

Pastor's Letter



Dear Folks,

My son and I enjoy watching cartoons on the Cartoon Network together. A recurring theme in the "wish" oriented cartoons is the desire that every day could be my birthday!" or "Christmas!" The idea being that celebrating is fun. Getting gifts is great. Partying non-stop is the way coolest way to live. The programs usually take the precise to their absurd end, wherein the main character experiences the law of diminishing returns and discovers that, the thing that makes special days "special" is that they stand out from the ordinary or awful days that come in between.

I tell you this because Holy Week contains some of the most ordinary and awful days of the year, sandwiched neatly between two extraordinary celebrations. Unfortunately, many people are willing to skip Maundy Thursday and Good Friday and keep the focus on the parties. Many people opt for the 2-dimensional, cartoon, wish fulfillment week, over the 3D drama that connects Jesus story to our own.

I pray that this year the 2D trend will start to turn around, and more folks (perhaps you!) will join in the passion that leads us toward wholeness. Please join the deacons and me on:

Sunday, April 1, Palm Sunday, at 9:30am for a musical celebration of our Lord's arrival in Jerusalem.

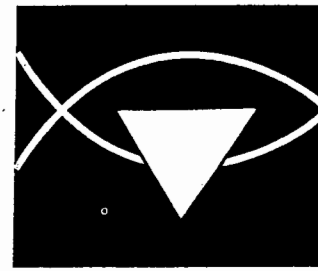
Thursday, April 5, Maundy Thursday, at 6:30pm for a colorful remembrance of our Lord's Last Supper.

Friday, April 6, Good Friday at 6:30pm for the quiet telling of our Savior's final hours.

Sunday, April 8, Easter, at 6am at Quabbin Tower and then at 9:30am in the Sanctuary, for a celebration of the freedom Christ's resurrection affords us.

I hope to see you there.

Aloha,
Todd



United Church of Christ

***This letter will soon be sent to the
Members and Friends of Grace
Episcopal Church in Amherst.
Please read and join us in praying
for our sisters and brothers in faith.***

Dear Members and Friends of Grace Episcopal Church,

The Board of Deacons and I would like to commend you with regard to your decision to enter into the wilderness of solidarity with our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters. Truly your action is based on solid justice theology and we applaud your integrity.

Our church voted 2 years ago to become Open and Affirming (see attached statement). This vote came shortly ahead of the state's decision to allow/acknowledge marriage between same gender couples. These coinciding events made it possible and even desirable for us to publicly recognize loving and committed relationships that sought the sacredness of covenant, without discrimination.

Please know that even our decision to marry people without discriminating has cast us into a wilderness time of discernment. We have had our policies and theology questioned and chastised by clergy and congregations that do not share our experience of God's calling. Fortunately for us, we have the blessing of our denomination. That relationship sustains us.

We pray that your denomination will reflect on its present theological position and be moved to see Christ's glory shining through your witness. Until that time arrives, please count us as your extended family and feel free to call on us for words of encouragement and support.

Sincerely,

Rev. Todd Farnsworth

Board of Deacons

From The Board of Deacons

The Board of Deacons has accepted our Pastor Todd Farnsworth's request for a sabbatical leave from early June 2007 to early September 2007. Todd is exploring a number of professional development opportunities and will be finalizing his plans for his sabbatical over the next couple of months. In the meantime, the Deacons are pleased to announce that Tom O'Brien will step in to serve as our interim minister during Todd's sabbatical. The Deacons are working with Todd, Tom and the Church and Ministry Committee of the Hampshire Association, UCC to prepare Tom for the interim post. This is very similar to the happy circumstances that lead to the posting of Rev. Sherry Tucker as the interim minister a few years ago. As he did with Sherry, Todd will work closely with Tom in the upcoming months so that Tom will be fully prepared by June. We look forward to sending Todd off for a much-deserved sabbatical and welcoming Tom into a new role.

The Board of Deacons



From the Board of Buildings & Grounds



Buildings and Grounds next meeting/work day is Sunday, April 15th following our service. We welcome any volunteers that are interested in helping.

Also, until further notice, please *stay out of the loft area* of the church. We will soon begin a project to repair/replace some of the plaster walls and ceiling. Signs will be posted. And finally, B&G will be evaluating the church's storage requirements. Before randomly placing items that need to be saved in a closet or storage area, please discuss with a member of buildings and grounds. Thank you.

Lost – A lens cap for a camcorder – if found, please bring to church office.

