

# *First Community Church*

# *Newsletter*

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January – February 2011

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## *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*

**B**y the time you receive this newsletter, Christmas will have come and gone. We will have celebrated Epiphany, the twelfth day after Christmas, and will have begun to take down the Christmas decorations from our sanctuary. According to our liturgical calendar, we are no longer marking time by the Sundays after Christmas but by the Sundays after Epiphany.

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

Here we are stepping forward into the New Year. As you have probably noted, this edition of the newsletter is for both January and February. This really forces us to look ahead. We need to remind you that our Annual Meeting will be held Sunday, February 13 right after worship and a potluck luncheon hosted by Women's Fellowship. This will be an important meeting for all members to attend. On the basis of the pledges that have been received to date, we may have to make some difficult decisions and look for some places where we can cut expenditures in the year to come.

If your New Year's resolutions contained anything about resolving to grow in the faith this coming year, you will have plenty of opportunities to do so in our church! In our Sunday morning Bible study, we will begin our study of the Gospel of John. The Monday afternoon Spiritual Exploration Reading Group will continue its study of parallel passages in the teachings of Jesus and the Buddha. The Thursday evening Spiritual Study and Growth Group will continue reading Don Piper's book *Ninety Minutes in Heaven* and discussing the themes of both suffering and life after death. I know it's not until March, but the United Parishes of Southborough Lenten

series, which will begin March 22, the second Tuesday evening after Ash Wednesday, will address the importance of ecumenicity.

It looks like it is going to be a very busy next few months! Here we are just emerging from Christmas and we are already preparing for Lent. I hope you will be present with us in worship, will attend the United Parishes' Lenten series, our Sunday morning Bible study, and/or our Monday afternoon or Thursday evening spiritual study and growth groups as a preparation for the celebration and experience of Easter.

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

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

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

Faithfully yours,  
The Reverend Paul D. Sanderson

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## *Adult Bible Study*

With the beginning of the New Year, we are starting our study of the Gospel of John, a poetic and mystical gospel account of not only what Jesus said but who he was.

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

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

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## *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 began twenty-one years ago 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."

Their ongoing mission is 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.

Excerpts from the December 2010 Straight Ahead Ministries Newsletter:

Scott just returned from Haiti last week. One purpose was to establish a ministry to prisoners there. The two major prisons in Haiti were destroyed during the earthquake, so all prisoners are now being held in the small, local jails. Instead of housing the typical 1 or 2 prisoners, they have 15 to 20 – and for long periods of time. When we asked how a church could help, the Police Chief quickly responded, "Bring in food! The only way they eat is if family members bring it in, and the guys here have no one who brings anything in."

We were able to establish a program with a key church in Leogan where we will provide funding for them to bring people in three times per week to feed all who are there and to minister to them. The pastor told us that most Christians in Haiti don't think about ministering to prisoners at all – but by establishing this ministry now, we could promote the model to 60 other pastors who will be meeting in the spring. Please pray that God will establish a strong ministry through these churches to everyone who is in jail in Haiti.

This year has brought many additional ministry opportunities. We just sent funds to India to supply sweaters and caps to 180 youth and 40 staff in two juvenile prisons. Through our affiliate there, we will also provide a Christmas meal to all, share the Gospel and give out our translated book. Back home, through the generosity of many local churches, we were able to provide presents and Christmas parties to youth in many of the lock-ups here.

We are also seeing God open up more opportunities to do community-based aftercare with youth. There is an area of Worcester called “Main South” that a police detective told us has a higher crime rate than New York City. And it’s where most of the 85 youth who are in our Worcester Re-entry Program come from. We have been looking for property where we can establish a Christian Community Center that offers a wide range of ministries. Please pray for God’s leading in this, and if you feel led to give toward it, you can designate it, “Worcester Community Center.”

We have some major things coming up that we need prayer for too. This month we will be meeting with all of the gang leaders from Lynn in the Essex County House Jail to enroll them into our *Ready4Life* program. These are guys who are all locked down 22 hours per day.

