



NEWSLETTER, MARCH 2008

The First Congregational Church of Georgetown United Church of Christ

Come Share the Bounty of God's Love...

Grow With Us!

7 Andover Street, Box 200 • Georgetown, MA 01833 • (978)-352-8443 • www.georgetowncongregational.org

It is hard to believe that our Lenten journey is coming to an end, and so soon in the calendar year! Before we know it, Holy Week will be upon us, as will many opportunities to gather as a community to worship God and remember the life, death, and continued presence of Jesus the Christ.

The week begins with Palm Sunday. On March 16 we will remember Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem where the crowds welcomed him by raising palm branches in the air and adorning the street with their cloaks. "Hosanna," they shouted. "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of God!" On Thursday, March 20 we remember the last meal Jesus shared with his closest disciples, a Passover feast, through which they recalled the freedom God provided their ancestors who were slaves in Egypt. In honor of the Passover, we will share a pot luck meal together in our fellowship hall. Following that meal we will move upstairs to our sanctuary and share a Tenebrae service. At that point the mood will change from a festive celebration to one of somber reflection. Through scripture lessons, choir anthems, and the extinguishing of candles, we will remember the final moments of Jesus' life and his death upon the cross. Then our grief turns to joy on Easter morning. On Sunday, March 23, we will gather on the hill at Penn Brook school (bright and early at 6:30 A.M.) and again at church (10:30 A.M.) to hear the eyewitness accounts of those who found an empty tomb and proclaimed the resurrection of Christ. As in recent years, we will decorate a stark cross with carnations during the service and celebrate the good news that Christ is risen.

I hope you will join us for these sacred moments during Holy Week. Our Palm Sunday and Easter morning services are designed for all ages so bring the entire family. Maundy Thursday is geared towards a slightly older crowd, but it is a worthwhile experience for young and "older" alike. We hope you will come and encounter this powerful and emotion-filled story once again.

On a more personal note, Sara and I are experiencing an emotion-filled journey in the days leading up to this sacred week. I hope, by now, you have received news that we are stepping down as your Co-Pastors. Our last Sunday with you will be May 18th and our last day in the church office will be May 23rd. Pastoral transitions are never easy and we are glad to have the coming weeks to engage in the important process of saying good-bye. We have so many fond memories of our time here with you and are grateful for your friendship over the years. And we'd like to tell you that in person. Please give us a call and make an appointment to meet us in the office, your home, or out for a cup of coffee/tea. It is our hope that, difficult as it may be, saying good-bye will be one more sacred and Spirit-filled process during this holy time of year.

God Bless,

Pastor Eric

Holy Week Events

Sunday, March 16th Palm Sunday

Join us for our traditional Palm Sunday service at 10:30 in the Sanctuary, where we will wave palms in remembrance of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Thursday, March 20th Maundy Thursday

At 5:30pm in the Fellowship hall we will share a Pot-Luck Seder Meal, sponsored by the Diaconate. During this Passover celebration we will remember the Hebrew People's escape from slavery in Egypt, and their deliverance into the Promised Land.

The Seder will be followed by a Tenebrae service at 7:00 in the sanctuary. In this service we will recognize the last moments of Jesus' life and his death on the cross.

Sunday, March 23rd Easter Sunrise Service

Come join us at 6:30am at the Penn Brook School, Elm Street, Georgetown as we watch the sun come up and remember the joy of resurrection. We worship in the Upper baseball field.

Easter Worship Service

At 10:30 in the Sanctuary we will once again lift up the miracle of Christ's resurrection.

Easter Flowers

Easter is Sunday, March 23rd. The Diaconate is collecting contributions for the Memorial Easter Flowers. If you would like to contribute, please fill out the information below. Your memorial will be included in the Easter Sunday bulletin.

MEMORIAL EASTER FLOWERS

To the Diaconate:

Yes, I would like to make a contribution (in any amount) \$ _____ towards flowers that will beautify our sanctuary and then be taken to our Homebound and recently Bereaved Members. Please make checks payable to Kristen Arsenault, 33 Garden Road, Unit B6, Plaistow, NH 03865, (or you may place your contribution payable to Kristen in the collection plate during the worship service).

