminish the joy of walking through a freshly painted cleaner room or hallway on your way to a service.

Someone new to the community or the church could witness the flurry of activity around activities like the Crop Walk, One Great Hour of Sharing, the Mitten Tree or the Church Fair and walk away knowing what a special place our church is. When area minister Peter Wells spoke here last fall he recited a list of the things we do. It seemed like it would never end. The spirit of activity and volunteerism in our church is one of its strongest and best attributes.

During all of this, we still found time to get together for parish life events, fund emergency relief efforts for the many people around the world affected by natural disasters, complete the final steps of a hugely successful Capital Campaign and tirelessly promote and support grocery cards (this team worked so long and hard that you could actually get them driven to your front door if necessary).

It is no small measure of our inner strength that we accomplished what we did. And, that during a period of interim ministry, we necessarily stretched, poked and prodded ourselves to grow as individuals and as a congregation in preparation for finding and naming a new settled pastor. It was often tough to be on the vanguard of this effort or to endure change we might not have all agreed with but we are the better for it now and most certainly will be in the future when a new pastor arrives to find that we are a more up-to-date, flexible and capable congregation than we ever dreamed of being.

This report is presented with deep gratitude to the members and friends of the congregation for your devotion to your church and your willingness to want, accept or endure change in the process of making us a stronger faith community.

The Church Cabinet
Steve Swets, Moderator

GET YOUR COPY OF THE ANNUAL



FISCAL REPORT!!!!

So that we may defer the cost of mailing the annual reports, we are encouraging you to pick up a copy at Kirkside. They are on the table in the hallway. Please be sure to sign your name on the list before taking one. If it is not possible for you to come by, please call the church office at 366-2000 or email Bonnie at brossi6@verizon.net.

NEW MEN'S GROUP

"Fishers of Men Ministry" of Westborough Meets every 2nd and 4th Thursday Evening The South Street Diner from 7:00 – 8:00 pm.

An invitation for all men who are seeking a closer walk with Christ, to join in this ecumenical group of men of all ages and stages of life. We are engineers, salesmen, retired, tradesmen. We are single or men with families. We welcome men who are looking for a place to fellowship with others and grow in our walk with God. Please join us for one or more sessions. Questions: Please contact **Doug Uhlman**, 508-962-3939.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

CHURCH SCHOOL UPDATE

Happy New Year! We hope your 2012 is off to a great start! We have exciting opportunities planned for the children in the months ahead. Please read below for more details.

In January

This month the older youth of our church participated in the Work Camp Service to share their experiences with the congregation. Later in the month children focused on scripture from 1 Samuel. They were asked to consider "What are you hearing God call you to do?" and "What does it mean to live in God's Way?".

The third grade class started learning the books of the Bible to recite when they receive their personalized Bibles this spring. If you did not get your bookmark to practice at home, or were not contacted about your 3rd grader receiving a Bible PLEASE let us know ASAP. Thank you to this month's teachers and assistants: Kelly Fitzpatrick, Steve Swets, Cliff Newton, Caroline

Swets, Nila Gray, Marilyn Lyle, Ted Jaworski, Ben Huber, Darvin Kapitz, Amber Bock, Nancy Cavanaugh, Kathy Reynolds and members of our Senior High Youth Group. We truly appreciate your time and energy!

In February

February 5 – Communion/Chapel Sunday

Rev. Elaine Gaetani will meet children in grades K - 3rd in the Chapel to begin our morning. Grades 4th- 8th will attend the Communion Service with their families.

February 12 – Jazz Service – Grades 4th-8th are invited to attend the Church Service with their families. Church School classes will be held for grades K-3rd.

February 19 & February 26 – Church School Classes for all grades K-8th.

*We are pleased to announce that our Student Minister, **Mr. Pedro Silva**, will be leading the youth in grades 4th- 12th in our "Deepening Communion" unit this year.*

Please plan to attend Church School March 4th, 11th, & 18th (possibly the 25th) and join your Church Family for Holy Communion on Sunday April 1st.

We also would like you to know that we are planning for a number of representatives from our Church to attend a workshop entitled "A Different Christian Voice: Thinking Outside the Pew" to explore alternative worship possibilities for our youth. If you would like more information or would like to join us please contact Rev. Elaine Gaetani or Kathy Reynolds. Youth are welcome and ENCOURAGED to join us!!!

