



The Messenger

February
2012

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ, Lee, Massachusetts

Lenten Study

You are invited to a six week Lenten study based on the book, *Real Faith for Real Life* by Michael W. Foss. Its subtitle is: Living the Six Marks of Discipleship. It is an invitation to move beyond 'membership' into 'discipleship'. Foss is the pastor of a Lutheran church in Minnesota. He has had great success in equipping and motivating his church members as disciples who follow in the Way of Jesus. The sessions cover topics such as: Daily Prayer, Weekly Worship, Daily Bible Reading, Serving, Nurturing, and Giving. I am proposing two days and times: Thursdays at 10 am and Sundays at Noon (with a bag lunch or a shared soup). Participants may buy the book (new for \$14 or used from \$8 and up). You can attend without reading the book as we will summarize the chapters. If you would like me to order the book for you, please let me know. An RSVP would be greatly appreciated so I can plan accordingly. Please contact me if you have questions. Rev. Bill Neil

A Multitude of Opportunities

Thursday, February 9 the Xicohtencatl Restaurant at 50 Stockbridge Rd. in Great Barrington is donating 50 percent of its proceeds to **benefit the Berkshire Immigrant Center**. There will be seatings at 5:30 and 7:30 pm. Cost is \$25 for a two course dinner, tax and tip not included. A Silent Auction will also be held. Reservations are recommended (413-528-2002). You may also make a donation directly to the Berkshire Immigrant Center 88 South St. Pittsfield, MA 01201.

February 10 to 11 offers an **Anti-Racism training** at Edwards House at the MA Conference Center in Framingham. The two-day workshop costs \$50 which includes all meals. Overnight lodging may be available for an extra charge. This event is designed for white people who want to deepen their commitment and skills in challenging racism and white privilege, and to help move their congregations forward on

"It is the aim of this church to present a religion as considerate of persons as the teachings of Jesus; as devoted to justice as the Old Testament prophets; as responsive to Truth as science; as beautiful as art; as intimate as the home and as indispensable as the air we breathe." ~ Statement by the Founders



Reverend Bill Neil, Pastor; Elaine Miller, Director of Christian Education; Jim Morrison, Music Director; Michelle Bouché, Administrative Assistant; Glenn Withers, Sexton

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these issues. Details are available from MACUCC or by contacting the church office.

On February 17 to 18, MACUCC is offering an overnight **Christian Spiritual Formation Retreat** also at Edwards House in Framingham. Come to worship, to learn new spiritual practices, to build community, to take Sabbath, and to play. The event begins at 7 pm on Friday and ends at 4:30 pm on Saturday. The cost is \$65 or \$90 which includes overnight housing. Cindy Bolton at MACUCC is the registrar.

Awakenings is a 4 day event at the United Congregational Church of Holyoke. It features Marcus Borg as the keynote speaker. There are a variety of worship experiences and workshops. Some of the meals are included in the registration fee. The dates are April 26 to 29. The cost before March 26 is \$260. Rev. Neil is planning to attend on the Friday and Saturday as part of his continuing education. Ride sharing is an option to save on housing costs.

Looking ahead to June 2, the Trinitarian Congregational Church of Concord is planning a **Day of Restorative Justice** with Dr. Howard Zehr. There will be panels, workshops, a film and a circle role play.

Lee Cabin Fever Festival

From February 17 to 24, several sponsors are organizing a week of indoor and outdoor activities to enliven the school vacation week. There will be a Swimsuit Race down Main St., an Ice Sculpting Competition, Fashion Show, Story Hour, Art Classes,

Karaoke Night, and more. Details will be announced as they become available.



Our church is one of the Snow Angels who is helping to plan and sponsor the festival. It is another wonderful opportunity to enjoy the larger community and make our presence known.