The deadline for receiving contributions (memorials will be printed in the Easter Sunday Bulletin) will be Wednesday, March 19th, 2008.

IN MEMORY OF (Please Print):

FROM:

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

Church School Class Schedule with Lesson Topics¹

Sunday, March 2 STUDENTS BEGIN IN CLASS

Focus Scripture: John 9:1-41

No Limits on Love

Rules and traditions intend to set helpful limits. Yet even the best-intentioned may be narrowly viewed so as to lose sight of what is needed: love. God sees and works beyond constricted perspectives so that opportunities to restore and anoint are not lost. Do we see and act that way? Or does fear of breaking with the old--or being open to the new--blind us?

Sunday, March 9 STUDENTS BEGIN IN THE SANCTUARY

Focus Scripture: John 11:1-45

Out of the Depths

Doubt and belief abound when death asserts that life and hope have boundaries. This week's readings assure individuals and the community of God's people that the life, hope, and comfort we find in God's care are boundless. Our song, even in the midst of tears, gives witness to such amazing grace and love.

Sunday, March 16 STUDENTS BEGIN IN THE SANCTUARY

Focus Scripture: Matthew 26:14-27:66

To the Cross

Questions. Doubts. Belief. The readings for Holy Week hold these in tension, even as God holds us. God hears our voices and tends to our needs along this journey to the cross, as we shout "Hosanna" and cry out "Why?" Even when there are no words to express our wondering, God invites our trust. We are safe in God, whose hands hold all our times.

Sunday, March 23 EASTER SUNDAY

NO CHURCH SCHOOL

Sunday, March 30 STUDENTS BEGIN IN THE SANCTUARY

Focus Scripture: John 20:19-31

Faithful Doubt

Christ greets fearful disciples with the word of peace and the gift of Spirit. Easter joy results. Even Thomas' doubt becomes faith's stepping-stone rather than

¹ Lesson titles and descriptions are taken from our church school curriculum, *Seasons of the Spirit*.

stumbling block. What kind of faith does God seek? God seeks trust that witnesses to a living hope; joy that celebrates God, who opens paths that lead to life.

To learn more about our church school and sign your children up for classes, please speak with Pastor Eric.

NEXT TEACHERS' MEETING: Sunday, March 9, 9:30 a.m.

TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES!

We have several openings in our teaching roster for the Spring Semester. We need people to work in teams to help teach the following students:

1. 3, 4, 5 Year Old Class
2. First through Fourth Grade Class
3. Fifth through Eighth Grade Class

If you have been a member or friend of First church for at least one year, would like to learn more about the Bible and our faith in a fun environment, and can dedicate a few hours a month to support our children and youth, team teaching church school may be a good fit for you!

Classes are generally 20 to 30 minutes long and run concurrently with worship. Teachers are provided curriculum which includes a detailed lesson plan for each session. The Christian Education Committee sponsors monthly teachers' meetings led by Pastor Eric to offer support for your lessons and he is available to meet with you at other times to answer questions and provide assistance. With a full roster of teachers, this will be a one to two Sunday a month commitment until our classes conclude on Children's Sunday on June 1st.

Please contact Pastor Eric to discuss this opportunity to learn and grow with our students.

Thoughts and Letters

Junior Choir and Bell Director

Dear Church Members,

I have been a member of this Church for about 50 years. I've served as Sunday School Superintendent for 23 years, Senior Choir Director for 40 years and Bell Choir Director for 27 years. I wasn't paid for this work but I have enjoyed it very much.

With great regret, I am resigning as Junior and Bell Choir Director. I will miss the music, the children, the ringers and my friends.

Evelyn Boose

Thank You Notes

Thank You Evelyn Boose...for your many years of service and dedication to this church. You have filled our sanctuary with music. You have taught our children about God's love through Biblical stories and song. You thrilled us with your Broadway Bells productions. And you have blessed us with your friendship for many, many years. Thank you!

