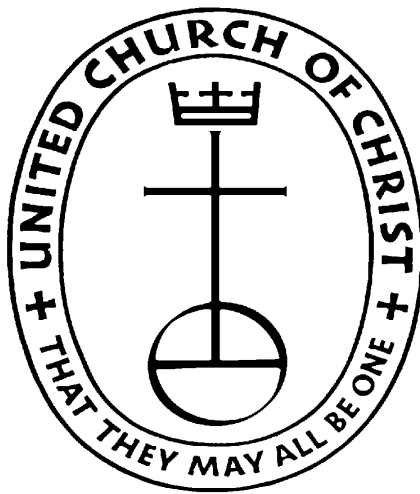


Rindge UCC Deaconer

May, 2009



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Pastoral Letter

Everything is so polarized these days. It seems we are constantly called to take a stand on every issue. Are you for or against the death penalty, prayer in schools, universal health care? Conservative or Liberal? Republican or Democrat? Pro-life or Pro-Choice? We might like to blame the media or politicians, but the plain truth is this either/or mentality is something we easily slip into. It's a form of mental shorthand. Is the person I'm looking at US or THEM.

Two quick and slightly disjointed observations. I was chatting with some relatives on my recent trip to PA, and we were talking about gas prices (a constant source of interest among my frugal German family). I heard that some folks who belong to my childhood church will not purchase gas from a certain station because they think it's run by "Iraqis". The waters of Racism still run deep there. If you don't look, think act, or speak like US, you must be THEM.

How faithful, church-going folks could hold this view is beyond me. It might be one thing to ignore the Pastor's constant call for radical welcome and inclusion, but can we ignore that same call from Jesus? You remember him, the one that ate with sinners and prostitutes, tax collectors and Samaritans?

The witness of scripture models how a people of faith can harbor differing views and still be a people united. "The LORD is my shepherd, I have all that I need" shares space in the Psalms with "The length of our days is seventy years— or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away." To deny these somewhat competing views is to deny the richness and beauty of God's word. Time and time again, scripture says that God shows no partiality, so why should we?

There are two Boston-area T-shirt companies that might seem to be at odds with one another. One is called "Life Is Good", and the other is called "Life Sucks". On the surface, you might imagine the 'Life is Good' folks to be hedonistic pleasure seekers or at least cockeyed optimists. The 'Life Sucks' folks seem to be overly negative, critical and pessimistic. But under the surface, both companies share more than meets the eye. On their website, the 'Life is Good' folks share real letters sent to them by writers with some pretty serious suffering – grizzly bear attacks, terminal cancer, birth defects – all telling how in spite of these setbacks, the "Life is Good" apparel reminds them and others to stay positive in the light of difficulty, and that life can, depending on your outlook, be good. The "Life Sucks" group uses life's mishaps as a way to lighten the load, laugh at our troubles, and encourage others to lighten up. And both companies sponsor programs that help their patrons give back to their communities. They share a common goal – making a positive difference in the world.

As Christians we have no excuse NOT to go deeper and find what binds us together with all humanity, regardless of the ways in which we might look, think, or act differently from one another. We have been marked by an inclusive, loving God, chosen not for membership in an exclusive country club, but to be welcoming servants, compelling all to come and share in the feast. Regardless of which t-shirt you wear, can you find the good in those who wear the opposite shirt?

Worship Schedule for May 2009

May 3 Communion Sunday

Greeters: Sandy and Ken Harding

Ushers: Joyce and Larry Kabat

Scripture Readings: John 10:1-18

Lay reader: Craig Clark

Sermon: Panic Attack!

