

Federated Church of Ashland
“The Chimes”
March 2010

From The Deacon’s Bench

WOW!!! Can you just feel the energy generated at our services in the past month? It has been an exhilarating time for our congregation and I think Jason is to be commended for his dedication to making things not only more spiritual but exciting and fun as well! I’ve heard more than one person say that they couldn’t wait to get to church on Sunday just to see what would happen next!

A few weeks ago I told you about a group of 12 people who were charged by the Council to find a way to bring new life to our church in an effort to grow our membership and to enliven and enrich our services with spirituality. I think that based on the last month we are headed in the right direction.

We continue to meet and have seen some great ideas come to light on Sunday mornings. The Music Committee has provided some new and uplifting music and the Christian Education Committee is working on a plan to involve the children more in our services. You may have already seen some of the kids playing the prelude or the offertory. They will also be involved in Hospitality and Missions and plans are being made for a “Kids Night Out” in the Coffeehouse. Outreach has played an important role in our meetings and we have contacted some people who used to come to our church but stopped. Some very good feedback has come to light and one thing was the lack of a permanent nursery person. We have begun a search for someone who might take this on and are very hopeful that we can bring that person on board in a very short time. Publicity for the church is also a subject on our agenda and hopefully you will see more about us in the near future. All in all, we are working hard to do the things that will make our church the place to be on Sunday mornings.

As we enter the Lenten Season we look forward to our Wednesday evening services. The Ash Wednesday service was a traditional service and was held in the Sanctuary. The rest of the services will be held in the Coffeehouse. All services will start at 7 PM and last about one half hour. Please make every attempt to join us in this journey toward Easter.

Signing off with great hope for the future of our church,

Nick Paternostro and Pam Dunham

WEATHER EMERGENCY

If we need to cancel worship services due to inclement weather, please tune into Channel 7 or Channel 56. Also, if you have Internet access log onto the churches website and it will have the latest up-to-date information.

Lenten Services

Our Lenten Services continue on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 in the Coffeehouse. Please join us.

Palm Sunday

March 28th

Our Palm Sunday service will begin at **8:45 AM** in the parking lot across from the Ashland Library (Weather permitting). Live Scillion donkeys will lead us as we proceed waving palms and singing praises into the Sanctuary.

Holy Week

Maundy Thursday, April 1st

Our service will be held at 7 PM in the Sanctuary.

Good Friday, April 2nd

4 - 7 PM Spiritual Labyrinth

We will hold a Dark Friday Service at 7 PM in the Sanctuary.

Easter

April 4th

Please join us for this special service at 9:30 AM.

Altar Flowers

Altar flowers may be donated at anytime. We have a **flower sign-up sheet** across from the Parlor. You may sign up to place flowers on the altar for a designated Sunday. The cost is **\$20** for two bouquets. Your check should be made out to the **Federated Church of Ashland**. **Please be sure to write Hospitality Flower Fund on the memo line!** Flowers are usually given to sick and shut-ins, however, you may choose to take them home with you, following the service **or** you may designate to whom they should be given. ***Please call Linda in the Church Office at 508-881-1355 and let her know your intentions, so that she can place your order for flowers and your flower information will be listed in the church bulletin on Sunday morning.***

Note: Deadline is Wednesday @ 9 AM!

Coffee & Fellowship

Goodies are always needed for our Sunday morning Coffee & Fellowship. If you would like to donate goodies, please sign up on the sheet, across from the Parlor. **Thank you!**

Brown Bag Sunday

*The third Sunday of each month we celebrate **Brown Bag Sunday**.* Please bring a non-perishable food item or personal care item and place them in the designated box in the Narthex. These donations will be taken to the *Ashland Food Pantry*, where they will be distributed to families in need. In addition to your “**Brown Bag**” donations, the Missions Committee also donates **\$100** worth of groceries on a monthly basis, to the *Ashland Food Pantry*. *These groceries are purchased with mission dollars pledged to local missions each month.*

Thank you for your generous donations!

Shelter Meals

On the fourth Wednesday of every month, a meal is prepared and served to the men at the *Crossroads Shelter* in Framingham.

