

THE PARISH POST

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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How Far Are You from Your Bucket?

By Dave Buchan, Interim Senior Minister

There's a story of a man who was hired to paint lines on the highway. The first day he went out on the job he took his brush and his bucket of paint. On his return at the end of the day his supervisor asked him how much he had painted.

He said, "I was able to paint two miles." The supervisor thought that was great.

The next day the man came into work, took his bucket and went out to paint. When he returned that day the supervisor again asked him, "How much did you paint?" "I painted one mile today," the man said.

One mile was not as good as two, but it was still acceptable. The third day when the man came in from work he was asked the same question. His response this time was, "I painted about 200 yards."

The supervisor was deeply concerned. "Tell me," he said, "How is it that you painted two miles the first day, one mile the second day, and only 200 yards today?" The painter answered, "The problem is that I keep getting farther and farther from the bucket."

We shouldn't let ourselves get too far from the bucket, should we?

First Congregational Church is a bucket – not of paint, but of faith. It nourishes and shares faith in God so we may lead productive Christian lives.

If we get too far away from the bucket, from the fellowship of faith, life eventually sags and we find that we can only paint 200 yards or less.

There is a scene in the book of Acts where St. Paul speaks passionately about Christ. And the king responds, "Well, Paul, I am almost persuaded to believe."

A lot of us want to move beyond "almost persuaded" to a dynamic faith. We want to paint long lines on the highway of life. First Congregational is here just for that purpose.

Please join us for worship, study and service. It makes a difference.

*In Christ,
Dave Buchan, Interim Senior Minister*

Adult Mission Trip News

Many thanks to all who attended our benefit concert in January, and especially to the performers! It was a splendid evening.

For the mission trip itself, we are looking for drivers to and from the airport. We are hoping to provide rides back and forth to the airport for our members who are going on this trip. If you can drive to New York on March 14 to drop our workers off, or on March 21 to pick them up, please call the church and leave a message for Alison McCaffrey.

We need three cars or vans each time. As always, contributions to help defray the cost of the trip for the participants are very welcome.



Maundy Thursday Worship Group

This year, Maundy Thursday, April 9, will be celebrated as an Upper Room Meal and Worship Service in the Parish Hall. In worship, scripture, and song we will learn about the Jewish Passover meal and the roots of our Communion service as we tell the story of the Last Supper with the help of the Scripture By Heart group.

A small group is now forming to work on all aspects of the worship service: from learning the elements of the Seder to working on the details of planning this event to menu planning and set-up. Something for all interests and all ages. Please sign up for this group at the lobby table, or speak with Alison McCaffrey.

Worship Schedule For February

Sunday, February 1: Services at 9 and 11. Alison McCaffrey preaching. Communion Sunday. Food offerings will be received; the food of the month is canned stew.

Sunday, February 8: Services at 9 and 11. Dave Buchan preaching.

Sunday, February 15: Services at 9 and 11. Dave Buchan preaching.

Sunday, February 22: Services at 9 and 11. Dave Buchan preaching.

Scripture By Heart

You've watched others offer scriptures by heart; maybe this year it's your turn. A new opportunity for "Scripture By Heart" is coming to gather around Mark's Gospel and to share the Passion story during the



Palm Sunday worship service, as well as during the Maundy Thursday Upper Room Meal and Worship service.

An informational gathering will be held on Monday, February 2, at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary. This is an opportunity to come and learn about this group and decide if you'd like to try this.

Regular meetings will begin Monday, Feb. 16 at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary. A sign-up sheet is on the lobby table.

Braving the Weather at Columbus House

What a hearty people we New England Congregationalists are! New Year's Eve day started clear and dry, but by 9 a.m. the snow started, and didn't stop until late in the afternoon.

We were busy at home that morning having AT&T installing new phone, internet and cable service, so were unaware until about 11 o'clock that no one could reach us by phone.

With great faith, we went to the church and were rewarded by all of our faithful cooks with a kitchen full of meatloaf, mashed potatoes and pies! The Cowleses and Garthwaits carefully made our way down to Columbus House to serve a welcome meal to more than 70 grateful people.