We’re so grateful for all your prayers and support again this past year, and for your consideration of us as you prayerfully consider a year-end gift.

Editor’s Note: You can learn much more by visiting Straight Ahead’s Ministries website @ [www.straightahead.org](http://www.straightahead.org).

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## *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.

Their Mission Statement is “To provide counseling to all persons seeking wholeness and renewal from a spiritual perspective.”

They are unique in that the therapists are doubly trained in the behavioral sciences and religion. As such, our mission for 30 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.

AVPCC has an interesting heritage, which starts right here in Westborough MA.



Anton T. Boisen (1876-1965) grew up in an academic family in Indiana and felt a call to the ministry and eventually graduated from Union Theological Seminary in New York in 1911. Unfortunately, several significant psychotic episodes caused him to be hospitalized for 15 months at Westborough State Hospital.

After his release he studied psychology and religion at Andover Theological Seminary and became convinced that some mental illnesses are "problem-solving experiences." He reported that he had had a "valid religious experience, which was at the same time madness of the most profound and unmistakable variety." "Mental disorder," Boisen later wrote, "is the price humanity has to pay for having the power of choice and the capacity for growth."



In 1925 he became a chaplain at the Worcester State Hospital, where he inaugurated an innovative program of "clinical training" for theological students. Boisen believed that ministerial students could learn some important things about health and religious experience by "studying living human documents" in a mental hospital. His clinical training program addressed the needs of the patients; but it also challenged students to become more self-aware about their own mental and spiritual health. During that first summer program at Worcester State Hospital in 1925, the students served as ward attendants during the day, attended staff meetings, and in evening participated in seminars with Chaplain Boisen and various members of the professional staff. Each year an increasing number of theological students enrolled in this new method of theological learning. In 1930 Boisen joined with others to form the Council for the Clinical Training of Theological Students, developing a program later to be known as Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), an international program pastors continue to participate in and learn from. (Boisen biography adapted from church historian the Rev. Barbara Brown Zikmund, 2004).

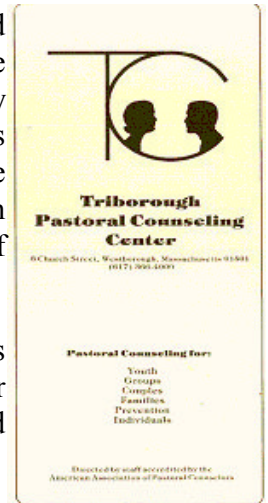
In 1931, Boisen was succeeded by Rev. Carroll Wise at Worcester State Hospital. Wise had a different view of what clinical training was all about. Boisen was primarily a researcher of religious experience connected to mental illness, and Wise was interested in a pastoral emphasis. Wise commented, "He (Boisen) finally forgave me for changing the Worcester program from a research to a pastoral emphasis." (ACPE History) Wise wrote, "Pastoral care is more a function than an activity, more a living relationship than a theory of interpretation, more a matter of being than doing. It is the manifestation in the relationship between pastor and persons, either individually or in groups, of a quality of love, which points to, and gives a basis in experience for, the realization of the love of God." (Meaning of Pastoral Care by Carroll A. Wise)

Carroll Wise would go on to become one of the four "gospel writers" for the modern pastoral counseling movement along with Seward Hiltner, Paul Johnson and Wayne Oates. Succeeding Wise as supervising chaplain at Worcester State Hospital was Rev. John Smith. In 1956, Smith started the Worcester Pastoral Counseling Center which this past year celebrated its 50th anniversary.

In 1979 the clergy of Westborough decided that their ministries would be strengthened by the presence of a pastoral counseling center in the town and approached the Worcester Pastoral Counseling Center. A satellite pastoral counseling center in Westborough was born under the name of the Triborough (Westborough/Northborough/Southborough) Pastoral Counseling

Center. Rev Laurence Nelson became the center's first director in 1979 with Rev. Peter Bishop leading the pastoral counseling center for the next twenty years until his retirement in 2000.

