

First Community Church

Newsletter

January – February 2010



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 message, Christmas has come and gone. We have entered into a new year and also a new decade!

Perhaps because we spent much more time with family, this Christmas seemed richer and busier than any in recent memory. In addition to having Kristen and Darlene's cousin Peggie with us, Corey, Robin and Nathan drove in from Michigan the day after Christmas, and Jay, Ann-Marie, Zach, Charlie and Emily Kate drove up from South Carolina, arriving two days after Christmas. So we had a full house all the way through New Year's Day!

To be honest, I enjoyed the holy chaos of a house bursting at the seams, the unrestrained joy of the children as they opened their second round of Christmas gifts, the simple pleasure of reading to my grandchildren and (this year for the first time) having Zach and Charlie read to me. All this topped off with more delicious food than we could eat in a month, thanks to Darlene's guiding principle of never having anyone leave our house without eating all that they possibly can. It was nice to be together as a family for the first time in many years, and the house felt empty when everyone left.

I have the feeling that Darlene and I are now entering into a second and quieter experience of Christmas. When we get home in the evening, as we sit and read in a living room graced by a beautifully decorated tree, it feels like we are picking up where we left off at the Christmas Eve candlelight service. I like the quiet that comes when we are no longer caught up in the busyness of buying and wrapping gifts, of trying to make sure everything is ready by the time our guests arrive. I have a hunch that this year we are going to leave the candles in our windows and our Christmas decorations up long past Epiphany.

I guess I just don't want to pack Christmas up and store it away for another eleven months, just as we do with our Christmas decorations. I would like to stretch out the season. We can do this by keeping the light of the candles, the light of the Christmas star burning within us. We can do

this by committing ourselves to being open to receive the Christmas light and by sharing it with others every day. Throughout the year to come we can think about others, what would please them, just as we do as we select a Christmas gift for someone we love.

A contemporary poet, Ann Weems, offers a prayerful poem that encourages us to keep Christmas alive in our hearts, in our relationships, and in our life as a church in the year to come:

Later, after the angels,
after the stable,
after the Child,
they went back . . .
as we always must,
back to our world that doesn't understand
our talk of angels and stars
and especially not the Child.

We go back complaining that it doesn't last.
They went back singing praises to God!
We do have to go back,
but we can still sing the alleluias!

I know that we can't hold onto Christmas forever. Or can we? We do have to go back to the world, but if we keep the spirit of Christmas alive within our heart we will have something special to offer to a world that desperately needs it.

I wish you a blessed Christmas in the year to come.

Faithfully yours,
The Reverend Paul D. Sanderson

Adult Bible Study

With the beginning of the New Year, we continue with our exploration of what it means to approach religion in general and the Christian faith in particular from a psychological perspective. We are presently reading the Jungian psychologist Edward Edinger's article, "Christ as a Paradigm of the Individuating Ego." Please join us for this fascinating exploration of our 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.

Confirmation Class

The confirmation class, which is taught by Reverend Sanderson, will continue to meet on the first and third Thursday afternoons of every month at 5:00 PM beginning January 7. This spring we will conclude our study on the significance of the Book of Acts and the founding of the early church for our understanding of what it means to be a 21st century disciple/apostle. This class is open to all young people from the 7th – 12th grades.

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. Their story begins:



Twenty years ago, no one could have predicted that the dream of starting a Bible study for kids in detention would result in the growth of an organization that has given thousands of young people around the world the opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel!

The story started simply enough when Scott and Hanne Larson arrived in Massachusetts: he was a student at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and she was eager to lead a Bible study with teen girls in a Massachusetts detention center, as she had in Minnesota since 1981.

Hanne was told that a Bible study would not be allowed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, but she didn't give up. She met with the treatment director of a local detention center to share her hope for youth in detention.

At the end of that meeting, the still-skeptical director said, "Okay, let's try it. But let's call it something other than Bible study." Hanne persisted, saying, "How about we call it Bible study, and if no kids show up then we'll call it something else?"