Our wonderful Stepping Stones Youth Group sent 100 Happy New Year goodie bags, and Jan Cowles provided ice cream to add to our homemade pies!

What a wonderful way to end our year...and once again thank you to all of our wonderful cooks: Lisa Canas, Donna Mead, Suzanne Lawson, Marianne Eagleson, Betsy Mulé, Carolyn Brown, Becky Cavazuto, Nancy Brunetti, Anne Giddings, Beth Ross, Martha Lape, The Albrechts, Emma Norback, Ruth MacDonald, Pam Euerle, and Carol Cummings.

Thanks as well to the Stepping Stones and their leaders: Deb Brown, Kerrie Dunne, Karen Basset, Steve Mulholland and Andy Shoop; we gave Carl a New

Year's Hat and a bowl with the goodie bags to hand to all, as they got their meal.

He was so pleased to have that honor. Carl is one of the success stories of Columbus House: He started as a resident there, and now has his own apartment and a job. He continues to help in the kitchen there, because of the difference it made in his life.

Thanks again to Jan Cowles, we brought 20 winter coats and some hats and gloves with us. Carl assured us that all who needed coats would have them when they left the next day.

It's hard to describe the warm and wonderful feeling we all experience serving this meal. Thanks to all who make it possible.

Jan Garthwait



Small Chores Leader Needed

The Parish Care Committee is currently seeking a leader for the Small Chores Ministry. The time requirement is minimal and sporadic. When a need arises, you find someone.



You would be responsible for recruiting potential workers and attending a monthly Parish Care meeting. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Donna Mead (donna.mead@comcast.net) or 272-5323 ext. 14.

Christian Education in February

Bible Journeys for Grades 2-6: Grades 3-6 will go to class when dismissed from the church. Watch the bulletin when children leave for class.

Grade 2 at the 9 a.m. service only will leave for Chapel in the early part of the service. After Chapel they will go with their Shepherd to their Bible Journeys workshop.

Parents may find their children in the classroom listed in the bulletin at the end of Church School.

In February, we focus on the plagues God put on the Egyptians leading up to and including Passover.

Thou Art, Room 8: Students will be making “celebration plates” (which they will use for a Seder Meal during their Red Sea Production workshop).

Children will use pictures from magazines that make them “feel good or happy” and glue them to the underside of clear plates.

Red Sea Productions, Room 9: Students will participate in an actual Seder Meal using costumes.

Desert Tales, Room 10: Children will learn about the plagues and Passover through watching “Moses and the Plagues.” After the movie they will have a discussion about what they viewed.

Gospel Games, Room 11: Children will discuss the Passover and the Israelites’

departure from Egypt after reading the Bible story. The children will play Passover ‘Pictionary’ using characters and objects in the Bible story.

Lenten Mission Project Grades 2-8: Heifer Project International is the organization we will help this Lent. Heifer International works with the poor throughout the world.

They help grass-roots groups set goals that are inclusive, achievable and in harmony with the culture and environment.

Heifer provides training, support and evaluation, which includes “passing on the gift” of livestock and learning so that more and more families benefit from your gift. Details about how children will raise money will be coming home soon.

Snacks and juice: 3-year olds through 1st graders are served snacks and juice on Sunday mornings. We have found that asking parents to contribute once a year helps us keep within our budget.

We welcome all contributions and offer a schedule as a suggested way to remember.

Please read labels carefully as snacks should have no nuts, peanut butter or peanut oil. Some suggestions of cookies which have no nuts are: nut free varieties of Chips Ahoy, Oreos, Teddy Grahams, Vanilla Wafers, and Lorna Doone.

Families with last names beginning N to Q, bring snacks in February. Names R and S, March; T to V, April; and W to Z, May.