In 1984 the Board of Directors of the Triborough Pastoral Counseling Center decided it was necessary to separate from the Worcester Pastoral Counseling Center and the Triborough Pastoral Counseling Center was incorporated as the Assabet Valley Pastoral Counseling Center March 1st of that year. The pastoral counseling center has been located at the Kirkside Building of the Evangelical Congregational Church since its' founding in 1979. From the very formation of the pastoral counseling center in Westborough, the area faith communities have been instrumental in the guidance of the center, by providing congregants to serve on the Board of Directors.



The center seeks to provide counseling for all who want to take advantage of this unique ministry and these faith communities 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.

## *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 13.



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.

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

## *Pastor’s Schedule*



On most weeks, the Pastor will be at the church on the following days/times:

Mondays	1:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Tuesdays	2:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Thursdays	2:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Please call (508) 873-0534 if you wish to make an appointment with the Pastor.

## *Let The Games Begin*



Are you ready to have an old fashion fun night of playing those games you love? David Sickles and Cheryl Holmes are scheming, we mean, planning a great night of just being together to laugh and play all kinds of games, cards, board games, dice, and more. There will be something for everyone.

Mark your calendar for Saturday evening, January 22 at 6:00 PM. Pizza, desserts, and drinks – No work involved. Just come and enjoy yourself.

For those of you who do not drive at night or will not attempt the winter weather conditions, don't worry, your chariot awaits! Call Cheryl & Jim Holmes at 508-460-0142 for a ride.

## *Spiritual Study & Growth Group*

### *90 Minutes in Heaven*

**Thursday Evenings from 7:00 – 8:30 PM**

Since we were unable this past fall to finish our discussion of the many issues raised by/in the Christian pastor Don Piper's fascinating account of his experience of heaven following his death in a terrible automobile accident, we will be continuing to explore this book and other accounts of "life after death" experiences between now and when the United Parishes' Lenten Series begins in March.

The group meets on Thursday evenings from 7:00 – 8:30 PM in the Vestry. If you have not attended and would like to attend, you could catch up very quickly with where we are in the book and would be able to both benefit from and contribute to our personal sharing and discussion.

## *Report Of The Diaconate*

With great joy we welcomed two young people into our community of faith through confirmation. Emily Hite and Mitchell Hilbert were confirmed in our sanctuary on December 12. It was a very exciting event for our church and in the lives of these two fine young people. Welcome and congratulations, Emily and Mitch.

Our Christmas Eve Service was very lovely and meaningful. The service included our tradition of the passing of the light by candles. We rejoice that the service was so well attended.

Our next meeting is Tuesday, February 1 at 7:15 PM.

The Diaconate wishes all a happy, healthy and safe New Year. May you grow in faith and find hope and peace.

## *From The Desk Of The Collector*



The Year 2010 ended with pledged income receipts of \$50,966, which represents 96.5% of the final amount pledged. (The original pledge total at the time of the Annual Report was \$50,216; Two additional pledges brought the final total to \$52,816) Thank you, thank you, thank you! This total represents only 65.5% of our budget but is far and away the largest support for the budget.

Currently our 2011 Stewardship Drive has raised 27 pledges, a decrease of 1, with a total of \$46,416. This is a decrease of \$3,800.00 from the amount reported in the last Annual Report for the calendar year 2010. Loss of pledges due to death and relocation have had a big impact.

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, some since the 1960’s!

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Interesting charitable comments in the news last month.

Billionaires agreeing to give away their fortunes. 16 additional tycoons have agreed to give the majority of their wealth to charity. Signing the “Giving Pledge,” they bring the total to more than 50. Organized by Warren Buffet and Bill Gates, they include 26 year old Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, AOL co-founder Steve Case, and Junk Bond King Michael Milken. The idea was born in part from a dislike of dynastic wealth, citing Andrew Carnegie who argued fortunes were often wasted by heirs and thus should be put to charitable use. Despite the fact that Gates & Buffet are the nation’s biggest givers, Buffet says, “I’ve got everything I possibly need. I’ve never given up a meal, a vacation trip, anything in my life. I consider the real philanthropist the person who sticks \$5 in a collection plate this Sunday and can’t go to a movie because of it. Plenty of people do that. They actually give up an extra toy for their kids at Christmas by giving that \$5 or \$10.” (Source: Rick Holmes, Opinion Editor, Metrowest Daily News)

Recently Massachusetts citizens were ranked 48<sup>th</sup> out of all 50 states in giving. Certainly not true at First Community Church!