On July 10, 1987, twelve of the fifteen juveniles incarcerated in the secure facility showed up for the first-ever "Bible study."

1987: Straight Ahead Ministries begins with that first Bible study. Today, over 400 Straight Ahead Bible studies are held each week in 15 states across the country.

1998: A prayer coordinator becomes the first additional staff member, with the goal of providing a prayer partner for each Bible study leader. The goal has been doubly met through the years as God has consistently provided at least two prayer partners for every leader.

1991: Scott and Hanne, moved by grief for Thomas, a young friend who committed his life to Christ in detention center Bible study and was brutally murdered two weeks after his release, opened the first discipleship home. Today, you can read the miraculous stories of God's provision during these years in *Nine Charles Street, Remembering the Power of the Lord*.

1992: Straight Ahead's ministry reaches Boston through the development of the Boston Urban Church Network.

1993: Institutional and aftercare ministry expands into New England states with the development of the Maine office. Today, state coordinators also oversee ministry in New Hampshire and Connecticut (1994), and Rhode Island (1995).

1995: National expansion begins with Straight Ahead's first affiliate in Georgia. Today, ministry affiliates are serving in Colorado (1998), Nebraska (1999), Iowa and Minnesota (2000), New Jersey and Alaska (2001), Michigan (2002), Illinois (2004), and Wisconsin (2009), bringing to 15 the number of states where Straight Ahead is at work

1998: *A Way Out*, our first and most popular publication is released, quickly followed by *At Risk*. Today, Straight Ahead provides resources for organizations around the world, offering 13 books in addition to curriculum for Bible studies, recovery discussion groups and discipleship.

1999: The School of Juvenile Justice is launched. Today this school draws people from 22 states and has inspired and encouraged juvenile justice workers around the world.

2002: Straight Ahead goes global, appointing John Kinsley as Coordinator of International Outreach. Today John is working directly with ministries in Ukraine, Nigeria, Canada and Hungary.

Straight Ahead has provided material, training or support in **Africa** (Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia and South Africa), **Asia** (Pakistan, India, Nepal, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, and the Philippines), **Europe** (Ireland, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia), and **The Americas** (USA, Canada, Martinique, and Peru). Parts of our material have been translated into **Spanish, Nepali, Telugu, Hungarian, German and Russian**.

2004: Recognizing our successful community-based aftercare programs in Boston, Public/Private Ventures chooses Straight Ahead as a lead demonstration site for the US Department of Justice's Ready4Work Reentry Program. Today, our Boston-Lynn Reentry Program serves nearly 250 youth with educational services, job training, mentoring and intensive case management. Less than 15 percent of these youth re-offend, as compared with the 85 percent recidivism rate nationally.

2005: Straight Ahead Academy, an innovative reentry facility for youth transitioning out of juvenile facilities in MA and RI, opened in Hubbardston, MA. The Academy was designed to help youth develop faith, character and leadership skills as they furthered their education or pursued a vocation. During two years of operation, twenty-six students attended the Academy; 19 of whom graduated, 12 attained their GED's, 6 went on to college and one entered a missionary service program.

2007: Straight Ahead celebrates twenty years of ministry because of God's great love for youth in detention.

2008: Training on Transformational Approaches with High-Risk Youth is launched in six cities around the U.S.

2009: Straight Ahead develops the first Juvenile Justice Ministries Program to provide a certificate, college or seminary concentration in Juvenile Justice Ministries. Juvenile justice ministry courses are offered in conjunction with Gordon College and Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary.

Ongoing: *Seeing Jesus Christ transform the lives of juvenile offenders...* Straight Ahead continues to serve as a juvenile justice resource center, to create an international movement whereby every juvenile offender will have the opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel and grow in his or her relationship with Jesus Christ. Please join us.

Editor's Note: You can learn much more by visiting Straight Ahead's Ministries website @ www.straightahead.org.

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 and currently serves over sixty communities in the greater Central/Metro West Massachusetts.



