

The Shepherd's Good News

Good Shepherd United Methodist Church

February 2005

Sara Bruce, editor

Well, the first newsletter was such a success, that we decided to do it again. Thanks to all the people who have contributed articles to the Shepherd's Good News, all the people who have put up with me badgering them for their articles, and especially all those who have supported me in this new position. I couldn't have done it without you!

If you don't have e-mail, Bishop Weaver sends us weekly e-mails titled "Partners in Ministry". I have included a portion of his Ash Wednesday email to us.

Some of the leaders of the church receive *The Interpurtur* magazine. In the latest edition, there was a wonderful pray that everyone should get a chance to read. You'll find it on page 7.

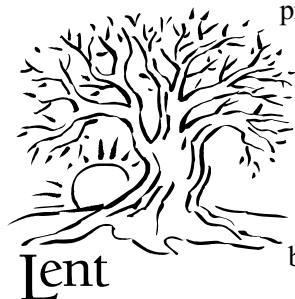
I hope that you enjoy this newest installment of the newsletter. I welcome all feedback and comments at sasalyn@maine.rr.com.

Peace, Sara

Reverend Tom's Corner

The season of Lent is upon us. The suggested Bible readings for Lent contain some of the most powerful stories in the Gospels. I will focus on them for the six Sundays of the season beginning with the story of how the devil tempted Jesus after he had been fasting and praying in the desert for forty days and nights. Read Matthew 4:1-11. I encourage you to use these days of Lent to ponder and pray on your discipleship just as Jesus did in the wilderness.

Here is a list of the Sunday themes with the accompanying Bible passages for your use in preparing for worship each week.



†February 20: For this one Sunday in Lent I am not announcing in advance the lesson for the morning because I'd like you all to hear

it as if for the first time. The reference will not even be printed in the bulletin.

†February 27: John 4:5-42 is typical of the work of John. It is full of twists and turns that could not have been predicted at first. Still they weave of ultimate grace.

†March 6: John 9:1-41 is, to be sure, one of the wonderful healing stories, but it is also a lesson on how to respond to whatever life deals us.

†March 13: John 11:1-45. In Greek death and sleep are portrayed as twin brothers. Sometimes it's hard to tell them apart. Sleep is respite, death is passage.

†March 20: Matthew 21:1-1. You may want to prepare yourself for Palm Sunday this year by pondering the role of the little donkey on which Jesus rode that day.

On Maundy Thursday there will be a service of Holy Communion recalling the last meal that Jesus had with his disciples prior to the crucifixion. The service will begin at 7:30 PM.

There will be an Easter morning breakfast at the church. Brad Van Damm, with his co-workers, will prepare the feast so that we can break our Lenten fast in style. Breakfast will be served beginning at 8 AM.

Between breakfast and the regular Easter service of worship at 10 AM there will be an Easter egg hunt for the children.



Partners In Ministry

Bishop Peter Weaver

editor's note: below is an excerpt from Bishop Weaver's e-mail letter dated Wednesday, February, 9.

Dear Partners in Ministry,

As Lent begins today, know that I will be praying for you and your congregations. As I encouraged the last congregation I served, so I encourage you to join in special disciplines of prayer and fasting for this journey of confession and reflection, ashes and resurrection. Christ goes before us!

Last Friday, I joined Dr. Marian Wright Edelman (Children's Defense Fund), Dr. James A. Forbes (Riverside Church, New York), Dr. Robert Greenstein (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities), Sister Simone Campbell (Network), and Bishop Warren M. Brown (AME Zion) for a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington. We were concerned about the federal budget process that starts this week and its implications for those who are the most impoverished and voiceless in our nation.

I was there because of the work many of our United Methodist congregations have done in our "children and poverty" initiative. I was there because I believe these concerns are God's concerns, and thus should be God's people's concerns.

Here is part of my presentation: In the State of the Union Address Wednesday night, President Bush correctly reminded us "a society is measured by how it treats the weak and vulnerable." He went on to speak of the importance of our values.

We all make lots of speeches, but I remember Martin Luther King's challenge to turn the words that are on "thin paper" into what he called "thick action."

Our federal budget is ultimately an action plan. And our nation's budget is one of the clearest statements of our nation's values. A budget is not just about accounting. It is about accountability.

*Accountability to the values we espouse.

* Accountability to sisters and brothers, who are our neighbors.

* Accountability to God, who in all the great faith traditions calls for justice, generosity, care for widows, orphans, the imprisoned, the stranger, hungry, sick, poor, and children, oh yes, the children.

As we develop and debate our national budget, we need to ask ourselves: Does this look like justice? Does it look like, "Love your neighbor, as you love yourself?" Will proposed budget cuts; cut the wounds deeper into the vulnerable and cut people off from hope?