The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University reports that the most important motivation for giving:

- Basic needs for the poor - 17.8%
- Make world better - 16.6%
- Make community better - 12.5%
- Poor help themselves - 11.5%
- For equity - 11.0%
- Problems in world - 5.3%

A major casualty of the Great Recession has been charitable giving. According to the Chronicle of Philanthropy, America's charities report an 11% drop in contributions in the past year alone. There is one big exception - Charitable contributions to religious groups dropped by 0.1% from 2007 to 2009. While 80% of all Americans reported making a charitable contribution in the previous year, the religious contributed more than others did. Of the most secular fifth of Americans, 2/3 said they gave money to charity, while impressive, 94% of the most religious fifth reported making charitable donations.

Compared to the population as a whole, Catholics are a little less charitable while mainline Protestants contribute a little more both to religious and secular causes. Compared to the rest of the population, Mormons are the one group that gives more to both religious and secular causes. Some charge that religious people contribute mainly to their own congregations, so in a sense they are giving charity to themselves.

As it turns out, though, religious Americans do not limit their philanthropy to their own congregations or even to religious causes more generally. (Source: David Campbell & Robert D. Putnam, Wall Street Journal)

Jim Holmes, Collector

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## *Calendar Girl*

Dianne Simmons, one of our co-chairs of the Diaconate is looking for any extra 2011 calendars that you might have received and will not be using.

Dianne, a nurse at the Leonard Morse branch of the MetroWest Hospital in Natick, has made it her mission to provide her patients and others on her floor, with calendars to put on the bulletin boards in their hospital rooms.



It is so easy to lose track of what day it is when you are hospitalized and having a calendar to refer to is a huge help and comfort. Sometimes patients want to take the calendars home with them so they can keep track of when they started a medication, had an X-ray, or when they need to see their surgeon in follow-up. A big thanks to all who donated calendars last year. You were all very generous and we had enough to last the entire year.

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## *Women's Fellowship*

*"The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted."*  
**Psalm 18:46**

December was a very busy month for the Women's Fellowship with the crafting of items to be sold on our Christmas Table. There were so many wonderful things made and donated for this

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effort that made our fundraiser very successful. Currently our total is \$412.50 – what a blessing! We wish to thank all who created, donated and purchased items from our table.

Marlene Joe would especially like to thank Jim Holmes for providing all the paper goods to the Women's Fellowship and for all the greenery used in the making of the beautiful centerpieces. Also special thanks to Martha Hubley for the other donated greenery.

On December 12, the Women's Fellowship came together for our annual Christmas party. We began with a brief business meeting. Barbara Crane shared a special Christmas devotion with us, which blessed us all.

Our Corresponding Secretary, Beth Hook, read some very nice thank you cards to the Women's Fellowship from recipients of the many Sunshine Baskets we made and distributed in November.

There was a brief discussion about our Spring program to be held in April or May. All were encouraged to think on this during our winter break and bring their ideas to our March meeting.

Looking ahead to Sunday, February 13, and the Church Annual Meeting, we firmed up plans about the meal before the meeting. Pat Grogan was willing to co-organize this meal with Mattie Cummings again this year.

We will be doing the "Crock Pot" meals again as this arrangement was a great success last year. Other complements to the meals will be tossed salad, bread or rolls and butter, as well as an assortment of bar cookies for dessert. We will be looking for four great cooks to sign up to make four dozen types of bar cookies. Please watch for the sign up sheet in the Vestry on Sunday, January 16.

God's rich blessing to all the church family in the new year from the Women's Fellowship.

Mattie Cummings, Secretary

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## Celebrations Celebrations

Following six years of participation in the Pastor's Class, on Sunday, December 12, Emily Hite and Mitchell Hilbert participated in the Rite of Confirmation, becoming full members of our church.