Walk for Multiple Sclerosis

Linda Gumlaw and Laurie Smith are walking in two different walks to help fight multiple sclerosis. Contact them if you would like to make a pledge or join them on their journey!
Laurie – Springfield – April 28th
Linda – Boston – April 29th
Thanks!



Relay for Life - BUCC's Angels

A church group is being formed to walk in the *Relay for Life* coming to Belchertown High School on June 22 & 23. If you are interested in participating in this worthy cause, see Laurie Smith.

Last Communion Sunday Potluck



Breakfast for the Season

We will gather again on April 1st for our last potluck for this season. Breakfast begins at 8 a.m. but drop-ins are welcome anytime. Ideas for dishes to bring include casseroles, fruit, bagels, juice, kid friendly foods, etc. Donations of paper products are also needed. Please come and create a special Palm Sunday memory by enjoying great food and fellowship with your church friends! See Audrey Miller for more information.



Flower Committee

To place flowers in the church for Sunday worship, please call a member of the flower committee: April - Doris Dickinson (323-7052), Easter - Norma Chartier (323-6857) & May - Doris Dickinson. Thank you.



UNITED CHURCH NEWS

The Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ produces a wealth of FREE resources for leaders and friends of our churches. Subscribe to any of the email newsletters currently offered by the Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ, by visiting their website at www.macucc.org. Also available is *The United Church News* which is a bimonthly newspaper available FREE to everyone in the United Church of Christ! It includes sections produced by both the national and Massachusetts Conference settings of the church and is THE source for in-depth news as well as opinion pieces, letters to the editor and more. It is a great way for everyone to strengthen his or her connection to the wider church.

Individuals can also subscribe to United Church News by calling 1-800-363-0575.

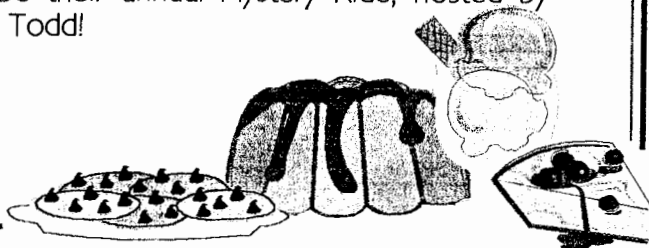
UCC Summer Camps

The UCC offers a wide variety of summer camps for all ages. Themes include: buddy camp, horseback riding, performing arts, "extreme" weeks, day camp, single parent camp, and adult getaway weeks are offered, plus many more! Read all about them by visiting www.grotonwood.org or www.oceanwood.org, or call them at 978-448-5763 or pick up a brochure from one of the bulletin boards in the Parish House.



Home Department

The next meeting of the Home Department will be a dessert meeting at the home of Ruth van Anen at 1 PM on Tuesday April 10th. The group is in the process of creating their schedule for the year and their May meeting will be their annual Mystery Ride, hosted by Rev. Todd!



The Home Department and CWS Health Kits

The Home Department recently sent 33 Health Kits to Church World Service. Thanks to everyone who contributed!

This is an ongoing collection and all donations can be left in the basket in the narthex. See Jane Gabbie with any questions.

Thanks for your support of this very important ministry.

The items needed are:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Hand towels | Bars of soap |
| Toothbrushes | Tubes of toothpaste |
| Band-Aids | Wash cloths |
| Combs | |
| Metal nail files or nail clipper | |



Women Gather for Dinner

Each month the women of the church gather together for food and conversation at Hawley's Restaurant at 5 PM on the second Thursday of each month. See Audrey Miller for more information.



Holy Week

- April 1, Palm Sunday and Cantata, 9:30 AM
- April 5, Maundy Thursday Service 6:30 PM
- April 6, Good Friday service at 6:30 PM
- April 8, Easter Sunday 6:00 am at Quabbin Tower 9:30 am in Sanctuary

Sunday School will not be held during April except April 29th.



Choir

The Senior Choir now rehearses on Sunday evenings at 7 PM. Please consider making a *joyful noise* by joining the choir!



Events in Our Community and Beyond

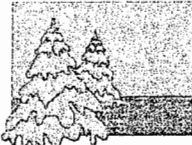
Join our Prayer Line

All are welcome to participate in the Church Prayer Line. If you have any concerns or celebrations you would like to share please call Jane Gabbie at 323-7832 Also, if you would like to participate by being a part of the line, please let Jane know. And now, prayers can be shared by email too. Send your concerns and celebrations to prayers@belchertownucc.org



Snow Cancellations

In case of severe weather, please tune to ABC Channel 40 or check WGGGB.com for our listing. If worship is cancelled, we will be listed.