I call on the President, the Congress and all citizens of goodwill to join in a bipartisan effort to create a budget that addresses the financial deficits without creating human deficits.

I encourage you to stay informed and in communication with the President, your Senators and Representative as the budget process unfolds.
Grace and Peace, Pete

Nurture

by Jennifer Van Damm

In an effort to spread gods light to new members of our church family, the Nurture Committee is asking folks to bring first time visitors of our church flowers or bread after the service. This is something that we use to do a few years ago, and we feel that it is important to making sure everyone feels welcomed into our church.

Several members of the congregation have expressed to the Nurture Committee that they would like to have Greeters on Sunday mornings. We are working to institute this. If you are interested in helping out as a greeter, please see Jennifer Van Damm.



We are also planning an Easter Breakfast before service begins on Easter Sunday at 8:00 AM and an Easter egg hunt for the children at 9:00 AM. We need folks to help set up, cook, serve and clean up. Please see Bradley Van Damm if you are interested in helping in anyway.

The Nurture committee is always open to suggestions from the congregation regarding programming and/or new ways to spread gods light.

Stewardship report 1Q2005

by Russ Shoberg

We wrapped up our 2005 pledge campaign on Sunday the 5th of December as people turned in their Estimates of Giving for 2005. We tried a bit of a new twist for this year's campaign by including categories for Operating Costs and Building Fund (Mortgage Reduction). I'm pleased to report that the congregation increased their Estimated Giving by a little over \$5000 from 2004 to 2005, up from \$38,812 to \$44,076. This came out to 46.1% of the approved budget (\$95,636 as approved at our January Administrative Council meeting). This is a strong improvement in dollars pledged year over year and is a good indicator of the commitment of the church family.

With that said, we have two particular spending challenges in front of us, both of which are to replace equipment that is important in our Sunday worship service. We need to replace our aged and failed public address system. While the original system had performed well for nearly eight years, it failed recently and must be replaced. The estimated replacement cost is approximately \$2500. We need to replace this sound system in order to be sure that all of our members are able to hear the service comfortably and easily.

A second challenge is to purchase our own "light box", or video projector. For the past couple of years, we have been relying on borrowing a projector from one of our member's employers, but it is time that we step out on our own and become an owner. The preliminary estimate for the purchase of that unit has been given at \$1800. This unit is used to project the hymns and responsive readings on the wall, and has been considered to be a desired feature of our worship service.

Lastly, there are two opportunities for people interested in participating in service, but at a "behind the scenes" level. We are looking for one or two volunteers to take over: a) coordinating the acolytes (candle lighters) and b) videotaping the Sunday service. Both of these are important parts of the service, and the person currently responsible is desiring a change. If you have an interest in taping the services, which get played on the Gray public access cable TV channel, in coordinating some others to do the tapings and/or working with the acolytes on an ongoing basis, please see Russ or Judi Shoberg.

Report of the Finance Committee

by Rick Smart

In 2004, the generous contributions of our congregation allowed us to continue the mission of our church, to give back to our conference, and to serve our local community in many new ways. We hope to do even better in 2005.

The pledges are in for 2005. We have received 15 pledges totaling \$29,840 towards our operations and 12 pledges totaling \$13,620 towards our building. Thanks to those who have pledged; it makes financial planning for the coming year much easier. If you have not yet pledged, and would like to do so, please contact Dan Frost.

The budget for our building is in good shape for 2005. Our pledges will easily allow us pay the \$470 monthly mortgage payment, and we will be able to reduce our building loans by over \$10,000. However, our operating budget for 2005 is a step out in faith as we are currently projecting a large deficit. A copy of both the operating and building budgets for 2005 will be available at our February 20 worship service.

If you have any questions about our 2005 budget, or any other part of our church's financial picture, please do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the Finance committee.



Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee (SPPRC)

by Sara Bruce

The Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee is currently working on evaluations for the staff.



We hope to have then completed within the next few weeks. If anyone has anything they'd like to contribute for either child care or the Music Team, please contact me.

From your Lay Leader**Natalie Blake****Lenten Series**

Join the Portland Cluster in its third Annual Lenten Series. Our theme this year is "Places on the Way to the Cross", and part of our offering will go to the Protestant Chaplaincy at Maine Medical Center.

The series began on Feb. 13. The remaining meetings are as follows:

Feb. 20 at West Cumberland with Rev. Linwood Arnold preaching on the upper room, Jack Sumpter as worship leader and Clark Memorial choir.

Feb. 27 at Clark Memorial with Rev. Mark Alley preaching on the Garden and Good Shepherd choir.