We celebrate their decision to join with us and to commit themselves to a life of Christian discipleship.



February marks the 42<sup>nd</sup> 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.

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## *A Blast From The Past*

### **100 Years Ago**

#### **1911 -- January**

- ◆ Mr. Irving Stone, Mrs. Ardell Stone and Miss Mildred L. Stone joined by letter from the First Congregational Church of Boulder, CO.
- ◆ Cordaville – 6 January - Solon R. Works, engineer at the mills, had an attack of neuralgia this week. (Note: This is Fran Rosenquists's grandfather)
- ◆ Southville – 13 January - There will be a good old fashioned oyster supper with all the accessories: pie, cake, celery, pickles, coffee and cheese, held at the Southville Village Hall on Friday evening January 20<sup>th</sup> under the auspices of the Ladies Aid Society. The supper will be followed by an entertainment under the direction of Mrs. Fay, and everyone will surely get double value of their admission fee.

#### **1911 -- February**

- ◆ Southville – 10 February - A chicken pie supper will be served in the Southville Congregational vestry February 21<sup>st</sup> from 6 to 8 o'clock after which a drama entitled "Jumbo Jim." Admission 15 cents.
- ◆ Electric lights are being installed in the M.E. Church and a handsome chandelier has been ordered for the audience room.
- ◆ Southville – 24 February - Last Sunday evening there was a union meeting of the Methodist and Congregational churches in the Methodist church. There was singing by a chorus choir, with cornet accompaniment by F.L. Kilbourne of Westboro and an address by the pastor, Rev. J.M. Sutherland. The new electric lights proved beyond a doubt that electricity was far better than kerosene. The new chandelier looked proud of itself with its 15 lights.

### **50 Years Ago**

#### **1961 -- January**

- ◆ Baptisms: Alice Christine Readio, January 1, 1961  
Steen Ward, Scott William and Jeffrey Alan Lisk; Norman Edward Wellman, all on January 22, 1961
- ◆ Births: Michael Scott Landon, January 23, 1961  
William Peter Hubley, January 25, 1961

#### **1961 -- February**

- ◆ The day after the largest snowstorm of the year, Sunday School was held for those who braved the elements to attend. There were 20 pupils and 7 teachers present.

### **25 Years Ago**

#### **1986 -- February**

- ◆ The Annual meeting was held on February 8, 1986 in the vestry with 27 members and 3 friends present. Meeting called to order at 7:45 p.m. by moderator, Robert Bishop. An offer had been made to start an endowment fund. The principal could not be touched for five (5) years and only earned interest could be used. It was voted unanimously to accept this offer.

- ◆ Plans for the purchase of a new Allen church organ, retailing for \$20,000, but with a quote for us of \$16,042, was presented by the organ search committee. The committee was most convincing and the following motion was made: “That we use the money from the funds in #1 (construction) fund and #3 (Bldg. & Maint.) fund to purchase the new organ, with the stipulation that the money received from the proposed Capital Fund Drive will be used to replace the Money Market Funds, with a minimum of \$2500. The balance received from the proposed Capital Fund Drive will go into the General Fund to be used at the discretion of the Board of Elders.” So voted. The meeting adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

## **10 Years Ago**

### **2001 -- January**

- ◆ Women’s Fellowship officers: Beth Hook, President; Rae Kay, treasurer; and Mary Richmond, Secretary.
- ◆ Investment Committee members: Karin Farmer, James Holmes, Rae Kay, Toby Mountain, and Gwen Sickles.

### **2001 -- February**

- ◆ The Annual meeting was held on February 10, 2001. The Pastor voiced the church’s thanks to Darcy Hilbert for raising the issue of First Aid kits. She has also mentioned that installing carbon monoxide detectors might be a good idea.

Norman Wicklman spoke regarding the progress and possibility of an addition to our church building. Building specifications and Title 5 have been addressed. The trustees will be going out for bids to draw up blueprints.

Trustees also exploring the possibility of using a “business” telephone service which would give us exposure in the “Yellow pages.”