Assabet Valley Pastoral Counseling Center is:

- ♥ *“A Place for Healing and Growth”* -- The Assabet Valley Pastoral Counseling Center 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.
- ♥ *“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 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.
- ♥ *“A Specialized Ministry”* -- A Ministry that provides quality psychotherapy, testing & assessment, and preventative education programs to the greater Central Massachusetts area. Our clients came from 72 different communities this past year, although the majority came from Westborough and its surrounding towns. We are located at the Kirkside building on Church Street.

The clinical staff of the pastoral counseling center includes Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists, Mental Health Counselors, Psychologists and a Certified Spiritual Director. Three of the staff has taught undergraduate and graduate courses in psychology, marriage & family, and pastoral counseling.

- ♥ *“Unique”* -- Its therapists are doubly trained in the behavioral sciences and religion. As such, our mission for 29 years has been providing counseling to individuals, couples, children, adolescents, families and groups utilizing each person's own faith perspective in their healing and growth - a view that has recently captured the interest of the scientific community. The pastoral counseling relationship provides a person with a direct and personal connection to their religious community and the values it represents.

What happens in pastoral counseling is the telling of stories, genuinely understanding them as they are presented, and interpreting them in the light of the religious community's larger story of life's meaning. 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's understanding of who a person related to God is. This allows one to experience and interpret new possibilities of selfhood, relationships and behavior.

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. A donation may also be designated to AVPCC through one's United Way contribution.

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

The staff is available for church, synagogue, and community programs on a wide variety of issues pertaining to mental health and preventative education for:

- Children - Child/Adolescent Counseling, ADHD Evaluations & 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 and Stress, Depression, Abuse and Shame, Loss and Grief, Low Self-Esteem, Alcohol Abuse and Dependence, ACOA Issues, Co-Dependence
-

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 21.



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. 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.

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

Come, eat, listen, vote, and elect. It’s your privilege!

Spiritual Study & Growth Group

The Shack

Thursday evenings – January & February Schedule

Since we were unable to finish our discussion of the many issues raised by/in William Paul Young’s best-seller *The Shack* this past fall, we will be meeting four more times in January and February. The tentative dates for our meetings are Thursday nights from 7:00 – 8:30 PM on January 14, 21, 28, and February 4. We have set aside February 11 as a snow date in case we have to cancel any of the others.

This thought-provoking novel has provided us with some different ways of looking at the theological issue of evil and our expectations of both God and life. If you have not attended and would like to attend, you could catch up quickly with where we are in the book and would be able to benefit (and hopefully even contribute) to our personal sharing and discussion.

Celebrations Celebrations



February marks the 41st 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.

United Parishes Lenten Series

As of the time this newsletter went to print, the United Parishes clergy has yet to meet to decide on a theme for this year's Lenten series. Since Ash Wednesday is February 17, it is safe to say that the meetings will be held four Tuesday evenings after that, probably beginning either February 23 or March 2. As soon as we have more information we will let you know by posting it on our website (and by announcing it on Sunday mornings in church). If we follow the same format as previous years, the meetings will begin at 6:00 PM with worship in the host church. This is followed by dinner, a presentation by one of the United Parishes' clergy, and discussion. We end promptly at 8:00 PM.

Save the Tuesday nights during Lent for this stimulating ecumenical event.

Reminder: All Boards and Committees that usually meet on Tuesday nights should find another meeting time during Lent.

From The Desk Of The Collector



The Year 2009 ended with pledged income receipts of \$50,912, which represents 103.4% of the amount pledged. Thank you, thank you, thank you! This total represents only 64% of our budget. There were some savings in the budget this year in reduced heating fuel prices but there is still a large gap between the pledged income and what our expenses are.

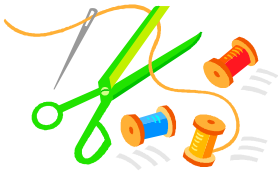
One thing you can always be sure of at First Community -- there is no fat in the budget. The Diaconate & Trustees will be meeting jointly soon to work out a budget to present at the Annual Meeting on Sunday February 21.