Teacher Schedule and Training

Below is the teacher training / mini Adult Education schedule for the next several months. All classes start at 6:30 and last for approximately one hour. Please join us if you are scheduled to teach or would benefit from an abbreviated Adult Education class .

February - 4 weeks (Feb 2 training at 6:30)

March – 4 weeks (Mar 1 training at 6:30)

April – 5 weeks (Mar 29 training at 6:30)

Please contact Kathy Reynolds at kreynolds118@comcast.net if you are interested in teaching or have any questions.

Reminders

Children's Offering: Each week a voluntary offering will be collected during church school. This year all funds will be donated to a local animal shelter.

Acolytes: Children will occasionally be called to serve as Acolytes. In this role children carry a

candle to the altar at the beginning of the service and then return to their seats to join their families.

Congo Kids and Junior High Youth Group

Congo Kids is a Youth Group for grades 4 -6. The Junior High Youth Group is geared toward older children in grades 7 – 8. Both groups meet at least once a month on Sunday evenings.

At the January meeting children met at the church to watch the movie Soul Surfer. They shared thoughtful conversation, enjoyed snacks and made Valentines for residents of the Willows.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 12, after church. Current plans include delivering Valentines to the Willows.

ADULT EDUCATION UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Wednesday evenings 2/29 - 3/21 Lenten Book Study with Rev. Elaine Gaetani "When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times".

**We are also piloting an online discussion group to go along with this series for those who are unable to participate on Wednesday evenings. Online discussion participants may contact Nancy Cavanaugh (nriccav@verizon.net) to order a book. Brenda Lord will serve as the online administrator for this exciting new venture into new technology. Books cost \$20. Scholarships are available for both onlin and in-class participants.

March 31 CE will present a special program with Rev. Cynthia Maybeck of Trinity Church in Northborough titled "From Death to Life Everlasting." We will enjoy fellowship and dessert from 6:30-7:00 followed by Rev. Maybeck's program which combines stories, song and Gospel to tell inspiring stories of hope in the midst of funerals and grief.

CE also offers monthly discussions led by Rev. Elaine Gaetani that are open to all. These discussions center around the month's church school lessons to offer teachers a deeper understanding of the curriculum, but parents and other adults are encouraged to attend to further their understanding and connection with God. The next 3 sessions will meet in the Kerygma room on the following Thursdays: **February 2, March 1 and March 29** at 6:30 PM. Attend 1 or all.

SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP

Senior High Youth Group Needs Your Vote!

The Senior High Youth Group has entered a local contest called "Winter Wish List". We need

everyone's help to vote for us. The grand prize is \$5,000 which would be a significant contribution to our fund-raising efforts towards our July 2012 work camp in Clendenin WV. My request is for everyone to go on-line and vote for our group – Senior High Youth Group – Congregational Church of Westborough MA. Please have your family members vote for us, and consider putting the word out to your address book and any social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Linked-In, etc.) We need this to go viral; worldwide. We will need about 10,000 votes to win. THE LINK: <http://www.thedailygrafton.com/promotion/www/centralmass>. Page down until you see our name and our picture (green T-shirts) from in front of the church from last year's work camp trip (Keansburg NJ).

Many Thanks – Art Sharkey

Board of Christian Education

Nancy Cavanaugh, Chair
Kathy Reynolds, Supt. Church School
Mary Ann Brayer,
Minutes Secretary & Chapel Leader
Beth Dapolite, Communication Secretary
Kristi Allen, Christmas Pageant
Clif Newton, Senior High Youth Group
Amber Bock, Curriculum
Brenda Lord
Darvin Kapitz

MUSIC 's



JAZZ THEMED SERVICE - FEB 12th

Looking for a change of pace? On February 12th, our Sunday worship service will feature some exciting live Jazz music including Sara Purcell and the return of Willie Sordillo. You won't want to miss this special unique service.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH CONCERT - FEB 24th

Music Committee is delighted to invite you to another concert this Winter celebrating African American history. This year we will be inviting several Church Choirs from the community and surrounding area to join us for this special event. It will be held Sunday February 24th, at 4pm. Free will donations will be gratefully accepted to benefit the Music Ministry. Refreshments will be available in the Vestry following the end of the concert.