Question was asked if we had “replacement cost” on our insurance policies and if an inventory would be made. Trustees will review.

There was a question about oil prices. Bob L’Heureux wondered if we should shop prices. Bob Farmer explained that the Trustees wanted a particular company for maintenance and oil supply.

Bob L’Heureux asked for a motion, which Gayle Nittler proposed that future budgets not indicate a proposed increase amount for salaries but that the current salary be quoted. Seconded by Jim Holmes and so moved.

Total proposed budget was \$60,460. Motion to accept by Dot Watkins and seconded by Lee Cummings. So voted. Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

## ***You’re Invited***



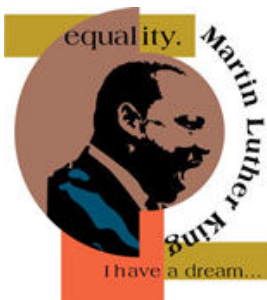
A special invitation is extended to all the ladies of our Church family. “Are you wondering where could I serve the Lord in our Church in 2011?” Please prayerfully consider joining the Women’s Fellowship. Our membership is down at this time, some due to prolonged illness making it difficult to participate, some have gone home to be with the Lord and some have moved away. Your participation in Women’s Fellowship would be a blessing to you, to us, and the greater community.

# Congratulations!



To Mitchell Hilbert for attaining the high honor of being elected as an Eagle Scout.

Also sharing in the proud moment is Darcy, Mitch's Mom!



## Remembering Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Monday, January 17

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 16.

## *Spiritual Exploration Reading*

### **Monday Afternoons with Rev. Sanderson**

Our Monday afternoon spiritual exploration group will continue its reading of and reflection on the parallel sayings of Jesus and the Buddha that were compiled by the biblical scholar Marcus Borg. One member of the group reads the saying of Jesus and another reads the (often almost identical) teaching of the Buddha. Then we discuss whether they seem to be saying the same thing – and what it is that they both are saying to us.

In a time that is fraught with religious prejudice, discrimination, and even outright conflict in our country and around the world, it is not only illuminating but also healing to discover how much we have in common with believers of other faiths.

The group meets every Monday afternoon (except Monday holidays) at 2:30 PM in the Vestry. If you have not attended and would like to attend, you could catch up very quickly with where we are in the book and would be able to both benefit from and contribute to our personal sharing and discussion.

## *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 who lives in Foxborough, the Moderator Lou Dundin who lives in Grafton, and the Co-Chairs of the Diaconate Sandy McKeen of Ashland and Dianne Simmons of Southborough.

We will not post the cancellation on the website or on our telephone at the church.

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.

## *From The Editor*

The deadline for the March 2011 Newsletter is **Sunday, February 20, 2011.** 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

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## *A Prayer For The New Year*

*God of the years that lie behind us,  
Lord of the years that stretch before,  
Weaver of all the ties that bind us,  
Keeper and king of the open door.*

*Grant us hope and courage glowing  
White and pure as the stars above;  
Grant us faith in a full stream flowing  
From the heights of Your eternal love.*

*Out of the ruins of doubt and sorrow,  
Out of the aches and pain and tears,  
Help us to fashion a new tomorrow,  
Free from the anguish of blighting fears.*

*All through the seasons of sowing and reaping,  
All through the harvest of song and tears,  
Hold us close in Your tender keeping,  
O Maker of all New Years!*

*Author Unknown*



# 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 December 2010 is already hard at work providing goats and chickens 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 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-two years of ordained ministry and my thirteen years of ministry with you.