Pastor's Piece

At our recent Confirmation Retreat, the leaders shared six core themes of the United Church of Christ. I think they provide an excellent summary of the ministry of Jesus. Here they are for your prayerful consideration. 1) We listen for the **Still-speaking God**. God is still speaking and we are still listening. This openness to the ongoing revelation of God as a living Word keeps us on the growing edge of the Jesus Movement! 2) We thank God by working for a **just and loving world**. All of our efforts to make the world more loving and just flow from our response to God's wonderful love, mercy, and grace. 3) We are a **people of covenant**, a united and uniting church. A shared covenant is essential to the congregational tradition. From the Mayflower Compact to the 2011 General Synod, we are a church that is united by our common commitments. We also value the very idea of unity. The words of Jesus from John's gospel still speak to us today: That They All May Be One. 4) We are **one at baptism and at the communion table**. We share the two sacraments of the Protestant tradition. All are welcome to the waters of baptism. All are invited to share in the communion of bread and wine. 5) **We belong to Christ**. We are a church which

declares that Jesus Christ is the head. As the body of Christ, we belong to Christ. In his life, Jesus invited people to experience a direct connection with God as Spirit and Truth. As those who belong to Christ, we are called into a union with God that is both spiritual and practical. We are to seek and to do God's Will as God gives us the grace to do so. 6) We are a people of **God's extravagant welcome**. We desire to welcome people to our services of worship and the activities of our church. This happens most fully when we invite people into friendship and relationship. Getting to know new people, offering our time and attention, participating in community events, mentoring someone who is new to our community, extending ourselves for the spiritual growth of others – these are ways that extravagant welcome can be lived out and made real. The ministry of Jesus is the Way of Jesus for all who seek to follow as his disciples. I want to be one. I hope you do too!

Rev. Bill Neil

Sale of T rees for 2011

Between the Boy Scouts and some men of the church 145 trees were cut and delivered to the court yard. \$144 will be given to a charity to e decided by the scouts. Approximately \$640 was given to the Church Youth Group and approximately \$640 was given to the Scouts.

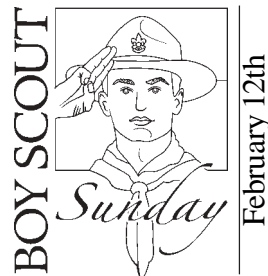
The Scouts and their leaders plus the men from this church can be proud to help sponsor the activities of the youth of these organizations.

Facilities Management

Facilities Management has ordered some new and much lighter tables for the community room. The current tables are very difficult to handle and are hard to store safely. We are also working on providing more storage. Our hope is that organizations using the church spaces have appropriate storage space that they can control and that there will be less clutter in the community room. Additional storage for items that can be put away, but need to be kept high and dry and used occasionally, will be provided in the attic over the Christian Ed rooms. Please help us by letting us know what sort of storage you need. How much for use every time you have a meeting and how much for longer term storage. Please let Michelle know your needs.



Historic Preservation Project: We are currently meeting to organize a fund drive for painting the church. We are also going to form a separate organization for the preservation of the church building. This will be an entity whose sole mission is to see to the upkeep of the building. As a separate entity, it will be easier to get grant funding to support the work of maintaining this impor-



From the Moderator: February 2012

I would like to propose two “new’ operating perspectives.... Both/And and NOW. It is so common in our culture to take the world view of either/or, good/bad, up/down, a dualistic approach that seems to help us feel in control of our life. It fosters judgment and “orderly” decisions. But does it nurture possibility?

Both/and has a very different feel. It is a matrix of opportunity, multiple choices, moving on many fronts and one that does not foster judgments. Judgment paralyzes. It brings past and future into focus and diminishes NOW. The both/and position keeps us planted right here in the moment alive with energy, possibility and life force, as well as the unexpected.

In preparing for annual meeting the council struggled with the urgency that is before us. The need for growth to stem the tide of reliance on invested funds. We could have been stuck in the either/or past and future view, which experience shows has only worried us, paralyzed us and fostered debate. Wisely, the focus was the middle way, reporting the truth of the matter, reflected in the treasurer’s diligent work AND the report of new initiatives that reflect the growth and learning of our last several years – The new Vitality Team, the Historic Preservation Partnership, the new Artist in Residence. Both/and as the NOW reality.

