

Peterborough UMC

March - April 2010

“Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Trouble, they make it a place of springs; the seasonal rains also cover it with pools. They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.” Psalms 84:5-7

Dear Christian Friends,

I have long been fascinated by the word “pilgrimage” which means “a journey to a sacred place”. In my summer sabbatical through the many sacred places and cathedrals of Ireland, I found that God seems to be trying to call his People and the Church to a greater intimacy and deeper relationship with Him. Yet we are all invited on a pilgrimage in this Lenten season as we start the Lenten journey of 40 days. We need to remember, Lent is not primarily about the suffering of Jesus on the cross. Rather Lent is basically about identifying with and accompanying all those who are being driven by the Spirit to make the wilderness journey of pilgrimage toward baptism, reconciliation, greater service in vocation and ministry as the people of God, and towards the re-affirmation of our call to be Disciples of Christ.

Lent is that season where we all, as the Church of God in this troubled world, begin our own pilgrimage journey through a Lenten wilderness time of purification and repentance (or "return") to the basics of our Christian faith. We embark together as a church on this Lenten journey so that we may return to our world with a deeper understanding of God's call in our life to truly be the "people of God" proclaiming the Good News of Christ as we join with Him in the work of "healing the brokenhearted."

While Ash Wednesday begins the wilderness journey of Lent that leads us onwards to the promise of resurrection beyond the death of winter's wilderness, the Lenten pilgrimage is above all a time to come apart and pursue this sacred journey with an open heart in order to enter into a deeper “relationship of love” that God is calling us to. Or as the Prophet Hosea said, *“Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her. There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Trouble, a door of Hope. There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of slavery.”* (Hosea 2:14-15)

Lent is about "simplifying," about letting go of whatever is distracting or hindering us from our Christian call; it is about going "back to basics" both as individuals and corporately as a church body. Lent is about refocusing on our true identity and reclaiming our purpose as God's agents for change and preparing for the proclamation of the Good News of God's Kingdom. Fasting, prayer, repentance, and other devotional practices during this sacred season can bring a renewed vision and strengthen us to fulfill our own purpose and destiny, as we join Christ Jesus spiritually in the fullness of his pilgrimage journey towards Gethsemane and the Resurrection awaiting on the other side.

My friends, we are all called in this sacred season to follow Hosea's instructions from God to *“Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until He comes and showers righteousness on you.”* (Hosea 10:12)

As we walk together on this Easter pilgrimage, may we all be strengthened by the knowledge that our Lord always walks alongside each one of us. For He is our *“shelter and refuge, an ever present help in times of trouble.”* Therefore, let us walk together in faithfulness and love, knowing that *“The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.”*(Zeph. 3:17)

Pastor Betty

Lenten Bible Study

“24 Hours that Changed the World”

Tuesdays through March 30

7-8 PM at the church

Books available, see Pastor Betty

Come to one or come to all

Palm Sunday

April 3, 10AM

This year's we will be using palm crosses made from dried branches of the dwarf palm *Hyphaena coriacia*. The crosses are hand-woven by villagers in Tanzania and neither the trees nor the crosses are chemically treated and are environmentally safe.

The palm crosses are imported by African Palms USA, an outreach ministry of St. John's Church, Olney, VA, founded in 1965 by Father Alan Talbot, an Anglican missionary in Masasi, Tanzania who sought a way for poor farming families to augment their income and improve their living conditions.

The result was turning a simple hand-woven palm cross into a great source of income and humanitarian aid. The net proceeds from the sale of the crosses, and all donations received, are returned to Africa in the form of non-denominational self-help grants to meet basic human needs.

For more information see the rolling bulletin board in the Marion Bagley Memorial Fellowship Hall.

**Maundy Thursday Service
April 1, 7PM**

A moving service held so we may re-experience the Last Supper of Jesus as we join his disciples in this Passover meal and hear Christ's last prayers and his instructions to all who would follow him.

**Good Friday Service
April 2, 12 Noon**

An awe filled time of reflection and meditation as we listen anew to the last words of Christ from the cross.

Easter Sunday Service with communion
April 4, 10AM

The Laity Corner

“⁴¹Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. ⁴²And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2)

Recent studies show that on any given Sunday in 2007, only 17 percent of Americans attended a Christian church. Even more troublesome, as the American population continues to grow, the church falls further behind. If trends continue, by 2050 the percentage of Americans attending church will be half the 1990 figure. Mainline churches have declined by 10 percent in worship attendance from 2000-2007. When we factor in population growth, that decline increases to 16 percent. The United Methodist Church attendance declined 2.3 percent from 2006-2007. The UMC is not alone with some others declining: Episcopal - 4.9%, Evangelical Lutheran - 3.8%, Presbyterian USA - 2.8%, & United Church of Christ - 3.1%. When we combine all Christian churches, numeric church attendance from 2000-2007 has declined by 3 percent. Scary isn't it?