9:00

Date	Thou Art	Red Sea Prod.	Desert Tales	Gospel Games
Feb. 1	Grades 3 & 4	Grade 2	Grade 6	Grade 5
Feb. 8	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 2	Grades 3& 4
Feb. 15	Grade 6	Grade 5	Grades 3&4	Grade 2
Feb. 22	Grade 2	Grades 3&4	Grade 5	Grade 6

11:00

Date	Thou Art	Red Sea Prod.	Desert Tales	Gospel Games
Feb. 1	Worship	Worship	Worship	Worship
Feb. 8	Grades 2- 4	Week Off	Week Off	Grades 5/6
Feb. 15	Grades 5/6	Grades 2-4	Week Off	Week Off
Feb. 22	Week Off	Grades 5/6	Grades 2-4	Week Off

Lenten Mission Project For Preschool 3-1st Grades: Our younger children will participate in the traditional Heifer Project mission for their Lenten Mission Project. Families will receive a Heifer calendar and an ark.

Families are invited to use the ark and the calendar suggestions to raise money. The children will decide as a class what one small farm animal they will raise money to purchase for a family in need somewhere in the world.

The children love this project as they can relate to the animals and see their money going for something tangible they have decided to buy.

Stepping Stones: Our 5th and 6th grade youth group has been keeping busy each month with mission projects around the state. In December, they ministered to our elderly in Southington Care Nursing Home by caroling. They returned to the church and enjoyed hot chocolate and cookies.

While eating their snacks, they put candy treats they brought into baggies for clients of the Columbus House for New Year's Eve along with a blessing for the new year.

In January, the group made Valentine Posters for the youth in the Cromwell Children's Home. They also sent along some candy. Our college youth also received packages from the church via this group with candy, hot chocolate, homemade cookies and a Valentines card. The college students love receiving packages from the church.

Many thanks to the Stepping Stones youth for their monthly service to others. Thank you to their wonderful leaders Deb Brown, Kerrie Dunne, Karen Basset, Steve Mulholland and Andy Shoop for the dedicated leadership of this group. February meeting will be Friday, Feb. 27th from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

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Fourth Grade Bible Potluck and Program: Saturday, February 7. Potluck Dinner: 4:30 p.m. with program to follow, Dessert and drinks provided by the Christian Education Board.

Please be sure to R.S.V.P. to 272-5323 with your attendance numbers and what you will be bringing for the potluck using the postcard enclosed. Please be sure to indicate your child's full name you want in his or her Bible.

All families of fourth graders will receive a letter in early January inviting them to the Potluck and Program. The program is an introduction for families about using the Bibles with their children. There will be babysitting for siblings younger than 4th grade.

Bible Presentation Sunday is February 8. Fourth graders will receive their Bibles at the worship service they attend.

Malawi Mission Project Update from last February: In February 2008, youth in grades 2-6 studied about Malawi and the mission project our church sponsors. They raised money collecting bottles and recycling them for money. The amount raised was to purchase mosquito nets for children's beds.

Amy Webb went to Malawi this fall and personally purchased as many mosquito nets as she could buy there with the money. She helped to distribute them to children and babies. These nets will save so many lives as they protect children and infants from mosquito borne illnesses. Our youth continue to be missionaries

each year through their Heifer Project fundraising, shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child and UNICEF.



Yutes in New Hampshire

As this issue of the Parish Post was going to press, 21 Senior High youth and adults were preparing to spend the weekend of January 30 through February 1 at the Monadnock Bible Center in New Hampshire for their winter retreat.

Along with many fun-filled activities, there were morning and evening worship times planned, as well as opportunities to explore, along with 225 other youth from around New England, what it means to "Walk with Christ".

We hope to come away enriched and inspired to walk as Christians in our daily lives.

This year our High School youth will take part in the 30 Hour Famine sponsored by World Vision. 30 Hour Famine is an international youth movement to fight hunger.

Students fast for 30 hours and raise funds to help feed and care for children around the world. Our fast will end on Sunday morning March 1 when we will eat together and be a part of worship services. The congregation is invited to share this meal with us. Details to follow.

Things sometimes change quickly, so please check the website www.yutes.org for last minute updates.

Parish Care in December

Here is what your Parish Care Committee and its volunteers did in December:

Bereavement – 3 people were sent the Bereavement Series booklets and invited to join the Bereavement group, which meets once a month on the last Thursday of the month in Room 11 at 7 p.m. The Memorial Service that was held in December was well received.

Birth/Baptism – A welcoming gift was delivered to a member who has just adopted a baby.