Each of these initiatives will offer us the chance for spiritual growth which is also a matrix of both/and not either/or. It is Spirit that will enliven our church, our people, our

community. Spirit is most alive in the NOW. The effects of Spirit at work can be seen retrospectively, but the manifestation of Spirit happens in the moment and its inspiration propels us forward to the next.

I am not proposing that we ignore the details, the past and the future, but I am proposing we join in the Spirit of NOW and act as if that is all we have. Here is where urgency lives fully. Urgency is alive, pulsing, life force. It is the place the Spirit can create among us. It may be urgent that we stem the tide of reliance on invested funds. But that happens in this breath, this moment of manifesting the Spirit among us through the passionate action, participation and relationship. Now.

Please claim these qualities to give meaning to each of our lives and thus the life of this church. Passion, Action, Relationship. This year our new initiatives will be driven by these three characteristics. The more you practice them, the more in the moment (now) we will find ourselves. This is the matrix of growth. This is where the Spirit of God is manifest through us. Commitment to this focus, paradoxically, ensures the success of the past and future.

The reality is that our commitment to growth, renewal, turnaround, requires a change in the how we “do church.” It requires passion, action, relationship in a very new vital way from each person. It requires we live in the NOW as if it is all we have. Because how we do NOW will paint the picture of the past and the future. Abandon hope for our future, step into the

action packed, vital, passionate, relationship of this very moment. It is all we have. Spirit is Breath. And we only take one breath at a time. The time is now. With NOW and both/and, we will be breathing the Spirit. This practice of Spirit is what will transform ourselves and the world. Why are you here? Are you here for any other reason?

Let's just start here on Park Place and see what we can do together.

Looking forward to a new year together.

Respectfully,

Martha Congdon, Moderator

Missions

Many have asked who Deva is. Deva's given name is Devakka Hanumantha Lamani. She is a beautiful eight year old sponsored by

this church under the Child Fund International in India. She is provided with education, health and wellness care and monitoring, and socialization. Her family consists of 2

parents and 2 siblings. When we send her a birthday or Christmas gift she often spends some of her money on her family. She is achieving good grades in the second grade and is growing accordingly. You can find her information, drawings and letters on the Mission section of the bulletin board in the Community Room. She loves to hear from her sponsor family.



Thank you - for the staff gift this past Christmas.
Your sexton, Glenn Withers

Community Dinners, Part 1

Community Dinners started in the winter of 1998 from a conversation between the then "new" pastor, Bert Marshall, and a church member, Karen Rizzardini. From the beginning this was to be a community dinner, not a soup kitchen. All would be welcome. No questions asked.

They named the project *Loaves and Fishes*. There were 12 teams preparing and serving a meal each Wednesday evening, so each team only worked one night in 3 months. In addition to 6 teams from the church, Karen remembers teams from St. George's Episcopal Church, Good Shepherd Church, Country Curtains, The Cactus Café, and The Sons of Italy. St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church and Tri-Town Rotary came on board later. Individuals, organizations and businesses donated money toward the project, among them Schweitzer Mauduit Mill, Ben's Shop, Kelly's Funeral Home, and Lee Kiwanis. Suchelle Bakery from Lenox donated bread and pastries. Some of the money raised bought additional tables, table coverings, and pans and utensils for the kitchen.

More about the project next month. In the meantime if you would like to explore the possibility of heading a new team, call Judy Morehouse, 243-2981 or Marilyn Rossier 243-4423.



First Congregational Church of Lee Prayer Ministry

Bible verse of the month: “Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” James 5:16,17

The **Prayer Ministry** meets the **2nd & 4th Thursday of each month at 1:00 p.m.** in the *Perkins Chapel* to pray for each person whose name appears below. **Everyone is invited to participate in this Prayer Ministry.** If you have names for the prayer list, please complete form on the next page and place in offering plate or submit to the church office. Names will be kept on the Prayer List for two months unless otherwise advised. rev. 01.26.12

WE PRAY FOR ~ Our Friends and Members:

Norma Berry (member of church)
Bob Bark (grew up in Lee area, member of a Long Island UCC church, asked for prayers for himself)
Dolores Birch (member of church)
Robert Birch (member of church)
Joseph Brazee (father of Kellie Monteleone)
Violet Brennan (friend of Barbara Mahony)
Marion Carrington (member of church)
Ray Cimonetti (friend of Sandy Cozzaglio)
Shannon Cranson (friend of church)
Barbara De Stefano (friend of Sandra Cozzaglio)
Secondo D'Elia (member of church)
Jacqueline Dolson, (friend of Barbara Mahony)
The Dugan family (friends of Martha Congdon)
Doug Guinan (friend of James and Sarah DelSignor)
Jeffrey Harford (son of Lynn Lanoue)
Barbara and Al Houldsworth (friends of church)
Linda Johnson (friend of Judy Morehouse)
Grace Ketchen (member of church)
Irene Lichtenstein (friend of Barbara Mahony)
Amy Loungway (member of church)
Ruth Lowry (member of church)
Harold MacDonald (member of church)
Elizabeth Mack and family (friends of Sandra Cozzaglio)
Joan Marino (friend of Barbara Mahony)
Dalton Marks (brother-in-law of Midge Trivers)
Larry Massey (friend of church)
Blanche Matarazzo (mother of Robert Matarazzo)
Geri McEvoy (friend of DeeDee Fraser)
Ruth Neil (mother of Bill Neil)
David Ohman (son of Conrad and Margaret Ohman)
Hayleigh Porrini (friend of Susan and Lindsay Clayson and Sandy Cozzaglio)

Lori Richmond and family (friend of Brian and Bonnie Tillotson)
Jordan Rosen (friend of Barbara Mahony)
Jay Rossier (son of Marilyn and Stan Rossier)
Jean Smith (aunt of Robert Matarazzo)
David Stone (member of church)
Barbara Stuhlman (friend of DeeDee Fraser)
Brian Tillotson (friend of church)
Claire Tisdale (mother of Sheila Maroni)
Meta Ukena (friend of Marilyn and Stan Rossier)
Rick Wade (son of Lois Wade and brother of Pam Naventi and Cheryl Walker)
Karl Wallace (cousin of Maddy Tremblay)
Henry Zukowski (husband of Joan Zukowski)
Larry and Shannon (friends of the church)

Sympathy

Extended to the family of Elaine Andersen
Extended to the family of Carol Anselmini
Extended to the family of Olivia Demos
Extended to the family of Janice Schaffer Cross

Our Shut-Ins at Care Facilities: Doris Clark (Providence Care Center), Jarolyn Etheredge (assisted living in New Hampshire), Ida Hitchcock (Centerville on Cape Cod), George Sampson (Kimball Nursing Home), Marge Szewczak (Fairview Commons), Lois Wade (Kimball Nursing Home)

Our Church: My prayer and yearning for this church is _____ (please fill in the blank). Bill Neil and his family, our Staff, our congregation, Committees, Council, children around the world supported by our church.

Our Local Community: For those who are in need of employment, food, shelter, financial assistance, friendship.

Our Country: For wisdom for President Obama, his cabinet, other elected and appointed leaders in handling the many problems we are facing, the economy and financial difficulties, global warming, energy, health, hate-filled extremists: also state and local leaders facing many of the same problems and specifically hold close the members of Congress that they may be guided to pass legislation for the common good.

Our Military:

Our World: For people impacted by natural and man-made disasters around the world, the victims of civil unrest in northern Africa and the Middle East, victims of famine in eastern Africa, people displaced by ethnic violence, all those whose lives are affected by war.