A SUCCESSFUL COOKIE WALK

The Music Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your financial support of this year's **Cookie Walk!** With your generous participation, we were able to raise \$600.42, which will benefit our Music Ministry during the coming year. Our sincere thanks to the Festival Ringers, the Chancel Choir (including past members and friends), and the kids and moms involved with the youth music programs for the wonderful array of sweets donated to this effort! To everyone, we extend our sincere thanks and deep gratitude for your enthusiastic support of our annual holiday event! The Music Committee.

MISSIONS & SOCIAL CONCERNS

GENEROSITY AT ITS BEST

The Missions Committee wishes to thank everyone who bought gifts for the Westborough Giving Tree as well as gifts for children through the Framingham Department of Children & Families this holiday season. Our Church members bought over 120 gifts for 60 children this year. A special thanks to Marilyn & Jerry Lyle, Charlotte Bramley and Kathy LeBlanc for delivering the gifts that went to Framingham. Helping a child's wishes come true is yet another way the Congregational Church of Westborough can consider itself blessed!

WORDS OF APPRECIATION

The following letters/cards were received in appreciation of the generosity and caring of The Congregational Church of Westborough:

"Due to your kindness and generosity someone in Westboro is enjoying a well rounded array of foods for their weekly selection.

With Sincere Thanks,

Wendy Michel, Treasurer, Westboro Food Pantry

Dear Friends, All:

On behalf of all of us at Abby's House, we want to thank you for your generous contribution of assorted clothing & household goods. Thanks so much for your support!

Annette Rafferty

Dear Rev. Dr. Legerstee,

On behalf of The Bridge of Central MA, I would like to thank you for your generous donation of \$800.00 towards our Holiday Appeal.

Barry Walsh, Executive Director, The Bridge of Central MA.

Dear Members:

We would like to thank you for your generous donation in the amount of \$300 for Cottage Hill Academy. Many thanks and may God bless you all,
Maurice J. Boisvert, President & CEO, You, Inc.

GREEN CORNER

LENTEN CARBON FAST:

We invite you to join us as we commit to fasting from carbon during Lent. Beginning Ash Wednesday and throughout Lent, participants will receive a daily email with the day's suggested carbon-reducing activity. When possible, this will include a quantitative measure of the carbon reduction resulting from the activity. Each daily email will also have a section suggesting a weekly focus for the congregation.

The activities will range from the very simple: unplug electrical devices (such as phone chargers) which you're not using but use electricity even when off; to the moderately challenging: reduce your driving speed, plan trips efficiently, walk, ride a bike, carpool or take public transportation when feasible; to a few which require a longer term commitment: buy local produce and consider getting involved in a community garden.

We don't expect everyone to be able to do everything suggested; but serious consideration of each day's activity can raise people's awareness, inviting them to think more carefully about how their day to day living impacts the environment and make the changes they can. In addition to the activity for the day you will find information about the carbon impact of the activity, along with links to more information related to that activity. While we consider all of the activities a form of spiritual practice, a concrete way of participating in the stewardship of God's creation, some of the activities are overtly spiritual in the more usual sense that people understand the word: meditation, prayer, self-reflection. The intention is to provide do-able actions which can make a difference; not to overwhelm people, make them feel bad about themselves, or cause them to feel that the situation is hopeless. We want people to feel better for doing this as well as challenging themselves to do more.

Congregations that participate are encouraged to gather weekly to share their experiences, support one another, compare notes, share resources and pray.

This invitation is being emailed to pastors all over the country by UCC Conference Ministers and by our counterparts in numerous denominations. In this way we will make this Ecumenical Lenten Carbon Fast a broadly experienced ecumenical spiritual practice. Our hope is that Christians the world over from every denomination might participate in this carbon fast.

By the way, the Ecumenical Lenten Carbon Fast now has a Facebook page. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, March 9, each day's activity will be cumulatively posted on this page. Click here to go to the Facebook page.

God is calling us to be the change we long to see. Let us engage this spiritual discipline, grateful for all God has entrusted to us, and trusting that with God all things are possible.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Women's Fellowship

Potluck Supper & Secret Pal Drawing
Monday, February 6, 2012
6:00 PM - Social Time 6:30 - Dinner
Please come for the Fun and Fellowship.
Bring a Friend!