Family Fun!



The Board of Christian Education is sponsoring Storyteller, Davis Bates in our chapel at 6 PM Friday March 30th. Contact any member of the Board for more details. Don't miss this great night of fun!



SUPPORT GROUP FOR WOMEN

Is there someone giving you a hard time?

Is your relationship stressful or hurtful?

Do you find yourself needing a place to go to talk – to get advice – to get resources?

Please contact the church office (Monday-Thursday 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.) for further information on dates and meeting times at 413-323-7442. Free childcare is provided.

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Thrift Store

The Hospice Shop, a thrift store, located at 18 Bridge St. in Northampton, accepts donations of clothing and household items. The merchandise is resold to customers and all proceeds from sales support the Hospice Program of the VNA & Hospice of Cooley Dickenson. If you have items to donate, please bring them to the store between 10 am & 4 pm, M.-Sat. For more information, please call The Hospice Shop at 413-586-0193. They are also seeking volunteers to help at the shop. If you want to help Hospice and enjoy the camaraderie of others in a fun environment, please consider becoming a Hospice Shop Volunteer. For more information, contact Jean O'Dea at 413-584-4640.

Community Health Screening Day

A *Life Line* sponsored community health screening day will be held on May 8 at Hope United Methodist Church. Pre-registration is required. Call 1-800-324-1851. Prevention screenings for stroke, aneurysm, arterial disease and more are available.

The Belchertown Cultural Council is offering the following FREE FILM EVENT:

The Great Directors Series. Come and join the community to view great films and stay for a discussion. The series will be held on the First and Third Fridays of the Month in the chapel of our Parish House at 7pm. This month's featured director is Woody Allen. *Annie Hall* will be shown on Friday April 6th and *Match Point* will be shown on April 20th. This is a free event but donations will be accepted.



Church Office Hours

Monday-Thursday

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Church Phone - 413-323-7442

Please leave a message.

Church e-mail address -

belchertownucc@yahoo.com

Web site - www.belchertown-ucc.org

Submit information for the weekly bulletin by

Wednesday at 10 AM.

Thank you.





Church Newsletter

Articles for *The Grapevine*, are due on the 24th of each month. Leave your announcement with the church office via e-mail, answering machine or call between 9 a.m. & 12 p.m. 413-323-7442

Thank you.

The Grapevine is published monthly by
Belchertown UCC

Staff: Rev. Todd Farnsworth, Pastor,
Dan Monte Music Director,
Terry Hall, Office



Annual Plant Sale

Don't miss our Annual Mother's Day Weekend Plant Sale coming up on May 12th, 9 AM – 3 PM on the church lawn! Annuals, perennials, bedding plants, hanging baskets and more will be available. Donations are needed! Pots will be available in the Narthex. See Lucy Jamgochian to donate or with questions.



THE NEW YORKER



"This is always my favorite part of the sermon."

EASTER WORSHIPPERS

I am not critical of nor bothered by "Christmas and Easter" attenders. In truth, in our world of pressure, confusion, and alienation, I'm



pleased that something about Christ's coming and something about Christ's promise of new life still draws us and still touches the human heart.

And the honoring – there is really no way to honor anybody – parent, child, mate, whomever, but by spending time with them. The honoring in our worship is, at its simplest, spending time with Jesus Christ.

The Rev. David E. Crossley, Rector, St David's Church, Baltimore, Maryland.

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THE CHILDREN'S MISSION

**BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
"ENCOURAGING YOUR CHILDREN TO BE THE BEST CHRISTIANS
THEY CAN BE!"**



Have you ever looked down on the ground and saw a penny? Have you ever left it there on the ground and said "it isn't worth it, it's only a penny"? Have you ever thought about how much it would add up to if you ever picked up all the pennies you saw?

This year we are challenging the children to pick up those discarded pennies and find out just how much they do add up to. We are asking the children to donate spare change. The money they raise will go towards renovations in the two upstairs bathrooms in the Parish house. The kids will get to see their donations grow in a plexiglas house, to which they can add their donations to every week after the Children's Message from Rev. Farnsworth. We are asking that you encourage your children to donate every week. Every contribution helps; a penny, a nickel, a dime or a quarter.

When the goal is reached, the children will be able to help with the decorating of the bathrooms. The kids will be able to say they not only raised the money, but they also helped design the "new" bathrooms.

There are 50 registered kids in the Sunday School program, so here's how it adds up.