Please note: This is an **Adult** Friendly Shelter.

On the third Thursday of every month, a meal is prepared and served to the *Women’s Shelter* in Ashland.

Please note: This is a **Kid** Friendly Shelter.

If you are able to provide a side dish, bread or dessert, or if you would like to come help serve, please call Vickie Mancini at 881-3263 or Mark & Dee Heaton at 881-2968. *Thank you!*

Hospitality Committee

We’re just coming off the heels of our first community supper. I cannot thank you all enough for supporting the Hospitality Committee and joining us for fellowship and a wonderful meal. We do this not only to help our Church but also to bring us all together. As a reminder our February supper is **February 28th** for beef stew and our Council members will help serve. Our March Supper this year is going to be Chili!!!! I know, I know, we usually do spaghetti but we thought we would change some things up. The CE kid’s usually help with serving this supper...Always an energetic bunch!!!! We hope to see you all there.

Please keep in mind our sign up for Easter Flowers. They make our Sanctuary look beautiful and our homebound friends very much enjoy receiving them. Please see flower form on last page.

Thank you and God bless,

Nick Paternostro

Theta Phi Delta's

The next meeting will be Monday, March 1st at 7:00 PM in the Parlor.

Thrift Shop

Open Tuesdays from 10 AM - 4 PM

March 23rd - 1/2 Price Day

March 30th - Bag Day

The Thrift Shop will be **CLOSED** April 6th and 13th.

Community Supper

Sunday, March 21st

Supper will be served from 5-7 PM upstairs in Fellowship Hall

A \$5 per person donation is appreciated.

Reservations would be appreciated... Please call the office at 508-881-1355

Coffeehouse Event

Saturday, March 20th

7:30 PM

Please mark your calendars **NOW** and plan to join us! *Howie Newman* will be performing. He does funny songs, short comedy bits and he also gets the audience to participate, which makes for a fun night. Tickets are available at the door. \$10 Adults, \$7 Students and Seniors. Refreshments will be available.

One Great Hour of Sharing *March 14th*

Dear Friends,

Through this year's One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering, Christian communities across the United States and Canada will again unite to generate funds for healing work across the globe.

As you might expect, much of this work is done in response to catastrophic events: earthquakes, floods, droughts, and wars. For people caught in emergencies like these, relief is offered in the form of food, water, shelter, clothing, and medicine. Gifts to OGHS provide a base of support so the church can respond immediately.

More than half of our offerings to OGHS sustain long-term rehabilitation and development projects in more than 80 countries, where people struggle to create better lives for themselves.

The third basic purpose of this offering is to assist refugees. War and famine are just two examples of circumstances that cause people to leave their countries seeking food, shelter, and safety.

What does all of this have to do, immediately and intimately, with you?

If it's been a while since you reflected on the nature of your individual gifts and the difference those gifts might make in the world, then consider the exhortation of 1 Peter 4:10b: **"Serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received."** What are your gifts? How does using them bring you joy? How can using them bring joy to others? The intersection of these questions is the place where we come to know, personally, God's purpose for our lives.

On Sunday, March 14th, we will dedicate our offerings for OGHS. In preparation, we will explore the ways in which we have been gifted and the opportunities we have to serve others. Join us!

Our gifts are plentiful and diverse, freely bestowed by an extravagantly loving God. We look forward to a fresh consideration of those gifts in the coming days, and to our generous participation in One Great Hour of Sharing.

The Missions Committee

Daylight Savings Time *Begins on Sunday, March 14th*

**Don't Forget...Turn Your Clocks AHEAD
Before you go to bed Saturday night, March 13th**

Annual Church Fair

Thanks, *Margot*, for coming forward and volunteering to chair our Annual Church Fair. You realize, along with the rest of our church family, that our Fair is a vital part of our Church outreach. Folks look forward to our annual event. I'm sure that our volunteers who have been a vital part of our Fair will continue to give you the support that they have given the Chair, whoever it may have been, for many years. Oh yes, and I'm sure that our Church Council appreciates you volunteering to take on this challenge also.