A - L Bring salads (any kind, fruit, vegetable or molded)

M - Z Bring main dishes (hot meat or vegetable dish)

Program Committee - Desserts

Program: Bob Brown will tell us about the history of the long-forgotten Lyman School.

Mission for February: Valentine Boxes for 'our' College Kids. Bring in bags of individually wrapped cookies, crackers, bars etc. and / or money donations to cover postage and shipping.

Please check the poster in the library for items needed.

Please let us know if you plan to come...we need to set up tables and chairs.



Valentine's Day Packages for 'our' College Students

Again this year, **Women's Fellowship** will send out Valentines Boxes to 'our' college students. We want them to know that the Church cares about them. My records show that we have been doing this since 1996.

All who have a scholar who grew up in our church and is currently attending an institution of higher

learning, please be sure to let me know their current mailing address *. If you put it in writing...it helps reduce mistakes. To have a package returned, will not only add an expense (it can more than double the initial cost), but it will prevent them from getting it by February 14th. *Please* check your information carefully.

* If they live in a residence (an apartment / house rather than on campus) or if they commute, it would be helpful to know. Also, if there are any known allergies, we will be mindful of that and not include such things in their box.

If you have a relative (niece, nephew, grandchild, etc.) in college who is *not* a member of our church family, we'd be glad to send them a package but will need to ask for a donation to cover the postage.

Please send information to me by e-mail if possible (DKMNM@aol.com) - or - send it to my home by regular mail. You can also give me a handwritten copy directly or through the church office.

Donna Morgan
11 Westminster Way
Westborough, MA 01581-3409

I'd appreciate it if you could let me know as soon as possible...we need to plan and shop. Sunday, January 29th, will be the final day to get names and addresses to me. Thanks for your help.

- Donna Morgan

STOP & SHOP and ROCHE BROS. GROCERY CARD SALES

2011 Goal: \$12,000

2011 Profit: \$11,228.50

2012 Goal: \$12,000

2012 YTD Sales: \$531.25

Financial Update: Very strong sales in November and December resulted in a successful year for our Grocery Card program. During 2011, \$252,850.00 worth of gift cards were sold to net us a profit of \$11,228.50 which will go to the operation budget of our Church. That's a lot of gift cards! **Don't stop now!** Many folks participated in year-end sales who do not participate on a regular basis throughout the year. If we can keep these new customers along with the regulars, we should be able to surpass our 2012 goal, all to benefit our Church. So keep eating, keep shopping, and keep using your grocery cards. **On sale:** Grocery cards are available each Sunday after worship, at Kirkside during office hours, or add your name to our delivery list.

Happy New Year! Sue Menzel 366-1268, Sally Petersen 366-5169 or sbpetersen4@gmail.com, Nancy Quimby 898-3463, nquimby11@charter.net.

WORDS OF APPRECIATION

A Note of Appreciation

-Thank you for the lovely poinsettia plant, besides the beauty it adds to the home during this season it has extra special meaning since it has been part of the Christmas decoration in our sanctuary.

-Also, a visit from the carolers brightens the season. It is always a joy to see the children's faces as they sing.

-Thank you for these gifts of the season!

Helena Engberg

The following people expressed their thanks for receiving Christmas flowers from the church:

Margaret Roche, Alfred MacConnell, Harriet Markert, Dottie Melin, Florence Nelson, Clare Werner, Ila Porter, Rev. Dirkje, Betty Simino, Kathy Reynolds, Kay Wentzell, George and Alice Hoogasian, Norma & Jack Thompson, Mary MacDonald, Bonnie Rossi, Lisa Coffey.

CHURCH OFFICE



PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT AS YOUR EMAIL ADDRESSES, PHONE NUMBERS OR OTHER VITAL COMMUNICATION INFORMATION CHANGES, WE NEED TO UPDATE OUR RECORDS IN THE OFFICE. PLEASE EMAIL BONNIE AT brossi6@verizon.net

AROUND THE CHURCH

CHOIR ROOM PROJECT

Our college kids/Work Camp alumni spent a day over their winter break working in the Choir Room. Many thanks to: **Lindsey and Amanda Hutchinson, John Petersen, Adam and Tyler Ridley, Caroline Swets, Max and Jake Sharkey, and John and Jessica Wilson** who sanded, scraped, washed, primed, and

painted the doors, trim, and windows of the Choir Room. While there is still work to be done there, they got us off to a HUGE start. Good luck next semester. You continue to make us proud!