Cards – 63 cards were sent containing sympathy, get well, thinking of you and thank you sentiments. We'd like to thank all the people who have volunteered to write notes. Anyone who has received a note from the church was very pleased to receive it.

Caring Visitors – We are currently seeking new Caring Visitors. This is a ministry in which a member of the church who is homebound or shut in welcomes a parishioner into his or her home for a minimum of one visit a month. It is important for the receivers to feel that they are still part of our church, and this is a wonderful way to provide it. If you are interested in becoming one, please contact Donna Mead.

Chores – Charles Jones has decided to step down from his position as leader of Chores. We are currently looking for a replacement. It doesn't require a lot of time, and it is sporadic. If you are

interested in leading this group, please contact Donna Mead.

Meals – Six meals were delivered. Jackie Cole will be the contact person for February. There are sufficient frozen meals at the moment, so there will be no need for any for a while. Please watch the Parish Post for future meal needs.

Prayer Pagers – Three of the 7 pagers were used.

Stephen Ministry – 10 care receivers were ministered to by 9 ministers. A new training class started last month, and we have three members from our church attending.

Telephone – This ministry is in full swing and being very well received. Patti Syme was the caller for November, Joy Hostage was in December and Debbie Wylie was the January caller. Thank you ladies for performing this important ministry.

The Parish Care Coordinator spent a total of 21 hours in December.



About Offering Envelopes

Here's a message from the Financial Secretaries: Please discard your 2008 unused offering envelopes. On the new 2009 envelopes, the number that appears in the left corner is correct. The printing company accidentally printed numbers on the right side, too; ignore them.

Thinking About Pledge Discipleship

We all have our own sensitivities and tendencies about how we handle our money. We grow up with them, it seems. As parents, we're challenged to counter our children's natural inclinations with money. But as adults, we're no less self-determined in our approach to money, and our materialistic culture accentuates this.

When we come to spending our money at church, it's a lot quieter. There are no ads, no commercials, and when someone does "make a pitch," it's remarkably low-key. Stewardship sometimes asks someone to stand up on Sunday morning and tell others why he or she pledges, but even then, no amounts are named, and it's all aimed at a pledge, a non-binding statement.

Some of us come from traditions where giving any money at all to a church on a regular basis may seem excessive – and definitely not a part of the covenant on which the church is based, as it is here. Some of us come from more zealous backgrounds of biblical tithing (giving a tenth of one's income to God).

Yet Jesus clearly means for our giving of money to God to be a discipline (or self-discipline, perhaps). After all, he teaches more on this subject in the gospels than any other except the Kingdom of God. But how in the world are we to make a discipline of our giving – how are we to become disciples in our giving – when we are left so entirely to our own inclinations? Even the basic principle of our economic understanding – the free market – has no

discernible bearing on our spending of our money at church. If it did have a bearing, we would probably have to argue that the inexhaustible supply of God's mercies has somehow worked to lower the price we must pay per unit!

Here's a first step that you might use to become a giving disciple of Christ. Take it upon yourself (no one will know) to think about your pledge not as an amount of money, but as a percentage. Make an effort to link giving to receiving.

It's easiest for pledging purposes to do this on an annual basis, especially if you're on an annual salary or fixed income, but you could calculate it on a weekly or monthly basis if your income is more variable. For example, if you make \$60,000 per year and you're currently pledging \$2,000 for the year (which happens to be the average pledge amount in our church), then you would see that this is a 3.3% return. However, if you earn \$60,000 and your current pledge is \$520 (which is the most frequently pledged amount), then you'll become aware that your pledge is .87%.

A steady amount of \$10 a week (or \$20) probably means a lot less to God than how thankful you are in relation to what you have received. That is the basic principle of this new – or maybe not-so-new – pledge economics, and that is the intent in recommending to you that you view your pledge as a percentage rather than just an amount.

The Board of Stewardship

Notes from the Executive Board

The January Executive Board meeting concentrated on plans for 2009 and beyond. This was also the meeting where we bid farewell to some members and welcomed those who will join us for the next 12 months.