March 6 at Chestnut Street with Rev. Yong Ja Kim preaching on Trial/Pilate, Charice Oliver as worship leader and School Street choir.

March 13 at Rainbow with Rev. Glenn Coombs preaching on via Dolorosa.

March 20 at Chebeague Island with Rev. Tom Merrill preaching on the Cross, Paul Doucette as worship leader and Tuttle Road choir.

Migrant and Seasonal Worker Ministry

Washington County, Maine.

This is our second year of providing items for this ministry. Last year, the items that were provided by the Portland Cluster and other churches served over 5000 migrant workers. According to the end of the season letter from the Director, Rev. Betty Palmer, there were not enough of everything for everybody but people shared and the neediest received what was available. Children and elders came first, young men stood and waited



until last and were just as thankful for the toothbrush without toothpaste and the used T-shirt as the first in line received the new T-shirt, socks, personal care kit, blanket and Bible. Please join in this Ministry which gives food to the hungry and clothes to the naked in Jesus name. There is a basket on the small table in the corner in the back of the Sanctuary for your donations.

Sometime in May we are hoping that Rev. Betty Palmer will be able to come to this area to collect all of the donated items. Last year, the collection went out from Tuttle Road UMC, and it was a powerful and moving service. We continue to collect personal care items, T-shirts, socks and school items for the children – anything in Spanish is a wonderful contribution. The Cluster extends its thanks to all who donated last year and continue to donate again this year.

A Treacherous Night On A Midnight Train!



This year's Mystery Dinner Theater will be presented by the Good Shepherd Players on April 2, 8 & 9th, 6:30 pm at the Spring Meadow Golf and Country Club in Gray. Join the cast and try to solve the mystery. Each person at the winning table gets a prize. Tickets are \$29.50 per person. The price drops to \$25 per person if you reserve a table of eight. The ticket price includes dinner (tax and tip) and the play. Hilarity abounds as each character tries to keep their secret from being exposed. Call Rae at 929-4020 or connect with her via email at: hemsyl@yahoo.com.

Morning Bible Study by Sara Bruce

What do you think of the United Methodist Church's Social Principles? This is the topic that is currently being discussed during the morning Bible study. We will continue with the Social Principles for several more weeks, so come and join the discussion.

We are always looking for new members. We are currently meeting on Wednesday mornings at 9:30 AM. Children are always welcome.

Bored of Trustees?

By Will Burrow

Think Spring! Before you know it the snow will be gone, along with the mud. To avoid the rush, please let me know if you will be providing love and care to your favorite piece of ground. The areas around the rocks, light posts, and sign look much nicer with flowers and mulch.

Project: The shed would look nicer and last longer if a couple of coats of white paint were applied. I would guess 5 to 7 gallons would be needed along with a few hours of labor (unless you have a sprayer). Volunteers?

Opinion: Spring will bring a return of the donut makers to the parking lot. I think a single row of spaced split rail fences might deter this type of vandalism. The cost would be for the fencing, the rental of a posthole digger, and a few hours of labor. The money is not in the budget, and I have no estimate of the costs.

Opinion: Please share with me your thoughts on turning down the temperature one or two degrees. Heat is an expense, but we do not want anyone feeling cold and uncomfortable.

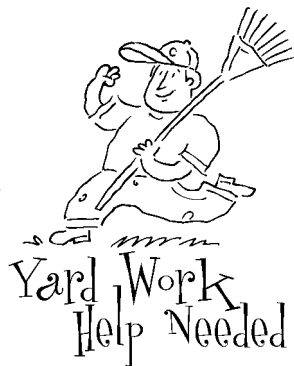
Craft Group

by Sara Bruce

Our annual Christmas Craft Sale exceeded our expectations this year. We had some wonderful donations to the craft tables, baked goods, and especially the silent auction. Thank you, everyone.

We still have not been able to establish a time to meet for craft group. Anyone willing to take this project on, please contact either Sara or Julie.

We will not be holding our traditional Mother's Day craft sale at Wal-Mart this year because of scheduling problems. Instead we will hold a bake sale on Saturday, June 11 from 9 to 1. In past years the baked goods have been the big sellers, so this is what we will be concentrating on this year.



Women's Group

by Julie Frost

The Women's Group is all about getting to know your Sisters-In-Christ. We meet on the third Wednesday of every month. The even numbered months we choose a restaurant to meet at and enjoy a nice meal while we socialize and learn about each others lives. The odd numbered months we meet at the church for snacks and a program or activity. (I see a Stampin' night in our future).

Rev. Tom and Beverly Merrill have graciously volunteered to host the Feb. 16th meeting "out" at their house in South Portland. Tom will prepare and serve the meal for the women to enjoy. The women will pay the amount they would have paid had we gone to a different fine dining establishment and the proceeds will be donated to a fund at Good Shepherd.