May 10

Greeters: Joyce and Larry Kabat

Ushers: Alice and Frens Zwart

Scripture Reading John 15:1-8 1 John 4:7-21

Lay Reader: Martha Thomas

Sermon: Heard it through the grapevine

May 17

Greeters: Una and Joe Bigelow

Ushers: Jane Hannon and Sue Campbell

Scripture Readings Acts 10:34-48

Lay reader: Barbara Wells

Sermon: The Frozen Chosen

May 24

Greeters: Lois and Norm May

Ushers: Rick and Janet Kohlmorgen

Scripture Readings Luke 24:36-48

Lay Reader: Bernice Martin

Sermon: Funeral Punch and Finger Sandwiches

May 31 Pentecost

Greeters: Doug and Linda Stather

Ushers: Ken and Sandy Harding

Scripture Readings Psalm 104

Lay Reader: Steve Henrikson

Sermon: What a tool!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

| <u>May Birthdays</u> | <u>Date</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Dorothy Hackett | 1 |
| Dean Skelton | 3 |
| Linda Stather | 3 |
| Nathan Warner (Primeau) | 3 |
| Paul Chace | 8 |
| Vanessa L'Heureux | 9 |
| Zackery Cormier | 10 |
| Abigail Goen | 11 |
| Linda Tower | 11 |
| Emma Bolduc | 12 |
| Ernest St.Pierre | 12 |
| Phyllis Groezinger | 13 |
| Richard Keegan III | 13 |
| Kevin Miller | 14 |
| Joyce Kabat | 15 |
| Eliza Popple | 15 |
| Tatyanna Wunschel | 16 |
| Margaretta Mellen | 20 |
| Marcie Miller | 25 |
| Louis Thomas | 25 |
| Penny Chace | 30 |

May Anniversaries

None

May Meetings

Thursday, May 7 @ 5:30 pm - Beginnings Session #6: How does God speak to me? *The Bible*

Thursday, May 7 @ 8:00pm – Common Grounds Coffee House

Tuesday, May 12 @ 7:00 pm – Trustees Meeting

Saturday, May 16 – Beginnings Sessions 7, 8 & 9: Exact starting time TBD

If I don't feel lost, why do I need to be found? *Salvation and Conversion*

Can I start again? *Forgiveness and Wholeness*

How do I speak to God? *Prayer*

Tuesday, May 19 @ 7:00 pm – Rescheduled Council Meeting

Thursday, May 21 @ 5:30pm - Beginnings Session #10: How can I make a life and not just a living?
The Good Life

Thursday, May 28 - @ 5:30 pm – Beginnings Session #11: Why should I join any group that will have me as a member? *Church Membership*

June 2 - @ 7:00 pm – Book Talk: **The Five People You Meet In Heaven** at the Goodrich's home.

Special Common Grounds performance

Common Grounds Coffeehouse welcomes Canadian fiddling sensation Cynthia Macleod to a special performance on Thursday, May 7 at 7 pm.

From her home base in tiny Prince Edward Island, Canada, MacLeod has built an international reputation that is expanding around the globe, strengthened by a touring schedule that has taken her across Canada, through New England, and as far away as Japan. In a part of the world known for dazzlingly talented fiddlers, fellow musicians have awarded her more than a dozen awards, including multiple awards as Roots/Traditional Artist of the Year and Instrumental Artist of the Year. She has also twice been chosen by audiences as Entertainer of the Year.

And all this before she's 25 years old.

In that time, she has produced three critically-acclaimed (and top-selling) CDs. *Head Over Heels* (2002) won her instant credibility with a hard-bitten music industry and was named Album of the Year. Her second CD, *Crackerjack* (2004), built on her growing reputation as a precise, lively interpreter of traditional fiddle music. *Hot Off the Floor* (2007) combined that traditional sound with newer compositions and cemented Cynthia's place among the very best in East Coast fiddle music.

Her growing fan base across Canada and throughout the New England states knows what to expect from Cynthia - soft-spoken down-home charm followed by a high-energy, electrifying show with fun, fiddle, and step-dancing - and often all three at the same time!

All shows are \$8, or \$4 with a valid student ID, with tickets available at the door the evening of the show. The ticket price includes beverages (coffee, tea, water, or soft drinks), with homemade desserts available for purchase. ***We could use some dessert donations – please let Pastor Jim know if you can help out.***

Doors open at 7:30 pm, with shows from 8 pm to 10 pm. In it's third season, Common Grounds, sponsored by the First Congregational Church, provides a venue for acoustic music in an intimate and relaxed setting and offers listeners a smoke and alcohol-free setting in which to experience quality musical performances while supporting New England area musicians. Anyone interested in more information may call Jim Melhorn at (603) 899-2268, or visit the Coffeehouse link on the Church's website at www.rindgeucc.org.

BOOK TALK

Have you given thought to joining us for “**Book Talk**”? Book discussion groups enrich our enjoyment of reading by providing an opportunity to share our impressions and hear other peoples’ opinions. They also strengthen our sense of community by providing opportunities for us to discuss ideas and interests, and to share experiences. It’s a wonderful way to strengthen ties with friends and neighbors as well as form new connections.