Please pray for _____

Requested by _____ Telephone _____

Reason for request (will not be printed on Prayer concerns) _____

Calendar - F e b r u a r y 2012

Church Ministry Schedule for Worship

Mo.	Altar Flowers	Coffee Hour	Diaconate	Hospitality	Usher
2	P. Morehouse	Music/Choir	S. Rossier/T. Martin		J. Arnold
3	J. Morehouse	Stewardship			J. Arnold

Monthly on the

1 st Sun	10:30a	Communion Sunday
	11:45a	Hospitality Mtg
1 st Mon	6:30p	Scout District Committee Mtg
2 nd Sun	9:00a	Bible Study
1 st & 3 rd Tues	12:00p	Prayer Shawl Ministry
3 rd Wed	7:00 p	Council Mtg
1 st Thurs	1:30p	Pastoral Relations
2 nd Thurs	7:00p	Spiritual Community small group
2 nd & 4 th Thurs	1:00p	Prayer Ministry
Last Thurs	5:30p	Clergy Community Practice

Weekly ongoing activities

Sun	10:30 a	Worship Service & Sunday School, nursery available
Mon	5:00 p	Weight Watchers
	6:30 p	Boy Scouts
Tue	9:00 a	WIC
	5:45 p	Zumba fitness
	7:00 p	Choir Rehearsal
Wed	8:00 a	AA Happy, Joyous and Free
	5:30 p	Free Community Dinner - doors open at 5pm
	5:30 p	The Shape Club
Thu	10:00 a	Parkinson's Singing Group
	7:30 p	AA Lee Park Place group
Sat	8:00 a	AA Sober on Saturday group
	10:00 a	Weight Watchers

Occasional activities

Fri	2/03	10:00 a	Facilities Mgt Mtg
Sun	2/05		Confirmation Class
Sun	2/19		Confirmation Class
Thurs	2/23	9:00 a	Messenger deadline
Sun	2/26	11:30 a	Special Congregational Mtg

Mark your calendars:

Confirmation: May 13
 ASP Youth Mission Trip: July 7-14
 Craft Fair & Festival in the Park: July 28
 Holiday Fair: December 1

Red Cross Blood Drives

1-6 p.m. on: Mar. 20,
 Sept. 25, Nov. 27

Our calendar of events &
 activities is available on our
 website: www.ucc-lee.org

From the Music Director,

Well it seems that Christmas is but a fond memory and people are now looking forward to the Season of Lent with the promise of Spring to follow shortly after. But I still think we have room for one more Christmas story this year. As most of you know, one of my “retirement” jobs is driving Special Education children to and from school at Muddy Brook Elementary. Understanding that my wife and I never had any children, this is a completely new arena for me. And I admit, one that I enjoy thoroughly.

This particular year, I decided to “bend” the rules slightly and play some music on the van during the last week before Christmas vacation. But I was not sure what music they would like. So I borrowed a CD from Judy with a bunch of children’s Christmas songs including “I’m gettin nuttin for Christmas,” the “Barking Jingle Bells Dogs,” and “Alvin and the Chipmunks.” The young SPED children that I drive are between the ages of 3 and 7. Perfect ages to enjoy Christmas! So unannounced one afternoon, I slipped the CD into the player and the first song is the Chipmunks singing their classic, “Christmas Don’t Be Late.” You can’t even imagine the excitement from these 4 kids. Next came the barking dogs, then a host of other kid’s classics, and eventually went full circle back to the Chipmunks.

My first thought was what a GREAT idea I had to play this CD. They loved the music. But it was not long before they decided that the Chipmunk’s song was their favorite, and

there was no need to play any other songs. Not the barking dogs, not “All I want for Christmas is my Two Front Teeth,” nothing. Just the Chipmunks. I can tell you that the song is only 1 minute and 47 seconds long. It will play 3 times in its entirety from Muddy Brook Elementary to Main Street Stockbridge, and it will play a full 18 times by the time I get them all home. Maybe this wasn’t such a great idea? But here is the best part of this story. As I mentioned I have 4 kids on that run. The youngest who just turned 4, decided he would be Dave Seville. The oldest who is 5 ½, decided he would be Alvin, while the other two agreed on being Simon and Theodore. So every time, yes every time the song played, they would all play their roles and it was so funny. They never tired of it. And these special kids did this without any coaching. They came up with this all by themselves, and they were wonderful. No fighting, no arguments, just 4 little kids having fun with a song. I can tell you that I was their age the first time I heard Dave Seville and the Chipmunks. He recorded that in 1958, and even though he died in 1972, his song and his beloved chipmunks live on, and are more popular today than ever before. So my Christmas story this year was told to me by 4 SPED kids and 3 singing Chipmunks. It is about love, and sharing and kindness to each other. It is about 50 years of bringing smiles to kid’s faces and laughter to their hearts. It is about watching them each take a part and respecting each other. At the end of the week, I knew that Jesus was also on our bus and He was proud of these kids. And although there were groans when I

announced at last stop before vacation that this would be the LAST time we played this song until next year, secretly, both Jesus and I were happy.