Dear Church Family:

Another birthday-another beautiful rose. Thank you!

Bud Hamelin

Dear Church Family,

Thank you so much for all your kindness and expressions of sympathy after my father's passing. Your support and prayers mean so much at such a difficult time.

Faithfully yours,

Donna DeSisto and family

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for the meaningful card and white poinsettia we received at Christmas. It was appreciated and beautiful.

Bud and Florence Hamelin

Dear Church Family,

Thank you so much for your prayers and cards and for the beautiful basket of flowers from the Board of Christian Education. I am recovering slowly but surely and hope to be back at church soon.

Regards,
Jaime Krenn

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for the poinsettia and visit from Kristen Arsenault.
Thank you for remembering me.

My Blessing, Love,
Lillian Kelloway

Prayers

Please keep in our prayers:

the family and friends of Don Gordon, who passed away in February. A memorial service was held at First Congregational Church on February 9th. Don was a dear friend of this church and very active in the Georgetown community. He will be missed.

Donn Chatterton who is recovering from recent hospitalization.
Jaime Krenn who is recovering from surgery.
Ralph Turgeon who is recovering from surgery.

Congratulations

Samantha McClure, daughter of Denise and Jeffrey McClure who was baptized on February 10th.



Happy Birthday Wishes
March



March 2nd

Lewis Pingree

March 10th

Rolland Spofford

Groups and Committees

Moderator's Corner

By Tom Stewart, Moderator

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and the initial plan that has been formulated with the United Church of Christ (UCC) Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Carol Atwood-Lyon, to address our up coming pastoral needs.

First, on a personal note, my wife Jo and I have been married for 14 years and moved to Georgetown prior to our twins being born in 2000. Time has flown by quickly as Skye and Cameron, who will be eight years old in April, are in the second grade at the Penn Brook School. We have attended church at the First Congregational Church since moving here in 2000. Professionally, I maintain three separate licenses as a Marriage and Family Therapist, Mental Health Counselor and Guidance Counselor in Massachusetts. I have approximately four years of non-degree postgraduate training primarily in family therapy theory and practice. Since the twins were born I have been a full time stay at home parent while Jo works as a Pharmacy Manager in a very demanding profession.

Following the resignation of our Co-Pastors, Sara and Eric Marean, I reviewed the bylaws of our church and immediately scheduled a meeting with the UCC Associate Conference Minister Rev. Carol Atwood-Lyon. Our bylaws clearly state it is the responsibility of the Diaconate to search for an Interim Pastor. Diaconate Chair, Jeff Fitzpatrick, has worked closely with me in scheduling a meeting with Rev. Atwood-Lyon and the Diaconate. We plan to meet on Tuesday February 26th to overview and plan for the Interim Pastor search process. Additionally, as time has allowed, I have met with and had telephone contact with several committee chairs and members of the church. It is my goal to reach out and speak with as many committee and church members in the months to come.

Lastly, the UCC guidelines recommend the Search Committee for a full time settled Pastor be formed after our church says our final goodbyes to Pastors Sara and Eric Marean and the Interim Pastor settles into his or her role. The bylaws clearly state it is the responsibility of the Moderator to "appoint, when the need arises, a Pastoral Search Committee of seven, nine, or eleven members." This responsibility requires careful, thorough and thoughtful consideration as well as input from all interested members of the Congregation. I am interested in hearing the thoughts, feelings and opinions of all who are involved in our church. Please feel free to contact me if you have issues or concerns you would like to discuss. I look forward to serving as your Moderator.

Trustees

1. SPRING IS IN THE AIR!!!

Which event below reflects that Spring is here?!

- a. Palm Sunday
- b. Red Sox in Florida
- c. Warming temperatures
- d. Mud in the house
- e. Easter Sunday
- f. Church "Clean Up" Day

The answer is All of the Above.

The Trustees are looking for volunteers to assist with our Annual "Spring" Clean Up scheduled for March 15th. We anticipate that the cleanup will take between 3-4 hours. Whatever time you can contribute is appreciated. Look for sign ups after Church service. THINK SPRING!!!