$\$.01$ per kid x 50 kids = $\$.50$ per week x 52 weeks = $\$26.00$ per year

$\$.05$ per kid x 50 kids = $\$2.50$ per week x 52 weeks = $\$130.00$ per year

$\$.10$ per kid x 50 kids = $\$5.00$ per week x 52 weeks = $\$260.00$ per year

$\$.25$ per kid x 50 kids = $\$12.50$ per week x 52 weeks = $\$650.00$ per year

$\$.50$ per kid x 50 kids = $\$25.00$ per week x 52 weeks = $\$1300.00$ per year

Every Penny Counts! Please Encourage Your Children to Donate!

2007 Annual Meeting

of the

Hampshire Association, Massachusetts Conference, *United Church of Christ*

“Our History Leads us Forward”

Sunday, May 6, 3:00 pm

Village Congregational Church, UCC

Main Street, Cummington

We invite you to join us, as we, worship, decide, learn, share, build community, share visions and ***grow in Vitality and Covenant***

† Worship with

Rev. Dr. Jim Antal, Minister and President, MACUCC

All Association choir (rehearsal begins at 2:15)

followed by:

Association Business Meeting

Mini- Workshops:

- U.C.C. History
- Learn & Share for Church Historians
- Warner Farm: Past, Present, Future
- Environmental Stewardship

Fellowship

Each church is asked to: send delegates and friends, bring their church banner, and provide two plates of finger food that hold some meaning to your local church gatherings.

We also ask that each church come prepared to offer one statement of historical or memorable significance to their congregation.

The Village Congregational Church is accessible and located just off Route 9, ½ hour from Northampton. Follow Rte. 9 west to Cummington, cross brown metal bridge, take first right onto Main Street, church is on right, seconds away. Park behind church or on south side of street.

For more information, please contact:

Pat Keith, Hampshire Association Executive Committee and Village Church member.

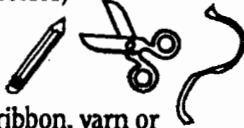
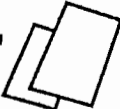
~ 413-634-5084, keiths44@gis.net

A PRAYER REMINDER

Many times we fold our hands together to pray. Here is a "handy" craft that can help you remember what to include in your prayers.

What you need:

- 2 sheets of 8½" x 11" construction paper (different colors)
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Crayons
- 1 piece of ribbon, yarn or string about 6-12 inches long
- Glue (white or glue stick)



What to do:

1. Trace your hand on one sheet of paper.
2. Cut out the traced hand.
3. Tie the ribbon, yarn or string around the pointer (index) finger.
4. Write a message on each finger:
(Pointer finger) God's guidance (pray for help to follow God's ways)
(Middle finger) Leaders in my life (teachers, pastors, etc.)
(Ring finger) Sick and old people
(Pinky finger) Myself
(Thumb) My family
5. Glue the hand onto the other sheet of paper.
6. Start with the ribbon finger and pray for God's help. Then pray for all the people on each finger.



Just for

KIDS

Remember to Pray

There are many verses in the Bible that talk to us about prayer. Solve the puzzle below to see the lesson Paul teaches about prayer in Philemon 1:4. Think about your own life and your prayers.



Use the alphabet code to fill in the blanks, and then read Paul's message.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
 Z Y X W V U T S R Q P O N M L K J I H G F E D C B A

" R Z O D Z B H G S Z M P N B
 T L W Z H R I V N V N Y V I
 B L F R M N B K I Z B V I H"

... Philemon 1:4, NIV

Answer: I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers



April 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 Palm Sunday 1 8 AM Potluck Breakfast 9:30 AM Communion, Worship No Sunday school 7 PM Choir	2	3	4	 Maundy Thursday 5 Service with Communion 6:30 PM	Good Friday Service 6:30 PM 	7
6 AM Worship/Quabbin Tower 9:30 EASTER Worship & Celebration	 7 PM Deacons Meet	1 PM Home Department	7 PM Church Cabinet Meeting	5 PM Women Dine at Hawley's Restaurant	13	14
9:30 AM Worship, No Sunday school 10:30 AM Buildings & Grounds Work Day 7 PM Choir	16	17	18	4 -7 PM Food Distribution	20	21
9:30 AM Worship, No Sunday school 7 PM Choir	23	Grapevine Deadline 	25	26	27	28
9:30 Worship, Sunday school & Youth Group 7 PM Choir	30	 Looking Ahead... ANNUAL PLANT SALE! Saturday May 12th, 9 -3 CHILDREN'S SUNDAY Sunday June 10th				



CHILDREN'S SUNDAY Sunday June 10th