Our next selection is **The Five People You Meet in Heaven** by Mitch Albom. The author gives us a thought-provoking original story that will change everything you've ever thought about the afterlife – and the meaning of our lives here on earth. It's both a story of a particular man named Eddie, and an open invitation to discuss its themes of love, grief, and the struggle to find our place in the universe.

Join us on June 2 at 7 PM for our next book talk at the home of Burt and Jan Goodrich. [74 Paradise Island Rd. / 899-5780] Have a friend who enjoys a good book? Invite them to come with you!

Deaconer Distribution: Mail, Pick-up or E-mail

We currently distribute the Deaconer in three different ways: by US Mail, in printed format to be picked up at the church and e-mail. Our goal is to provide it to you in the most cost-effective way. However, we know that many don't or can't use email due to the lack of high speed internet available here in town. In any case, if you would like to receive the Deaconer differently than you do today, please let us know by leaving a note in the Membership Committee's church mailbox or emailing your information to Marcie Miller at QuiltMM@gmail.com.

Membership Database

As you may know, the Membership & Evangelism committee maintains a database of our church family's names, addresses, phone numbers, birthdays, wedding anniversaries and email addresses, which allows us to keep in touch with everyone. To that end, it is important that our data be accurate and up-to-date. So, please let us know if or when your information changes or you notice an omission or inaccuracy. Email updates to Marcie Miller at QuiltMM@gmail.com or leave a note in the Membership committee's mailbox at church.

Also, did your **email change from Verizon to Fairpoint**? Please notify us of your new email address!

Do you have children at college who have email? Let us know their email and we'll include them on the church email list.

The Rindge men's club of the First Congregational Church will host their annual Mother's Day Breakfast on Sunday May 10th at 8:00 A.M. in the meeting house. The guest speaker will be Amanda Borozinski of the Keene Sentinel staff. All are welcome.

Wachovia Securities is holding a Seminar on Identity Theft, Thursday May 21, 2009 at the Wellington Field Recreation Building at 7:00 PM. Refreshments will be served. Everyone is welcome(Folks can Bring a Friend) and it is FREE.

News from the NH Conference

The Quarry / UC News

Due to financial considerations the National Setting of the United Church of Christ will cease publication of UC News with the August-September issue. The New Hampshire Conference wrap-around edition, The Quarry, is being discontinued with the April-May issue, which was recently received by subscribers.

We regret this loss of such valuable print communication vehicles, but we are not currently in a financial position to continue publication ourselves. Please invite your members and friends to subscribe to The Weekly News by requesting it and sending a current email address to Helen McGlashan or by phoning her at the Conference Center, 1.888.642.8229 (toll free in NH).

A monthly, copy-ready bulletin insert about NH Conference ministries will be available to church leaders starting in May. We encourage you to reproduce this insert in your print and electronic publications.

YES WE CAN . . . END HUNGER

Saturday, May 2, 2009
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

New Hampshire Conference Center
140 Sheep Davis Road
Pembroke, NH 03275

Keynote Speaker: Arthur Simon, President Emeritus and Founder of Bread for the World

Panel Discussion: Hunger in America: Why Do We Have IT, How Can We Change It?

Workshops:

CROP Hunger Walk

Talking to Our Legislators: How Can We Make Policy Change?

Write, Call, Email: An Effective Bread for the World 2009 Offering of Letters Campaign

Event Sponsors:

The New Hampshire Council of Churches

Church World Service - New England

Bread for the World

Cost: Suggested Donation of \$10.00, includes breakfast and lunch

To Register: Please contact, David Lamarre-Vincent, Executive Director, New Hampshire Council of Churches at 603.224.1352.

Summer Camp Update

Interested in helping out at Horton Center located in Gorham, New Hampshire this summer? The New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ is looking for chaplains and volunteers for camp this summer. See details below.

Chaplains are needed for the following sessions:

July 5 - July 11 (Mid High)

July 12 - July 18 (High School)

July 26 - August 1 (High School)

August 2 - August 5 (Elementary)

August 9 - August 12 (adults)

August 13- August 16 (family camp)

Volunteers may be asked to supervise cabins overnight, help guide campers through the day, help lead or lead the bible study and help in other camp areas. Volunteers would be asked to be available for a session and must normally be 18 years or older (Under 18 maybe able to assist in some areas with Elementary camps). Room and board is free.