Reverend Sanderson

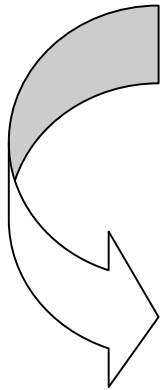
## *With Our Special Thanks To –*


- ◆ Cheryl Holmes for organizing the weekly November Southborough Food Pantry Coupon Program. Thanks to Cathy Ten Eyck for making sure that all the donations were delivered to the Food Pantry each week.
- ◆ David Sickles and the choir for hosting the Advent Event. It was a wonderful evening of fantastic food, fun, entertainment, and fellowship.
- ◆ Bob L’Heureux for making sure that our Nativity was displayed at the front of the church 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 for “decking” the walls and windows of our sanctuary for Christmas. Each year, the new additions to the “Holiday Dressings” add more “beauty to the season” at First Community Church.
- ◆ Pat Grogan for again making sure the Christmas Poinsettias are in place to grace the altar for Christmas Sunday and the Christmas Eve Service. And thanks to George Nutting who brought in strips of styrofoam to place behind the skirt in the chancel so the poinsettias would be raised up and could be seen by people who were sitting in the back of Church. Good thinking!
- ◆ Michael Larson, David Sickles, and the members of our Choir for their inspirational music throughout the Christmas season.
- ◆ The Advent Candle lighters: Lynn, Scott, and Zachary Webster; Garcia Passley, Roy and Nigel Pinnock; Emily Hite and Mitchell Hilbert; Margie and Dave Lowry; Scott & Sandy McKeen and Clark, Kim, Cassidy and Carter Bilawchuk.
- ◆ The Christmas Eve readers: Bob Farmer, Karin Farmer, Joyce Harrington, Tyler Hilbert, Bob L’Heureux and Darlene Sanderson. (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.)
- ◆ Dave and Margie Lowry for donating a space heater for the Pastor’s office.


# LOOKING AHEAD

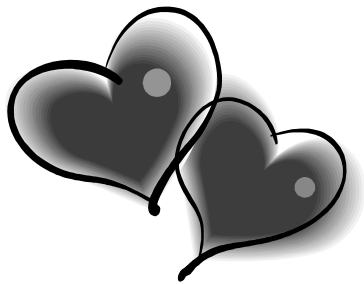
United Parishes Lenten Series  
Begins in March - Dates To Be Announced

**Write down these dates!!**



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

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



# CELEBRATIONS



# For we are laborers together with God...(1 Corinthians 3:9)

## Lay Leaders

January 2 - Martha Hubley  
January 9 - Pat Grogan  
January 16 - Bob Farmer  
January 23 - Jim Holmes  
January 30 - Mattie Cummings



## Greeters

January 2 - Beverly Lees  
January 9 - Barbara Crane  
January 16 - Karin Farmer  
January 23 - Scott McKeen  
January 30 - Lee Cummings

## Coffee Hour Hosts

January 2 - Martha Hubley  
January 9 - Sandy & Scott McKeen  
January 16 - Garcia Passley & Roy Pinnock  
January 23 -  
January 30 - Mattie Cummings



## Memorial Flowers

January 2 - Bob L'Heureux  
January 9 - The Willman &  
Sickles Families  
January 16 - Garcia Passley &  
Roy Pinnock  
January 23 - Hazel Watkinson  
January 30 - David Sickles



## Deacons for January

Sandy McKeen and Dianne Simmons



## *Our Gifts We Bring*

Our Missions Offerings are donations made above and beyond our gifts of the Pledges that we make to support the First Community Church of Southborough's General Operating Budget.

Bob Farmer, our Treasurer, has provided us with the final update for 2010 of what we have collected, raised, and donated to the Missions that we have chosen to support this year.

<i>Missions -- January -- December</i>		
	COLLECTED	DISBURSED
Straight Ahead Ministries	\$500.00	\$500.00
Assabet Valley Pastoral Counseling	\$260.00	\$260.00
Abby's House	\$380.00	\$380.00
Worcester County Food Bank	\$300.00	\$300.00
Church World Service	\$380.00	\$380.00
Love Loaves-Heifer Project	\$40.00	\$0
Love Loaves-World Vision	\$2.00	\$0
Heifer Project	\$560.00	\$600.00
Rape Crisis Center	\$385.00	\$385.00
Southborough Food Pantry	\$50.00	\$50.00
Central Asia Institute	\$385.00	\$385.00
World Vision	\$448.00	\$450.00
Tibet Mission	\$375.00	\$375.00
Salvation Army	\$780.00	\$780.00
Haiti	\$585.00	\$585.00
Haiti Earthquake Relief	\$1,626.00	\$2,190.00
Haiti Cookie Sale	\$262.00	\$0
Haiti Breads Sale	\$252.00	\$0
Haiti Hygiene Pouches	\$50.00	\$0
Haiti-Cholera Relief -- Sunday School	<u>\$35.00</u>	<u>\$35.00</u>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$7,655.00</b>	<b>\$7,655.00</b>