34TH ANNUAL TROOP 100 PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Westborough's Boy Scout Troop 100 will hold its 34th Annual Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, March 4th from 7:30 am to 1 pm. This is Troop 100's only fundraiser for the entire year. Everyone is welcome. Tickets will be available at the door. The event will take place at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 17 Willow Street, Westborough. Tickets are \$5.00 per person, \$4.00 per person for families of four or more, and \$4.00 for senior citizens.



CoolCups.com

Super Saturday: March 3, 2012 Ludlow High School ~ Ludlow, MA

Why should you go to Super Saturday?

- Because you are looking for ways to enhance singing and music in your service of worship, are looking for ways to add a second service or want lay folks to be more comfortable in leading corporate prayer.
- Because you need to lead a capital campaign, are looking for ways to inspire greater generosity in your congregation or want to be able to talk about faith and money through sermons and testimonies.
- Because you need to be energized by crazy optimism, want to hear stories of the glass being half full or are looking for a new model of church that encourages "discipleship," not "membership."
- Because you need creative ideas for leading youth worship or Bible study.
- Because you are trying to wrap your head around being a person of faith in our current political climate or trying to make sense of the struggles of Palestinians, Israelis, or GLBT persons abroad.
- Because you want to go to two of the excellent 33 workshops being offered and you want to be around other UCC folks who are passionate about ministry.

Patrick Evans of Yale Divinity School will lead worship.

Please register for Super Saturday. We guarantee this best deal in town will be time well spent! Register today at www.macucc.org.

SUNDAY GREETERS

Please call **Linda Birch** 870-9911 or sign up after the worship on the greeter calendar.

CHANCEL FLOWERS

If you would like to grace our Chancel with flowers on a Sunday morning, please sign the flower chart in the Vestry. Flowers are given in memory of, in honor of, or for a special occasion. Please call **Chris Mosher** 366-2250 or **Nancy Gage** 366-9266 with questions.

HOSPITALITY

If you would like to be added to this committee contact **Betty Gray** 366-1039. Participation involves cooking and delivering a meal to a family or individual, on occasion. Because we are many, no one is inundated with requests.

AUDIO VISUAL REQUESTS

Please let **Tom & Donna Morgan** 366-0358 know at least one week in advance if you have AV requests of church services or events.

HOSTING COFFEE HOUR

If you would like to host, please sign-up in the Vestry or call **Linda Borglund** 870-5784.

SUNDAY BULLETIN DEADLINE

Submissions for Sunday's bulletins must be received by 10 AM the preceding Wednesday.

THE EVANGEL - DEADLINE

The deadline is Wednesday, Feb. 15

Publication is Wednesday, Feb. 25

Copy received before deadline is appreciated!

CHURCH WEBSITE

If you have church related information you would like posted on the church website, send it in a .pdf file or in a Word document to webmaster@uccwestboro.org. If you are interested in helping work on the website or have questions, call **Doug Wales** at 870-0086 or Lisa at the church office 366-2000.

ASSABET VALLEY PASTORAL COUNSELING CENTER

The AVPCC in Westborough continues to offer new groups such as divorce support, caregivers support, midlife transitions and grief and loss support. If you are interested in a daytime or evening divorce support group or a grief and loss group, both running 10 weeks, or a monthly women's group to run all year, please call Mary Taber at 508-366-4000, ext. 3, at the center.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Rev Dr Dirkje Legerstee, Interim
Pastor

dlegerstee@comcast.net

The Rev Elaine Gaetani, Associate
Pastor

revelaineg@aol.com

Pedro Silva, Student Minister
psilva@ants.edu

Curtis Richardson, Director of Music
ccurtisrichardson@comcast.net

Office Administrators

Lisa Coffey

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General Church email –

WestboroUCC@Verizon.net

Church web site

www.UCCwestboro.org

U.C.C. web sites

<http://www.macucc.org> (Mass
Conference)

<http://www.ucc.org> (National)