We are doing a lot of things today, but the question remains, are we acting as Jesus would like to see? Are we doing what Jesus would do in these troubled times? Are we praying? If we are praying, what are we praying for? A praying church is a staying church! Are we talking the church and fellow Christians “up” or are we “downing” the church and others? Are we ministering to others, not just members of our own church and congregation? Are we going into our world to reclaim lost sheep? Are we going into our world to gain new sheep for the flock and God’s Kingdom?

Most scholars and theologians recognize the fact that we are living in what is referred to as a “post-Christian” country. Peterborough UMC is a success story in the midst of many sinking churches in New England that are increasingly on the verge of closing their doors. I remember going to a very helpful church growth conference not too long ago that was based on Acts 2:42. It was a conference that provided all sorts of “classes” that were intended to help ministers and laity alike to grow their churches and minister to people “where they are.” The theme was “Extending the Table”. It was a fruitful learning time and great fellowship with many others who have similar interests in growing God’s church and their own church body! Sometimes we forget that the church is not our church, but God's church, and that we need to do what Christ wants and needs us to do to grow His church. As disciples were called to “follow him,” we are all on this earth to grow God’s church, and as we follow the instructions of Jesus to proclaim “the Good News of God's Kingdom, heal the brokenhearted, and free the oppressed,” then our physical church will grow as well! The early church certainly had NO trouble growing in numbers. In fact they grew so fast that scripture states in Acts 2 that:

“⁴¹Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. ⁴²And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³Then fear [fear is not terror, but awe] came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. ⁴⁴Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. ⁴⁶So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:41-47)

Now, let us get to the “meat” and understanding of this key scripture on church growth and understand how it can guide us all as Laity and Ministers of God’s church. There are five functions mentioned in these verses that the church needs to perform to grow as a church: Worship (v.47), Ministry (v.45), Evangelism (v.41), Fellowship (v.46), and Discipleship and Prayer (v.42). These five activities constitute the purpose of the church. It is what a biblically functioning true Christian community looks like. It is what the church must do in order to reproduce itself and grow.

Following is a partial list of things our church is doing. As you read them, do they fall into the previously mentioned five functions of the church? Adult fellowship, Sweetheart Dinner, chicken & biscuit dinner, roast beef dinner, Alpha, Lenten study, Souper Bowl Sunday, members going to lay speaking courses and to leadership conferences, special services (Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, etc.), pastoral care, individual outreach, contact with

others at home, nursing homes, etc., yard sale, junk computer collection, liturgists, ushering, fellowship, choir, organist-piano, special music, special presentations open to the public, adult education, Sunday School, church committee/group service, tithing, donating, and preaching. From this list, I find that we are a blessed and busy church! We are doers! We are called to be disciples of Christ! We are giving of ourselves to the betterment of our community and God's Kingdom! We all need to ask ourselves, however, if there is anything missing in what we are doing as a church that is necessary to grow a healthy church according to Acts 2? What can we do as a church that we are not doing now in order to reach the unchurched who do not know Christ and are part of the 83% of our population who are no longer attending church?

Let us all remember that God is the final evaluator as to what we are doing and how we are doing it, not committees or statistics. We are called to be God's tools, disciples, and ministers. Let us pray that we are doing His bidding according to the full instructions for us in the Word of God!

I would like to finish with a poem from the United Methodist Catalyst from "The Dream" by Wesley Fresndorff, the late Episcopal Bishop of Nevada and Bishop for the Navajo people:

***"Let us dream of a church
in which worship is lively and fun as well as reverent and holy,
and we might be moved to dance and laugh.
Let us dream of a church
with a radically renewed concept and practice of ministry
and a primitive understanding of ordained offices.
Let us dream of a church
so salty and yeasty that it really would be missed
if no longer around
where there is a wild sowing of seeds
and much rejoicing when they take root,
a church so evangelical that its worship,
its quality of caring,
its eagerness to reach out to those in need
cannot be contained."***

God Bless You! Arnie Johnson

PEW BIBLES

Two years ago the church ordered new pew Bibles and we each had the opportunity to purchase them in honor or in memory of someone special in our lives. There are 15 Bibles still available for dedication. If you are interested in dedicating one, please see or email Karen Keenan at mkssk@myfairpoint.net. The cost is \$12.00.

Monadnock Area Transitional Shelter

(from their newsletter)

In 2009 MATS served 4 single adults as well as 8 families consisting of 9 more adults and 13 children from the following towns: Antrim, Bennington, Jaffrey, Milford, Peterborough, and Wilton. They renovated one apartment from a 1 bedroom to a 2 bedroom apartment in order to serve more people and began replacing windows at the shelter with energy efficient windows. Their 2009 income was \$104,320.61 and their operating expenses were \$86,758.37. The surplus is held in reserve against the 2010 operating expenses.