Thanks Again, Margot, and remember I'm still here and willing to do whatever is necessary for our Fair.

Another HUGE Thanks to everyone who supported me these past few years.

Together we made the Autumn Leaves Fair a huge success!

God Bless you all!

Irene

Financial Summary for FY 2009/2010 through Feb. 17, 2010

As of the February 17th income exceeded expenses by \$9,643 year-to-date. This positive position is due to the application of 2006 and 2009 fair money plus the receipt of designated memorials and income from the Thanksgiving and Christmas offerings and the Council Letter, which has brought in \$3,970 so far. Our actual receipt of contributions from pledges versus anticipated pledges is about even.

However, going forward our only major source of income is from pledge contributions and special offerings. As a result we will end with a shortfall of approximately \$14,000. **Our financial resources to cover this amount of shortfall is very limited. Unless increased income from contributions and other sources is achieved, cuts in expenses will have to be made.** Employee compensation and utilities make up the major portion of our expenses.

A Note From Our Pastor

Holy Scripture is a profound resource for growing deeper in our understanding of what it means to live in the character of God. For example, in the twelfth chapter of Luke Jesus tells a story. The story is in response to someone from the crowd asking Jesus to settle a sibling rivalry over an inheritance. “Teacher, order my brother to give me a fair share of the family inheritance” (Luke 12:13). Jesus’ response to the person is the story of a rich man who owns a farm. The farmer produces a terrific crop and decides his barn isn’t big enough. He decides to tear down the existing barn and build bigger barns in its place. Then, being impressed with his self, says he can retire and take it easy. Then God speaks up and says that tonight the farmer will die and asks the farmer who will get his beautiful barns? This, Jesus tells the man in the crowd, is what happens when you fill your barns with self rather than God.

This passage of scripture causes us to pause and consider who or what we live for. In other passages of scripture Jesus challenges us to love God, serve others, and not store up treasure on earth where moths and rust destroy. Pastoral ministry has placed me in the lives of people at pivotal times. Death and illness in families are certainly such times and we all become more introspective and self-aware at such critical times. When any of us face our mortality we are faced with an assessment; an assessment of where our heart and soul have been and what comes of the investments reflected in our lives. In this story Jesus reaffirms that some things pass away. We have certainly found this to be true. However, some things do not, and our spiritual stewardship provides us with an opportunity to testify to this. It is a significant work our congregation is challenged with – **the work of filling our barns with God rather than self.** The work of sharing life, eternal and abundant life with our community, begins when we accept the call to discipleship Jesus points us toward so passionately. When we see our life joined with others as a spiritual body of Christ, empowered to change the world, then we will embrace a vision that moves beyond our personal space. I believe the Federated Church of Ashland is ready to move ahead. Our congregation is ready for the renewed call of God and ready to receive it in abundance – not abundance that will fill a barn, but abundance that will fill the heart of God and bless the world. Leadership in the congregation has come together on Monday nights to facilitate an increased awareness of what we can do to encourage one another in our faith walk and church service. The Federated Church is made up of some of the most impressive people I have met in my thirty-eight short years – people filled with the capacity to minister and change the world for the better. The work of our church is now to channel our talent and giftedness in a way that causes us to fill the world with the richness of God, and therefore point to the ultimate, heavenly reward.

Jason

“Easter Flowers”

Flower orders are due on Sunday, March 28th!

YOUR NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

Please Complete Information Below:

Please indicate type of plant AND number of plants ordered _____ Lily _____ Tulip

1. Flowers may be given “*In Memory of*”:

Please print name(s)

OR

Flowers may be given “*In Honor of*”:

Please print name(s)

2. Do you wish to have your plant(s) delivered to a sick or shut-in? Yes _____ No _____

3. How do you wish to have your name(s) appear in the bulletin under the heading “**Given by**”?

You will be billed directly by Talvy Florist. The price of each plant is \$15.

If you wish to take your plant(s) home with you, please do so following our Easter worship service.

Please drop this form in the collection plate or leave it in the Church Office.

Thank you!