Currently our 2010 Stewardship Drive has raised 28 pledges, a decrease of 2, with a total of \$50,944. This is an increase of \$1726 over 2009 but back to the level we were at in 2008.

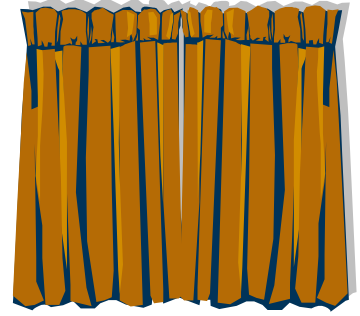
Stewardship envelopes are now available at the Church. If you have forgotten to return a pledge, please contact me ASAP. We appreciate both our new pledgers and the "old reliable" ones who pledge year in and year out.

Jim Holmes, Collector

Sanctuary Improvements



We now have a beautiful skirt around the edge of the chancel in the sanctuary. The fabric matches the fabric in the skirt that sets off the choir loft and also the altar curtain. The chancel skirt hides the loudspeaker wires, softens the front of the sanctuary aesthetically, and helps to set the chancel aside as a sacred or special place, thus differentiating it from a stage in an auditorium.



A very big thank you to Marlene Joe for donating the fabric for the skirt, to George Nutting for the installation of the railing, and to Bette Medine, a Southborough seamstress who donated her labor in sewing and installing the skirt.

Women's Fellowship

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid." **John 14:7**

The members of the Women's Fellowship held their Annual Christmas Party on December 13. We had a special time of fun and fellowship with Pat Davis playing Christmas hymns on the piano and the rest of us following along in song. The Yankee Gift Swap was great fun with lots of beautiful gifts passed back and forth -- everyone left with something special in hand and many great memories.

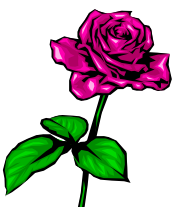
Women's Fellowship will again be hosting the Annual Meeting Luncheon on Sunday, February 21. It will begin right after morning Worship Service, prior to the Annual Meeting. Pat Grogan and Mattie Cummings will be coordinating this effort and will begin contacting people beginning the third week in January. Please look at the sign-up sheet in the Vestry and add your name with the others who have already volunteered to bring their "crock pot specialty."

Our "Pillowcase Sundress Project" is still a work in progress. For all those wanting to make one or more of these dresses or if anyone needs information, see Evelyn Till. For help with sewing, see Mattie Cummings. Please work on your dresses through January and February and bring the finished product to our March meeting. These dresses will be sent to Haiti in the spring.

The next meeting is set for Tuesday, March 16 at 7:00 PM. Helen Varney will lead devotions and Marlene Joe will take charge of refreshments.

Mattie Cummings, Secretary

With Our Sincerest Sympathies



Our most heartfelt sympathies to Pat Willis for the loss of her husband Bob. He died on Monday, December 21, 2009 at Rose Monahan Hospice Home in Worcester after a battle of cancer.

Our love and prayers are with Pat, their son John, and each of the Willis families.

A Blast From The Past

50 Years Ago

1960 -- January

- ◆ Teachers for the 1959/1960 Sunday school year were: Patricia Merchant, Mrs. Lawrence Henley, Mrs. Austin Dobson, Mrs. Ernest Williams, Mrs. Robert Miles, Mrs. Robert Holmes, Mrs. John Dewey, Mr. Ray Hyde and Rev. Kersenbrock.
- ◆ Mr. & Mrs. Willis Landon joined the Church January 24th. Shirley & Charles Hutchinson, Leonard Drive, Southboro joined the Church January 31st.

1960 -- February

- ◆ The Women's Fellowship held a guest night in February and members of the Wesley Methodist Church of Framingham were entertained along with members and friends of the Fayville Baptist Church, St. Mark's Episcopal Church and the Pilgrim Congregational Church. Then on February 29th, the Fellowship were guests of Beth Shalom Sisterhood of Framingham.

25 Years Ago

1985 -- January

- ◆ New members: January 6: Cheryl Pierce & Jill Selden.