<i>Other Income &amp; Fundraisers -- January -- December 2010</i>		
	COLLECTED	TRANSFERRED
Building Fund - 2010	\$1,568.00	\$1,568.00
L'il Shoppe	\$210.00	\$210.00
Knight Fuel Surplus	\$329.00	\$0
Spaghetti Supper	\$377.00	\$0
Yard Sale	\$752.40	\$0
Bottle & Cans Drive	\$299.40	\$0
International Dinner	\$420.00	\$0
Pie Sale	\$832.50	\$0
Thanksgiving	\$415.00	\$0
Christmas	\$1,238.00	\$0
Christmas Eve	\$210.25	\$0

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>January 2011</h1> <h2>Missions -- Straight Ahead Ministries</h2>						
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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		7:15 PM Diaconate Meeting		7:00 PM Spiritual Study & Growth Group  <i>Epiphany</i>		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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	2:30 PM Spiritual Exploration Reading Group	5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal		7:00 PM Spiritual Study & Growth Group		
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
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	 <i>Martin Luther            King, Jr. Day</i>	5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal		7:00 PM Spiritual Study & Growth Group		 <i>Game Night            6:00 PM</i>
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
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	2:30 PM Spiritual Exploration Reading Group	5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal		7:00 PM Spiritual Study & Growth Group		
30	31					
10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service Coffee Hour following Worship Service	2:30 PM Spiritual Exploration Reading Group					

# For we are laborers together with God...(1 Corinthians 3:9)

## Lay Leaders

February 6 - Sandy McKeen  
February 13 - George Nutting  
February 20 - Joyce Harrington  
February 27 - Lou Dundin



## Greeters

February 6 - Lois & Chet Jacobson  
February 13 - Sandy & Scott McKeen  
February 20 - Garcia Passley & Roy Pinnock  
February 27 - Dianne Simmons

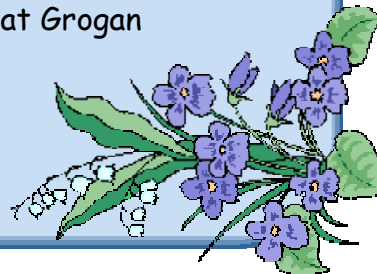
## Coffee Hour Hosts

February 6 - Pat Grogan & Beverly Lees  
February 13 - Annual Meeting Luncheon  
February 20 -  
February 27 -







## Memorial Flowers

February 6 -  
February 13 - Sharon & Skip Willman  
February 20 - Cathy Ten Eyck  
February 27 - Pat Grogan



## Deacons for February

Jim Holmes and Dianne Simmons

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:15 PM Diaconate Meeting	2 	3 7:00 PM Spiritual Study & Growth Group	4	5
6 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	7 2:30 PM Spiritual Exploration Reading Group	8 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	9	10 7:00 PM Spiritual Study & Growth Group	11	12
13 <b>ANNUAL MEETING</b> 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 	14 2:30 PM Spiritual Exploration Reading Group 	15 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	16	17 7:00 PM Spiritual Study & Growth Group	18	19
20 <b>DEDICATION OF CHURCH OFFICERS</b> 9:15 AM Adult Bible Study 10:30 AM Choir Rehearsal 11:00 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship Service Coffee Hour following Worship Service March Newsletter Deadline	21  <b>President's Day</b>	22 5:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	23	24 7:00 PM Spiritual Study & Growth Group	25	26
27 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	28 2:30 PM Spiritual Exploration Reading Group	<b>February 2011</b> <b>Missions - Assabet Valley Pastoral Counseling</b>				