Members completing their tenure in January included Senior Deacon Ford Cole, Trustee co-chairs Ed Albrecht and Rich Kruczek, Member-at-Large Mark Hall, Women's Fellowship representative Addie Marx, and Outreach chair Lisa Canas. These lay leaders have done yeoman duty working throughout the past year to help guide our church through a maze of challenges and special events.

Joining our ranks are Senior Deacon Mark Sullivan, Trustee Co-chairs Martha Lape and Alan Skiparis, Member-at-Large Jim Louys, and a yet-to-be named chair of Outreach.

During the January 25 Annual Meeting, we began a church-wide discussion concerning possible changes to the schedule of worship services. For those who were in attendance, you know that this was a lively subject with many factors to be considered. Our objective is to fully consider all the voices with our church family, to fully communicate everything we hear and learn, and to act only when

we have a high degree of confidence that any change will make us a better church.

Someone recently reminded us that at one time, the worship service used to last over three hours – and that was just the morning session. The point is that what may have been acceptable in an earlier century may not be appropriate today. You will all hear much more about this subject as we move forward.

Your Executive Board is preparing for its annual offsite planning retreat, to will be held in late February. During this session, lay leaders, staff, and clergy will come together to briefly reflect on the past, but more important, to “look over the horizon” and attempt to anticipate the many exciting things God has in mind for us in the coming years. As always, your suggestions and comments are most welcome; contact Bob Mead at (203) 248-9576 or robert.mead@comcast.net.



**Have you remembered
First Congregational Church
in your estate planning?**

Outreach Update

Amy Webb has returned from her visit to Malawi. During her one-month stay, she was able to assess the management of our funds by a competent Malawi group and to organize fertilizer and crop allocations to our orphan families for the coming year. Mark your calendars for Malawi Night, March 12. Come and head about Amy's trip, learn more about the AIDS orphans we help, and enjoy some African drumming. Chad Groshart's trip to Nepal will be coming soon!

We are off to a good Food Mission start this year. In January, the communion donations included 195 food items for Greater Waterbury Interfaith Ministries (GWIM) and 22 boxes of cereal for FISH. Outreach designated \$200 to match our cereal box donations from November, December, and January.

We are blessed with outstanding talent and teamwork: On January 4, the Gulf Coast Mission concert was well attended. Organized by the Rev. Peggy Allen and Christine Fitzmaurice, it featured the talents of: Jonny Allen and his fellow percussionists and friends Erik Lutters and Chris Clarino, who came here from Rochester, N.Y. for this event; classical guitarist Trevor Biggart; vocalists Robin and Jack Sellati; and our youth Praise Band. Outreach hosted the post-concert reception.

Outreach plans to continue innovative service projects this coming year. Thank you to Beth Ross for her three years of


service, including one as chair; Robin Sellati for one year of service; Amy Webb for completing another person's two-year commitment and now starting her own three-year commitment; and Eric Ploch signing on for another year as a Youth member. We look forward to adding five new adult and one new youth members.

It has been my pleasure to serve on Outreach for three years, and it was my honor to represent our Board as chairperson this year. I look forward to the Gulf Coast Mission trip and other ways to serve our Church family.

Lisa M. Canas



Search Team Request

Your Senior Minister Search Team is not finished yet! In an effort to help Jeff and Lori Braun learn names and feel welcomed, we ask that you or your family complete the form on the next page  with some very basic introductory information. It is quick, simple and completely voluntary. Please feel free to include a photo of yourself as well.

Please return your form no later than February 20 to give us time to organize them prior to Jeff's first day on March 16. Forms may be returned to the church office, the SMSC mailbox, by email at seniorsearch@cheshirecongregational.org, or to any search team member: Kirsten Sullivan, David Hostage, Ford Cole, Regine Hahn-Selzer, Joy Deegan, Amy Webb, Jack Sellati, Harry Black, Patti Dickinson.

Welcome, Jeff and Lori!

Family name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Family members: _____

Kids' ages and schools: _____

How long at First Congregational: _____

Current church activities: _____

Occupation(s): _____

What we're passionate about: _____

Anything else: _____

Please cut this out of the Parish Post and send it to the church office.