2. Mr./Ms. Fix It

Have you noticed something in need of repair? (Sorry, only church related fixes) Is there anything that needs to be cleaned? If so, please speak or contact the "Fix It" crew, better known as the Trustees! We'll take note of the request and try to fix it as quickly as we can. Current trustees are: Rich Brock, Chairperson, Allan Barlow, Jo Stewart, Glen Cryan, Chris Pinto, and Jeff Gillen.

3. Snow Removal

The Trustees are looking for volunteers who would be willing to help remove snow from walkways, stairs, and entryways. Snow that is not cleared soon changes to ice, so the Trustees make every attempt to keep these areas clear. However, there are times when we are not available, whether due to work schedules, vacations, etc. These are the times when we need your assistance. Look for sign-ups at Church or contact Rich Brock (352-6853) with questions.

The Women's Guild

Bring Your Own Sandwich Lunch

Thursday, March 27 at 11:30 am

(Note: A Snow Date will be Tuesday, April 4th)

The program for this meeting will introduce us to a mission project that is sponsored by Rotary Club International. Guest speaker, Lisa Bartlett, owner of Georgetown Photo, has put together a program of her reflections and photos from a mission trip she undertook in the spring of 2006 to Columbia. She went in the official capacity of trip photographer for Rotary. There she witnessed the transformation of children's cleft palate deformities into miles of smiles through the volunteer efforts of a team of dedicated doctors. This medical problem could be prevented through proper nutrition. A free-will offering will be taken.

Women's Guild Penny Bowl: The Penny Bowl is accepting contributions of your pennies and loose change for the month of March. Look for our Penny jar in the Fellowship Hall. If you pockets and purses are loaded down with pennies, consider emptying them into the Penny Bowl. If your piggy banks are overweight and need to go on diet, bring them into church and make a donation to the Penny Bowl. These funds are used by the Women's Guild for the materials in making quilts for babies in crisis, plus other mission projects. Thank you for your support.

Youth Group

Senior High Youth Group

Sunday, March 9th, 2:30-6:00

Meet at the Church before we go to Checkered Flag Indoor Karting in Haverhill, where we will be doing some Formula 1 racing! We will be having two races, pizza, drinks, and lots of fun!

Sunday, March 30th 6:00-7:00 pm

Regular meeting to prepare for our Youth Sunday.

We look forward to seeing you.

Susan Stead

Middle School Youth Group

March 9th,

Outing to be announced

March 30th, 5:00-6:30

Regular meeting here at the church. See you there.

Announcements

One Great Hour of Sharing takes place on Sunday, March 2nd.

Your contribution to One Great Hour of Sharing carry God's message of love and hope to the people in more than eighty countries! The United Church of Christ works with international partners to provide sources of clean water and food, education and healthcare, small business, micro-credit, emergency relief, and advocacy/resettlement for refugees and displaced persons. Your gifts also support domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response.

Read about transformed lives at www.ucc.org/oghs
Together we can make a world of difference!

****Refer to the calendar at the end of the Newsletter for family activities
related to One Great Hour of Sharing**

Blessing of the Animals

For many of us, animals are an important part of our lives and our families. And so, on Sunday March 9th, we will honor our animal friends through a "Blessing of the Animals" Service. Bring a picture, a collar or leash, any memento of your favorite animal friend and together as a community we will bless them from afar.

Bread Exchange Sunday

On Sunday, April 6th we invite you to participate in our "Bread Exchange Sunday". Bring a loaf of bread, homemade or store bought, to church with you on April 6th. After the communion service you can exchange the loaf you brought for someone else's loaf!