Volunteers are needed for the following weeks:

June 30 - July 4 (Elementary)

July 5 - July 11 (Mid High)

July 12 - July 18 (High School - Arts Alive)

July 19 - July 25 (Mid High)

July 26 - August 1 (High School)

August 2 - August 5 (Elementary)

Several of the specialty camps (one Hut to Hut and one Canoe) are now full, but a few still have one or two spots available. Our "regular" camps are growing in size every day, but we still have room. You can register on line at Outdoor Ministries Website or call or e-mail Robert Vodra for a brochure and registration form.

Church Council Minutes April 21, 2009

Present: Mary Jane Sawyer, Phyllis Groezinger, Jane Hannon, Ellen Gadegaard, Jeanne Norwood, Marcie Miller, Pastor Jim Melhorn

Leaders Gathering in the Presence of God

Worship/Prayer/Scripture/Sharing:

Jim led us with a reading from Luke and a subsequent discussion.

Old Business:

March minutes: were approved as presented.

Retreat planning:

- Jim and Janet Goodrich recently visited three potential sites/venues and are compiling

their comments in preparation for making a final recommendation for a fall retreat.

- A follow-up meeting will be scheduled soon.

Giving Tree:

- Mary Jane has sketched the “tree” based on Jim’s stole and should have it constructed by next meeting.
- All agreed we need someone to step up and be the “owner” of the activity. Jim will find someone to work with him to lead and administer this effort.

Updates to committee schedules, chair, recorder and council rep:

1. Committees are reminded to get their committee’s information to Janet Goodrich ASAP!

Church Council: By-Law responsibilities:

2. We are asked to review this document (handout provided in meeting materials) and be prepared for discussion at the next meeting.
3. Each committee should also review their committee’s description and responsibilities in the constitution and by-laws to ensure that it is accurate and complete.

Listening for God's Word to the Church

Guided Discussion

Discerning Your Congregation’s Future: Jim continued our discussion using the polarity model and we had a lively discussion centered on movement (like the civil rights movement) versus institution. We spent a great deal of time talking about where our church fits on this model. Several key points were identified as we focused on many generational/age differences with respect to work. The big question is where do we go from here?

Congregational Health Inventory: Jim has received five or six and will provide copies to others as needed. Please complete one and return it to Jim as soon as possible. We plan to discuss the results at our next meeting.

The Church Responding in Faith Action Items – New Business – what decisions need to be made?

Pastor’s Housing Allowance

- Jane and Marcie provided two documents which summarize the Trustees recommended changes to Jim’s salary structure and contract in support of his house purchase instead of living in the parsonage. The Trustees relied on research and review of IRS, NH UCC Conference and UCC Pension Board documentation and regulations to develop these documents.
- The amendment documents Jim’s compensation, which will not change in total, but identifies that this compensation will be divided into three parts: salary, housing allowance and social security allowance. The benefit to Jim is that his income tax responsibility will be significantly lower.
- The addendum adds a statement to his contract that provides the church the ability to review Jim’s salary if or when the parsonage is sold or becomes income-producing.
- A motion was made to accept both the amendment and addendum as presented by the trustees which updates Jim’s 2000 employment contract. The motion passed unanimously. The housing allowance of \$28,700 will become effective on May 1, 2009 and will remain in effect until modified.

Music Committee Request:

- Ellen asked Marcie and Jane to clarify the amount and availability to use the music

stock fund interest.

Leaders Going out to share the Good News

Upcoming plans/events – Ministry groups within the church (not reading minutes)

Yard Sale – May 2nd - Jane is looking for assistance

May Breakfast – May 23rd - still needs a coordinator

Financial resources/stewardship – how are we doing financially?

We're doing okay, no surprises to date. However, it's going to be a difficult year. Reports are available on the bulleting board.

Closing worship/prayer - Jim ended the meeting with a prayer

Reminders: **Deaconer deadline is the 23rd of each month – send/email to Lorri Bond**

Please update the hall calendar with events, scheduled meetings, etc.

Don't forget to send items to Tony D'Ambrosio for the church's website

Next Meeting: **TUESDAY, May 19 (Note change in date)**

Respectfully submitted,

Marcie Miller, acting scribe