1985 -- February

The annual meeting was held Saturday February 9th preceded by a turkey dinner served by the high school class. Martha Palmer motioned that the organist salary be raised to \$35 weekly and the sexton to \$75 monthly. So voted. The \$200 miscellaneous mission was voted to go to Famine Relief in Africa. The final budget was \$19,416.

10 Years Ago

2000 -- January

- ◆ Deaths: Frances Houghton January 18.

2000 -- February

- ◆ The annual meeting was held on February 12th at 7 PM with 36 members and friends present. The Women's Fellowship prepared an especially delicious dinner. Bob L'Heureux moderated and Lee Cummings opened with prayer. Rev. Sanderson challenged the congregation to donate 10% of the pledged income to missions. Raises of \$3,000 to the pastor and \$800 to the organist were approved. Pledged income was \$42,148 and the final budget was \$55,955.

Southborough Food Pantry Fuel Fund

The offering taken at the United Parishes Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service at First Community Church was designated to go to the Food Pantry Fuel Fund. A total of \$438 was collected. Additional contributions to this worthwhile cause are always welcome and can be mailed to:



Richard Draper, United Parishes Lay Council, P.O. Box 166, Southborough MA 01772-0166

Calendar Girl

Do you like “win-win, no-cost, do good/feel good” opportunities? We have a wonderful one in Ethel Armstrong’s pull-tab collection program. We save all those pull-tabs from our cans that we would have thrown out and bring them to Ethel who then acts as the liaison to the Marlborough Masonic Lodge. They in turn bring the tabs to the Shriners Auditorium where they are redeemed at a recycling center and the proceeds are used for the benefit of the Shriners Hospital for Children in Boston.



Now we have a new similar opportunity. Our very own co-chair of the Diaconate, Dianne Simmons, is a nurse at the Leonard Morse branch of the MetroWest Hospital in Natick. At the recent Diaconate meeting, a discussion ensued about patients in hospitals often finding that they lose track of what day it is. The days all tend to blend together. It turns out Dianne makes it her mission, not just for her own patients, but also for any others on her floor, to help provide each of them with a calendar to put on the bulletin boards in their hospital rooms. This helps the patients to keep track of what day it is. When they are released from the hospital, they can bring the calendar home if they so choose.

This is the time of year when we sometimes find that we have more calendars than we need and end up tossing them in the recycle bin. Now you can bring your unneeded 2010 calendars to Church and rest assured you are helping Dianne fill a small need in our immediate area.

And don’t forget to keep those tabs coming!

Bottles & Cans For Cash



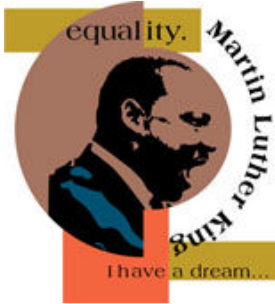
The Department of Public Works in Southborough has released their 2010 Schedule and First Community Church is lined up for Wednesday April 28 for our day in the “Cage.”

This is the day that we take our turn to sort and bag cans and bottles for cash! The Transfer Station’s Bottle and Can Cage in Southborough is located off Route 85, near the Post Office.

A great fundraiser for our Church, it involves giving your time and effort for just a few hours on that day.

More details will be coming in the weeks ahead.

Mattie Cummings
Chief Bottle & Can Collector



Remembering Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Monday, January 18

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., one of the great 20th century prophets (in the biblical sense of that term), a tireless worker for peace and justice, challenged us to stand up for our beliefs and convictions when, in a sermon delivered in the Ebenezer Baptist Church on November 5, 1967, he said:

You may be 38 years old, as I happen to be. And one day, some great opportunity stands before you and calls you to stand up for some great principle, some great issue, some great cause. And you refuse to do it because you are afraid. . . . You refuse to do it because you want to live longer. . . . You're afraid that you will lose your job, or you are afraid that you will be criticized, or that you will lose your popularity, and you're afraid that somebody will stab you, or shoot at you, or bomb your house; so you refuse to take the stand. Well, you may go on and live until you are 90, but you're just as dead at 38 as you would be at 90. And the cessation of breathing in your life is but the belated announcement of an earlier death of the spirit.