Martha Lape Endowment Fund Makes Third Donation

This year's donation of \$500 from the Martha Lape Outreach Endowment Fund is being given to the Monteverde Friends School in Costa Rica. We have first-hand knowledge of this school through Laurie Sanders, daughter of Leah and Al Sanders. Laurie and her family spend significant time in Costa Rica, and Laurie's daughter attends the Monteverde School when they are there.

Forty-one of the 94 students at the school receive need-based scholarships, ranging from 10 percent to 90 percent of full tuition. To meet the needs of these students and their families for the 2009-2010 school year, the school needs to raise at least \$60,000. Most of the students are from the rural Costa Rican mountain area, but in all they represent 12 countries of origin, and five languages can be heard on campus.

Laurie was a Youth Deacon here at First Congregational Church, and served on the Associate Minister Search Committee in 1982. She was Cheshire's Environmental Planner before her move to Massachusetts. She has been a lifelong champion for the environment and was affectionately known as "Swamp Woman" (she knew every flower, grass, tree, insect, bird, etc., in our wetlands and beyond).

The Martha Lape Outreach Endowment Fund was established in 2005 with donations made by parishioners in honor of Martha's retirement as Church Administrator. The first donation was given to Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Miss.,

to aid in its rebuilding efforts from Hurricane Katrina. The second went to the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen in New Haven. The money has been invested, and each year the committee of three decides where the interest and any additional donations will be sent. They are trying to rotate the gifts locally, nationally and globally. The committee is: Martha Lape, Pam Euerle, and Leah Sanders.



Milestones

In the Life of our church family

Weddings

Leah Allen to Daniel Jasinski, on December 27, 2008. Leah is the daughter of Ken and Peggy Allen. The Rev. Alison McCaffrey officiated.

Baptisms

On January 11: Mia, Jack, and Billy Syme, children of John and Patti Syme; and Ian Pittsley, son of Christine Pittsley.

Deaths

Kenneth Hale, husband of Mary Hale, on December 14, 2008

Marjorie Beard on December 22, 2008

Albert Bozzuto, husband of Dolores, father of Peggy Conant & Patti Syme, on December 26, 2008

Gertrude Cumming, mother of Cindy Rowe, on December 26, 2008

Former Parish Intern Lynda Bigler is Ordained, Called to Iowa

Editor's Note: Lynda Bigler was at First Congregational Church in 2005-06 as our Parish Intern from Yale Divinity School. She was ordained by the Central Pacific Conference of the UCC at the First Congregational Church in Portland, Oregon.

By Lynda Bigler

Iowa. Who would ever have thought I'd end up in Iowa? After all, "everyone" knows Iowa is inhabited by farmers named Floyd who wear denim coveralls, checkered flannel shirts, and John Deere caps. They spend their days driving their tractors through town when not on the farm. The Floyds are married to women named Wilma, of course. They look just like Floyd except they show a few more curves.

And Iowa has tornadoes for heaven's sake! I've lived through numerous hurricanes and earthquakes, but tornadoes have a category all their own, arriving in the dead of night while you're fast asleep. Isn't Iowa close to the place where Dorothy's cyclone adventure began?

My call to Humboldt, Iowa is an illustration of God's hand in my life. I planned to be the pastor of a multicultural urban congregation, ministering to those society can forget are among us. More than once I got to the top of the call list at such churches, but each time the Search Committee chose the other person because they were afraid my lack of eyesight would hold me back in my ability to minister to them. Discrimination –

both subtle and blatant – are alive and well in the UCC search and call process. It makes itself known when the person with all the gifts a church desires shows up wrapped in a package that doesn't look like what they were expecting.

Humboldt Congregational UCC is the oldest church congregation and building in north central Iowa, situated in a town of about 5,000 folks. It is a green oasis of wide tree-lined streets among Iowa's miles of corn. I can walk or bike to do my pastoral visitation because the town is a grid of streets and flat terrain. Although the main street is only three blocks long, it has everything I need to live there. The people I have met have shown me there is a reason that part of the country is called America's Heartland. And when the congregation unanimously voted to call me, they also unanimously voted to drive me wherever I needed to go, whenever I needed to get there, for as long as I am their pastor. That, brothers and sisters, is radical hospitality that extends beyond the stranger who visits on a Sunday right up to the pulpit.