Church Office

Hello all,

It's me again. Please send me your email addresses so that I can create a church wide mailing distribution list. I will keep you updated on the happenings in our church family. My email is

www.churchoffice@georgetowncongregational.org. Michelle Brock



Book Club



The Book Club is opened to anyone who would like to gather together with Church Family and friends. The group meets monthly at member's houses to discuss the selected books. The following is a list of the books that will be discussed in case you would like to get a head start on future readings. No need to call ahead to book yourself a seat. Just show up and have a cup of tea and good discussion. The meetings start at 7:00pm

March 13: *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* by Lisa See at Kirsten Davis' home, 30 Marlboro Rd, Georgetown

April 10: *Eat, Pray, Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert at JoEllen Fielding's home, 20 Ordway St, Georgetown

May 8: *A Patchwork Planet* by Anne Tyler at Nancy Aberman's home, 199 West Main St, Georgetown

June 12: *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson at Donna DeSisto's home, 15 School St, Georgetown



The Giving Tree Is Up!

Our giving tree has been placed in the church narthex with many envelopes hanging from its branches. These envelopes are filled with the names of items that the church needs to run throughout the year. Please take one and contribute to help our church make all its costs. The envelopes can be returned to the church office or placed in the offering plate during the service. And, thank you for all that you do to keep our church alive and growing!



Light the Church Fund



Contributions for lighting the church edifice can be made on a monthly or weekly basis, either in memory of loved ones, or in honor of someone special. Contributor and names of loved ones will be listed each week in the bulletins and also in the Monthly Newsletter. For one month's listing, the suggested donation is \$100. You may send contributions to the church (P.O. Box 200) and to the attention of our Collector.

Pantry In Need

The Pantry is always in need of extra items to help keep our pantry stocked for those who are having a difficult time. Grocery gift cards are a great way to support the pantry or next time you are shopping, consider picking up an extra item or two to add to the pantry. Spaghetti, pasta sauce, canned soups and stews with meat are always favorite things and anything that is nonperishable such as paper goods are welcome. Please place them on the shelves in the pantry when you bring them in. At this time, we do not need tea but are in need of coffee.



Lost and Found



There is a collection of coats, hats and other items that have been left behind by people who have visited our church. If you are looking for something, please check out the coat hangers at the Clark Street doors.



**It is not too late to support Kate DeSisto who is participating
in the Relay for Life!!**

Kate DeSisto is participating in the American Cancer Society Relay for life at Syracuse University. The event will take place on March 29-30, 2008 at the Carrier Dome. Kate is heading up her own team this year and is looking for support. To make a donation, checks can be made payable to:

American Cancer Society

and mailed to Donna DeSisto, 15 School St, Georgetown, MA 01833

If you prefer, you can contact Donna via email: Dgdesisto@verizon.net

and she will forward Kate's website info to you for online donations.

Thank you for your support.

Belleville Church of Newburyport presents:

KEN MEDEMA who will be in concert at Belleville Church, 300 High St., Newburyport, on Sunday April 13 at 4:00pm. His music moves the feet and touches the soul! For those who do not know him, take a quick peek at kenmedema.com. Blind from birth, he started his career as a music therapist, has sung for audiences as diverse as the Crystal Cathedral and Sojourners justice events, and is simply an amazingly gifted and faithful musician. The theme of the concert will be "SONGS OF HEALING AND HOPE", and it is meant for a diverse community. In every concert, Ken composes songs on the spot about stories he has just heard from the audience. It is truly an unforgettable experience! Join us as we celebrate our Bicentennial Year with this beautiful, amazing servant of God.

Ross Varney, Pastor, Belleville Church,

Groveland Congregational Church Candlelight Taizé Service

The Groveland Congregational Church cordially invites the community to a candlelight meditation service modeled on the services held at the Taizé community in France. The half hour service will take place at 7:00 PM on Sunday evening, March 2nd at the Groveland Congregational Church, 4 King St. in Groveland. In keeping with the season, the service will have a Lenten theme.

The Taizé community, which was founded in 1940, today is comprised of over 100 brothers, Roman Catholics and Protestants from a variety of backgrounds and representing over 25 different nations. By its very existence, the Taizé community is a concrete sign of reconciliation between divided Christians and separated peoples.

The worship space will be illuminated with a multitude of candles; the music will consist of simple repeated refrains, enabling the worshippers to enter into prayer. There will be readings from Scripture, petitions, and a time of silent prayer. In this type of service, the community gathers to listen to God. By singing simple songs of prayer over and over, the mind calms and the soul opens up; God speaks and the heart hears.