W. B. Yeats in his poem "The Second Coming," said:

*The best lack all conviction
While the worst are full of passionate intensity.*

Mahatma Gandhi once said that in order for evil to triumph, all that has to happen is for good people to say and do nothing.

There are so many areas in our national dialogue where we need to take these words of advice and challenge to heart. Let us rededicate ourselves to this higher vision and higher calling in our celebration of Martin Luther King's birthday during our Sunday worship on January 17.

Report Of The Diaconate

We ask the congregation to bear with us this winter as we all struggle at times with the decision to cancel or not cancel church. The decision will be made based both on your safety and in consideration and with respect, for your spiritual needs to attend worship. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

The January Mission is Straight Ahead Ministry and February's is the Assabet Valley Pastoral Counseling Center.

Our next meeting is Tuesday, February 2 at 7:15 PM.

The Diaconate wishes everyone a happy, healthy and peaceful 2010.

Oh The Weather Outside Is Frightful....



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, Our Moderator Lou Dundin, and the Co-Chairs of the Diaconate Sandy McKeen and Dianne Simmons.

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 2010 Newsletter is **Sunday, February 21, 2010.** 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

Dear Partners:

Your partnership is essential as we strive to spread the hope of Christ's love in the world's darkest places.



Your gift received in November 2009 is already hard at work providing a share of a deep well around the world. I am grateful for your generosity in these uncertain times.

May God bless you for helping us provide both physical necessities and spiritual comfort to children and families in desperate need. Proverbs 11:25 (NIV) says, "*A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.*"

May your life in the coming year reflect the same joy, hope and happiness you're helping to bring to hurting children and families everywhere.

In His Name,

Richard E. Stearns
President

From Our Members

To the parishioners of The First Community Church in Southborough,

Words cannot begin to express my gratitude for your amazing outpouring of support during this unsettling time. There was a reason that Kim and Clark discovered your church for their marriage and introduced Scott and I to your congregation. What a wonderful, caring group of individuals you are. We are so grateful for the flowers sent by the congregation, the food basket from the Women's Fellowship, the numerous hugs, cards, calls, meals, emails but most of all for your friendship. We thank God daily for such a wonderful congregation. Bless you all...and keep the prayers coming.

Thanks to all for your concerns and kind words and especially for your prayers.

Love to all.
Sandy and Scott McKeen

From Our Pastor

I would like to thank the members of this church for your generous Christmas gift. Combined with last year's gift, I now have enough to purchase a new clergy robe – and maybe even an additional lighter weight robe for summers. This will be a wonderful way to celebrate my forty-one years of ordained ministry and my twelve years of ministry with you.

Reverend Sanderson

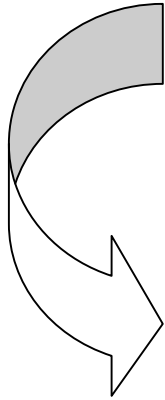
With Our Special Thanks To --


- ◆ Bob L'Heureux for his dedication each year to make sure that both of our Nativity sets are displayed all Christmas season. Thanks to Dan L'Heureux for helping his Dad to get the job done. Many thanks also to Arlene Williams for allowing us to store the Crèche at her house each year.
- ◆ David Sickles who “decks” the walls and windows of First Community Church with the finest Holiday Dressings each Christmas season. And many thanks to Sharon & Skip Willman for their assistance to David and for the wreaths on the doors.
- ◆ Pat Grogan for her time and energy to make sure that the Christmas Poinsettias are in place gracing the altar for the Christmas Sunday that was snowed out, and the Christmas Eve Service.
- ◆ Michael Larson, David Sickles, and the members of our Choir for their inspirational music throughout the Christmas season.
- ◆ The Advent Candle lighters: Jim & Cheryl Holmes, David & Barbara Crane, Tom & Julie Looney, Scott & Sandy McKeen and Clark & Kim Bilawchuk (and Cassidy and Carter). Chris and Nancy Mantos were unfortunately not able to light one of the candles this year when our worship service was cancelled because of snow. There's always next year!
- ◆ The Christmas Eve readers: Scott McKeen, Sandy McKeen, Bob Farmer, Karin Farmer, Joyce Harrington, and Lou Dundin. (Reminder: If you would like to be a lay leader or greeter on Sunday mornings, or if you would like to do one of the readings or candle lightings on special days, please let Reverend Sanderson know and we will put your name on the list.)
- ◆ Skip Willman for making sure that our parking lot and walkways are plowed each and every snowy day.