And about the tornadoes. Humboldt is bordered on the southwest by the north fork of the Des Moines River. According to the people I asked – and the World Book Encyclopedia – tornadoes travel from the southwest to northeast – and they don't jump rivers. And the Congregational Church in the center of town is a testament to this tornado

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pattern.

Yet that isn't the only way tornadoes are a part of this story. Last June I stood in a pulpit in Maine, preaching for a Search Committee, and praying for the Boy Scouts in Iowa, their leaders, and their families after a tornado went overhead at a Boy Scout camp without warning while they were camped there. Four boys died, some were seriously wounded. Our Humboldt home belongs to one of those Boy Scout families whose son was seriously wounded. Yes, God's hand is in this call.

For anyone wishing to visit Iowa after February 1, please feel free to stop by our new home at 408 North Taft Street in Humboldt. You will always be welcome there.

Blessings, *Lynda Bigler*





Women's Bible Study


The next Women's Bible Study sessions are "Acts: Christ's Church in the World." Can anyone encounter the resurrected Christ and remain unchanged? The group, led by Debbie Gravell, meets Wednesdays at 10 a.m. in the Parlor.

We use a study guide; its cost is \$6. All women of the church are welcome to join us when you can, and be away when you must; each week stands by itself. We read the scriptures together, share reflections on the scripture, and close with prayer requests. We will use a Max Lucado Life Lessons study guide.

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select "publications and
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and choose "Parish Post"
(back issues are there, too)

 **Via e-mail**
Get the Parish Post
every month by e-mail!
Simply notify
office@cheshirecongregational.org

Thank-You Letters

My thanks for the bright and beautiful poinsettia I found at my front door the other evening. It was a lovely surprise! Your kindness was certainly appreciated. Thank you! I'd like to wish everyone a happy and healthy new year.

Meryl Cunliffe

I wish to thank you for the poinsettia plant that was delivered to my apartment at Elim Park. Its beautiful red leaves helped to brighten up the Holiday Season.

Robert E. Moseley

Thank you so much for the lovely Christmas plant you left at our door. It was so nice of you. We had just come from a family dinner at Elim Park with our son and wife and 14-month-old twins. We had such a great time with them as this was their first trip from Portsmouth, N.H. We wish God's richest blessings upon you as a church in the year 2009.

Ruth and Magnus Hansen

Thank you for your thoughtfulness; I want to tell you how very much your kindness meant. You all mean so much to me and my family. Thank you for caring!

Dolores Bozzuto and family

Thank you so much for your help, support, understanding and prayers during the past month. It helped me, my family and most importantly, my mother. The whole thing still seems surreal, but what was real were the shoulders and strength you sent with me.

*Dawn De Feo, Director
First Congregational Church Daycare and
Nursery School*

The Malawi Mission Team would like to thank the entire congregation and staff for all of the support that you have given this ministry in the year 2008. Your sponsorships of individual children, your financial donations, your attendance at concerts and your donations of bottle and can receipts have all been a blessing. Your prayers and encouragement for a safe and successful mission trip to Malawi in November have been inspirational. With God's help and your continued support and involvement, 2009 will see our ministry work put down even stronger roots.

Robin Sellati, Amy Webb, Gretchen Bates

To the Church School children: Thank you for the money you raised to buy us mosquito nets!

The children of Nthandizi, Malawi

Lectionary for February

Sunday, February 1: Deuteronomy 18: 15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8: 1-13; Mark 1: 21-28.

Sunday, February 8: Isaiah 40: 21-31; Psalm 147: 1-11; 1 Corinthians 9: 16-23; Mark 1:29-39.

Sunday, February 15: 2 Kings 5: 1-14; Psalm 30; 1 Corinthians 9: 24-27; Mark 1: 40-45.

Sunday, February 22: 2 Kings 2: 1-12; Psalm 50: 1-6; 2 Corinthians 4: 3-6; Mark 9: 2-9.