Happy Valentines Day!

Jim Morrison



Posting the following notice in anticipation of the sale of the Orchard Street property.

Special Congregational Meeting

Sunday February 26 - after worship to authorize the sale of the Orchard Street property.

2012 E cumenical Lenten Carbon Fast

This Lent enter into a **spiritual discipline of fasting from carbon.**

Last year, over 6,000 people in every state and 14 countries participated in a daily invitation to fast from carbon as their Lenten discipline. Initiated by the UCC in 2011, endorsed by Episcopalians in 2012 and promoted in countless places the world over, here's our hope:

FOR ALL WHO MAY PARTICIPATE:

For hundreds of years, Ash Wednesday (February 22, 2012) marks the beginning of a time when Christians engage in spiritual disciplines involving repentance, fasting, prayer, study and works of love. Living as we are at a time when our actions - along with the actions of only a few generations - have threatened creation as we know it by the excessive burning of fossil fuel, it is fitting to engage in a spiritual discipline of fasting from carbon. To participate:

<http://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/d.jsp?llr=lawaneab&p=oi&m=1104263796747>

Here's how it works:

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.

Yes... we are on Facebook! Beginning on Ash Wednesday, each day's activity will be cumulatively posted on this page: <http://www.facebook.com/carbonfast?sk=wall>

Let's make protecting God's creation by reducing our carbon footprint as fundamental a spiritual discipline as prayer.

~ *An initiative of the New England Regional Environmental Ministries, United Church of Christ*

Thursday, February 23

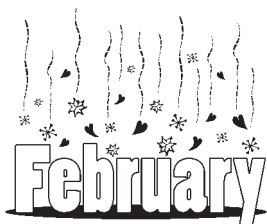
DEADLINE 9 a.m.
for the MARCH issue
of *The Messenger*

World Day of Prayer Service March 3, 2012

Church Women United of Berkshire County will offer a World Day of Prayer program on Saturday, March 3rd at our church.

Registration is at 1:30 p.m. The program begins at 2:00 p.m., with refreshments following.

Everyone is welcome to attend this mean-



Birthdays:

9 Jordan Robinson **10** Marissa Maroni
11 Stephen A. Cozzaglio, Michael Maroni,
Mary Zimmerman **16** Don Hunter **18** Catherine
Fennelly **19** Dick Spalinger, Joan Zukowski
27 Amy Loungway **28** Stephen Alexander
Cozzaglio

Anniversaries: **12** John & Gloria Arnold

Worship Attendance

Jan 1	42	
Jan 8	51	
Jan 15	80	incl 19 in school/nursery
Jan 22	71	incl 10 in school/nursery
Jan 29		

Revised Common Lectionary - Year B

February

5 5th Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 40:21-31
Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
1 Corinthians 9:16-23
Mark 1:29-39

12 6th Sunday after Epiphany

2 Kings 5:1-14
Psalm 30
1 Corinthians 9:24-27
Mark 1:40-45

19 Last Sunday after Epiphany / Transfiguration

2 Kings 2:1-12
Psalm 50:1-6
2 Corinthians 4:3-6
Mark 9:2-9

22 Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12
Psalm 51:1-17
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:16, 16-21

26 1st Sunday in Lent

Genesis 9:8-17
Psalm 25:1-10
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:9-15



Service in the Chapel
February 22, 7:00 pm

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
25 Park Place, PO Box 395
Lee, MA 01238-0395

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.
Church School & Nursery Care Available
Communion offered first Sunday of each month

Ash Wednesday Service
February 22nd 7p.m. in the Chapel

Visit us online: www.ucc-lee.org