MATS is the local mission that our church supports with our budget.

Support A Child

We have a new child this year!

His picture is posted on the rolling bulletin board in the fellowship hall.

Arun (ah-roon) Hanumanthu is a 5 year old orphan, born June 18, 2004, staying at the Methodist Boarding Home for Boys and Girls in Andhara Pradesh, India. Arun has a very sad and complicated history. Both of his parents contracted AIDS. His father was arrested on a murder charge. According to Mrs. Omega Chandrashaker, the superintendent of the home, there were ten murders in 2005 in the village where Arun's family lived. Arun's father hung himself while he was in jail. His widow was left with two children to raise on her own. She moved into the home of her brother where she soon died from AIDS. Arun was given the responsibility of taking care of the uncle's water buffaloes. A Methodist pastor learned of this sad situation and convinced the uncle to allow Arun to live at the home.

The MBHBG is located in a very remote and arid area. Farming is almost the only occupation and because of a prolonged drought many of the men from this area sought work in other parts of India, leaving their wives and families in the village while they were gone. Unfortunately, many of the men visited brothels when they were away and unknowingly brought AIDS back with them where they infected their wives.

Right next door to the home is a Methodist hospital. Whole families infected with AIDS occupy a single room. When the parents die, the boarding home next door takes in the children. The executive director of World's Children has visited this home 3 times and is quite impressed with the home and Mrs. Chandrashaker. Arun and the other children there are being well taken care of.

The Missions Committee is again asking for contributions toward the support of "our child."

It costs \$25/month to provide Arun with room and board and an education. What a deal!! We also usually send an extra \$20 for Christmas and \$10 for his birthday, making the total we are looking for \$330. If you feel called to this project please contribute any amount you feel you can afford. Checks should be made out to the church and clearly marked "Sponsor a Child." Contributions should be in by the end of April, please.

**One Great Hour of Sharing
Special Offering
March 14**

Gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing lay the foundation of all of the United Methodist Committee on Relief's work by covering the cost of doing business. This means that all gifts designated to specific programs can go 100% to those programs because UMCOR's basic expenses are covered.

Through programs such as the HIV/AIDS ministry at Ganta Hospital in Liberia, and Emergency Relief to Haiti after the earthquake, that help provide healing and hope for some of the world's most vulnerable people, UMCOR is there on our behalf providing help to people in distress.

Our member's contributions to Haiti Relief -\$509.06.

Easter Lilies

Each Easter our altar is decorated with lilies bought by members of our congregation in honor or in memory of friends and family. If you would like to contribute a lily for the altar this Easter, please let the Worship Committee know by completing this form and returning it to either Ellie Strand or Ann Hampson by **March 14, 2010**.

Your name _____

___ I will purchase my own lilies and have them at the church by 11 AM on Saturday, April 3rd

OR

___ I would like the worship committee to order ___ lilies at \$12.00 each. **Please make checks payable to Woodman's Florist.**

For the bulletin, please list below the dedication information for each lily, whether you wish to order or will be bringing you own.

of lilies circle one:

_____ in honor / memory of _____

_____ in honor / memory of _____

Please remember to bring your lily(ies) home with you after the Easter service.

FANNY CROSBY IS COMING TO OUR CHURCH!
Sunday, March 14 at 3:00PM
Don't Miss IT!

A very special program, "An Afternoon with Fanny Crosby," will be presented at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 14, 2010 at the Peterborough United Methodist Church, 43 Concord St (Rt. 202), Peterborough, NH.

Fanny Crosby, one of the best known and most prolific of song writers that has ever lived. Fanny Crosby was a blind hymn writer who lived in the early part of the 20th century who ministered to the downtrodden in urban areas. Although blind since the age of six weeks, she penned some of the most famous and well-known hymns ever composed such as: "Blessed Assurance", "Christ The Lord Is Risen Today", "To God Be The Glory."

Dressed in authentic period costume, the Rev. Ann Nelson will appear as Miss Fanny in a first-person interpretation program entitled, "Her Heart Can See." The presentation will be interspersed with congregational singing of some of the favorite hymns that Crosby wrote.

Rev. Ann Partner Nelson retired in 2005 after 35 years of service as a United Methodist parish pastor. Pastor Ann is currently serving as the Hospice Chaplain in our area of NH. Her husband, John Nelson, will be co-presenter and narrator.

In keeping with Crosby's passionate heart for missions, **a free-will offering for the Monadnock Area Food Bank** will be received. Time will be available after the 1½ hour presentation for the audience to ask questions of Miss Fanny and also of Rev. Nelson. Refreshments and fellowship will follow. All are welcome! Please bring your friends to join us for this great opportunity to visit with the famous Fanny Crosby.