Take a break from your hectic schedule and rest in the God. For further information, contact Groveland Congregational Church at 978-372-3463 or visit the web site at www.grovelanducc.org.

BOARDS, COMMITTEES, OFFICERS AND STAFF **2008**

MODERATOR

Tom Stewart

CLERK

Emily Knapp

TREASURER

Peggy Smith

COLLECTOR

JoEllen Fielding

ASST. COLLECTOR

Vivian Rasmussen

AUDITORS:

Dwight Southwick & Jeff Moore

FINANCE COMMITTEE

George Desrochers, Robert Knapp and Tim Clift

SAFE CHURCH ADVOCATE

Pam Sheehan

DIACONATE

Kristen Arsenault

Gladys Kneeland

Brett Davis

Chuck Davis

*Jeff Fitzpatrick

Tracy Southwick

Barry Games

Cheryl Gould

TBA

Betty Bruce

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Kirsten Orender

Lauren Kalfin

*Joanne Kelly

Michelle Wilson

Carol Lutes

Karen Young

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Allan Barlow

Jo Stewart

*Rich Brock

Glen Cryan

Chris Pinto

Jeff Gillen

MUSIC COMMITTEE

Donna DeSisto

TBA

*Joe Rawlins

Pam Sheehan

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Michelle Brock

Pat Barlow

*Joan Chatterton

Marion Harding

COORDINATORS FOR:

USHERING

Donn Chatterton & George Comiskey

MISSIONS

Diane Townsend

SOCIAL

Kristen Davis & Janice Murphy

UCC DELEGATES

Nancy Aberman

FLOWERS

Michelle Brock & Jaime Krenn

*Denotes Chairperson

STAFF

Co Pastor/Co-Directors of Christian Education

Rev. Sara E. Marean

Rev. Eric M. Marean

Acting Office Manager

Michelle Brock

Director of Music

Robert Knapp

Organist

Emily Knapp

Junior Choir Director

Marion Harding

Sexton

Rachel Edwards

Pastor's e-mail: eric@georgetowncongregational.org , sara@georgetowncongregational.org

Office Open: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 10:00-2:00

Office email: churchoffice@georgetowncongregational.org Phone: (978) 352-6853

March 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 11:45 Junior Choir Practice 11:45 Diaconate	3 9-12Senior Center	4 9-12Senior Center 11:30 am Guild Snow date 7:00 Cabinet	5 9-12 Senior Center 7-9p Band/Choir 7-9p Boy Scouts	6 3-6 Joyce Dance 6-9pm TOPS I 6p Moonlight show	7 9-11:30am TOPS I 12-2Women's Club 7-9pm AA 6p Moonlight Show	8 Moonlight show
9 2:30-6:00 Senior Youth Group Checkered Flag Indoor Karting Haverhill MS Youth TBA 2-5p Moonlight	10 9-12 Senior Center	11 9-12Senior Center 6-9p Moonlight	12 9-12 Senior Center 7:30-9Choir/Band Boy Scouts 7-9p	13 3-6p Joyce Dance 6-9pm TOPS I	14 9-11:30a TOPS II AA 7-9pm	15 8:30 am Rise and Shine SpringCleanup
16 11:45 Junior Choir Practice 10:30PALM SUNDAY	17	18	19	20 5:30pm Maundy Thursday	21	22
23 6:30am Sunrise Service 10:30EASTER	24 9-12Senior Center 6-9p Country Gardeners-	25 9-12 Senior Center 6-9p Moonlight	26 Senior Center F 9-12 7-9p Band/Choir 7-9p Boy Scouts	27 11:30am Guild 3-6p Joyce Dance 6-9pm TOPS I	28 9-11:30am TOPS I 7-9pm AA 5:30-9:00Boy Scout Ceremony	29
30 11:45 Junior Choir Practice 5-6:30 MS Youth Group 6-7:00pm Senior Youth Group 2-5p Moonlight	31 9-12Senior Center					