LOOKING AHEAD

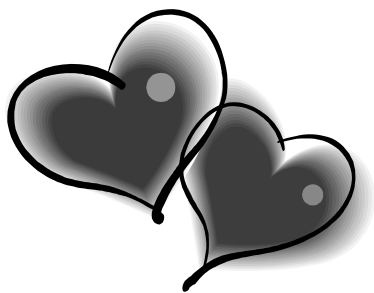
United Parishes Lenten Series
Dates To Be Announced

Write down these dates!!



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

	
Birthdays	
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



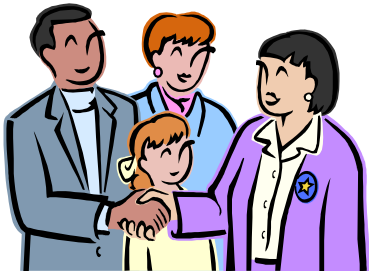
For we are laborers together with God...(1 Corinthians 3:8)

Lay Leaders

January 3 - Beth Hook
January 10 - Evelyn Till
January 17- Martha Hubley
January 24 - Karin Farmer
January 31 - Ralph Claflin



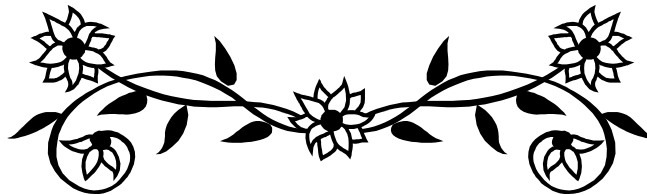
Greeters



January 3 - Sherrie Jodrey
January 10 - Sandy McKeen
January 17 - Dianne Simmons
January 24 - Lou Dundin
January 31 - Helen Varney

Coffee Hour Hosts

January 3 - Karin Farmer
January 10 - Sandy & Scott McKeen
January 17 - Mattie & Lee Cummings
January 24 - Beth Hook & Evelyn Till
January 31 - Cheryl & Jim Holmes




Memorial Flowers

January 3 - Martha Hubley
January 10 - Karin Farmer
January 17 - Dianne Simmons
January 24 -
January 31 -

Deacons for January

Dianne Simmons and Evelyn Till

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>January 2010</h1> <h2>Missions -- Straight Ahead Ministries</h2>						2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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		5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:15 PM Diaconate Meeting	 Epiphany	5:00 PM Confirmation Class		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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 6:30 PM Trustees Meeting		7:00 PM Spiritual Study & Growth Group The Shack		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
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	 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal		5:00 PM Confirmation Class 7:00 PM Spiritual Study & Growth Group The Shack		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
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		7:00 PM Spiritual Study & Growth Group The Shack		
31						
10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service Coffee Hour following Worship Service						

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2  5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:15 PM Diaconate Meeting	3	4 5:00 PM Confirmation Class 7:00 PM Spiritual Study & Growth Group <i>The Shack</i>	5	6
7 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	8	9 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	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  <i>President's Day</i>	16 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	17  5:00 PM Confirmation Class	18	19	20
21 <i>ANNUAL MEETING</i> 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  March Newsletter Deadline	22	23 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	24	25	26	27
28 <i>DEDICATION OF CHURCH OFFICERS</i> 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	<h1>February 2010</h1> <h2>Missions -- Assabet Valley Pastoral Counseling</h2>					