March Birthdays

- 1 Ron LaRoche
- 9 Clara Morland Rush
- 16 Nathan Luscombe
 Laura Nerz
 Nan McCurdy (missionary)
- 18 Glynn Wells
- 20 Phyllis Porter
- 23 Ken Schultz
- 25 Karen Zemken

March Anniversary

26 Arnie and Mary Johnson

**Daylight Savings Time
Begins
Sunday, March 14
Set your clocks ahead one hour**

Chicken and Biscuit Supper

Saturday, March 27

5-7 PM

\$7 Adults, \$4 Children under 12

Creamed chicken on homemade biscuits, coleslaw,
cranberry sauce, homemade desserts and beverage

April Birthdays

5	Bobby Venning	19	Andy Morgan
6	Marion Wilcox	20	Steve Gatcombe
	Courtney Dunning	23	Andy Lawn
11	Pat Woodward	26	Ellen Dunbar
14	Arnie Johnson	27	Anthony Dinino
18	Karen Ravndal-Emery	28	Staci Keenan

April Anniversaries

14	Andy and Pat Lawn
24	Jim and Barb MacInnes
30	Christine and Greg Robidoux

If your birthday or anniversary is wrong or missing,
contact Nancy Luscombe or put the correction in the collection plate.

United Methodist Women

Wed., March 17th at 12 noon at the church

Bring a bag lunch.

Coffee and dessert will be provided.

There will be a short DVD on

Cooper Community Center,
the United Methodist Mission in Roxbury,
MA.

We will also get our planning done for the
year.

Everyone welcome!!

Wed., April 21st at 7:00 PM at the church

Nancy Luscombe will present the program,
"Beauty from Irritation."

Dessert and coffee will be served.

Everyone welcome.

Adult Fellowship

Pot Luck Suppers

6:00 PM

Saturday, March 6

Game Night.

Bring your own favorite game, or come and
join someone else in their favorite.

It should be lots of fun, so why not join us?
Sign-up sheet posted in the fellowship hall.

Saturday, April 10

Program to be announced

(Note this is the 2nd Sat. because of Easter.)

Watch for the sign-up sheet in the
fellowship hall on Mar.28.

All are Welcome.

Questions?

Call Barb and Jim MacInnes, 924-1952.

"...I was in prison and you came to me..."

Matthew 25: 36

If you are interested in joining a prison ministry at the new jail in Marlboro, please contact Pam Kennedy from the West Rindge church. She is coordinating a tour of the facility with the chaplain. A tour is necessary to be part of the ministry. If interested contact Pam at 532-6722 or paknh@comcast.net. The tour date will be set after she has the final number of people interested.

VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION
DOWN EAST MAINE MISSION
(Sponsored by the New Hampshire District)
July 10-24, 2010

Hi Friends,

Once again our team has been invited to return to the Jacksonville Campground in Machias, Maine. This year we have been asked to construct 2 bunk houses and the bunks for the Down East Maine Mission (DEMM). The dates for this project are July 10-24. You invited to participate in either or both weeks. Last year's project (the storage facility) is a tremendous blessing to their missional outreach in that area. This year's project will allow them much greater flexibility in scheduling teams throughout the summer to be working throughout the area. The exciting part of our work is that we will not only be in mission this summer, but our project will enable mission to continue there long into the future as well.

I hope that you will want to be a part of this year's team. This is a great way to invite others from your local church to be involved in the Mission Leap Year as well. The cost will be \$250 for one week or \$325 if you want to go both weeks.

Shalom,
John Blackadar

See Nancy Luscombe for registration information if you are interested.

Lay Speaker Courses Available

Moultonboro UMC, Moultonboro, NH

Saturday, March 6, 2010

First UMC, Littleton, NH

March 27 and April 10, 2010

8:30 AM to 4:00 PM

Registration Deadline: March 5

St. Paul's UMC, Manchester, NH

April 10 and April 24, 2010

8:30 AM to 4:00 PM

For more information see the "Around the Conference" bulletin board

Finance

As of February 14 we are at 13.5% of the year
and have received 11.6% of our pledges.

We have received \$6896 (9.47%)
of the anticipated income.

Roast Beef Supper

Saturday, April 17

5-7 PM

\$10 Adults, \$5 Children under 12

Roast beef and gravy, smashed potatoes,
green bean casserole, coleslaw, beverage
Amaretto cheesecake or yellow cake with lemon sauce

Souper Bowl Sunday for Heifer Project

\$145 was made on soup sold to the congregation

Thanks to Nancy Luscombe and Pat Woodward
for their delicious soups.