The more you know about someone the closer you feel. We are becoming a closer knit church family by sharing some of our time with each other each month. Come out and enjoy an evening of easy conversation, good food, and fun!

Music Team

The choir theme of "Burst into Song" (Isaiah 55:12) continues. We have been blessed that new members continue to join us to add their voices. We welcome anyone 6th grade and up to join us and "Burst into Song". We also offer a morning of "contemporary" Christian music with guitar to the youth grades 6 and up. This is offered by Tim Warrow once a month at 8:45 AM. Tim's next morning session will be March 13. Stay tuned for ongoing dates. Another exciting music ministry event will be on February 27 when the choir will perform at Clark Memorial for the Lenten service. In addition, we hope to hear some "bells" performed by the children of Good Shepherd and will be exploring additional new anthems' for the rest of the choir season. As we select music we also would welcome requests for music selections as we know we may not hit everyone's favorite. If you have a request slip a note to one of the team or to Tom and we will add it to our repertoire. Join us and listen in Faith- Dawn, Bethany, Jody, and Tim.

Outreach

Health Kits for United Methodist Committee on Relief

As I write this on Ash Wednesday, the collection of health kits in Portland is complete. The 46 kits we compiled together, joined with other kits from United Methodist Churches in our area, will travel to Mission Central to be distributed where they are needed.

I have read that cash donations to UMCOR are the most helpful because it allows the people with the training (the relief workers) and the network (UMCOR and its partners) to carry out the most effective relief plan. Outside of cash donations, the health kits and other kits which UMCOR provides (such as layette kits and school kits) are the most urgently needed items when disaster strikes.

I am glad our church family was able to contribute in both of these ways, through cash donations and by donating and packing health kit items. For me, personally, this project was a focal point for my thoughts and energy around the tsunami disaster. It allowed me to keep a prayerful focus on the victims, families, survivors and relief workers, amidst the normalcy of my daily life. It helped me explain to my kids that not everyone has the items we take for granted. It allowed me the joy of seeing Ksenia and Annika unbox tubes of toothpaste and place them gently into ziplock bags, hoping that somehow, a small seed of empathy and generosity is planted, and a larger worldview is attained. Thank you to everyone who so generously contributed!

Clothing Swap

Dates have been set for our 2005 Clothing Swaps. They are:

Saturday, March 19th 10am – 2pm

Saturday, August 13th

Saturday, November 12th

The Outreach Committee had a productive meeting after church on January 30th, and we have put together a good plan to “advertise” our March Swap through flyers posted in our community, the WMSJ Community Calendar, and mentions on Gray Access

Channels, to name a few. We will also be in touch with all the families who have already benefitted from our clothing closet throughout the winter, so that they may return for more as their children grow into new sizes. We are growing a dynamic program to reach families in need and also do our part in recycling perfectly good children’s wear.

When you see the sign ups come around, please think about taking some time to work at the swap and see what it’s all about!!

Helping People Hurt by the Big Wave

By Sarah E. M. Ames, Age 7

Lots of people got hurt by a big wave. People died and lost their homes. I am saving money to get a “Health Kit.” I got \$13.60 by helping out around the house. I like helping. Won’t you help, too?

Sarah has worked hard saving money for the victims of the tsunami. You too can help by making a donation to “South Asia Emergency, UMCOR Advance #274305”. Your gift can be placed in the offering plate on Sunday morning or mailed directly to UMCOR at 475 Riverside Drive, Room 330 New York, NY 10115. For more information visit UMCOR’s website: <http://www.umcor.org>

Youth Group by Rae Elliott

The 2004-2005 Youth Group starting off the new term with adding two more leaders and one more youth. The kids have decided to work on at least one charitable organization this term. They’ve narrowed it down to a food pantry, animal shelter or the Root Cellar in Portland. A few of the kids are working on each project to get all the necessary information to decide on which one to pursue. Since they did such an awesome job last year compiling returnable bottles and cans for the bottle drive, we’ve decided to do it again this year. The kids would like to raise the money so they can attend this year’s Mystery Dinner Theater. Some of the planned upcoming events are performing a play in church during the Lent series and a rock-a-thon/sleepover. There is also the possibility of another camping trip this summer. I just want to end with saying what an awesome bunch of kids we have in our Youth Group!

“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”
Ephesians 2:10
(NIV)



Thank you to our loving and caring church family for all your support during this difficult time in our lives. Thank you for painting our home, stacking the wood and most recently for shoveling snow and chipping ice off our roof. Thank you for all the prayers and hugs and listening ears. You are the body of Christ.

The DeRoche Family



“You can tell what they are by what they do”
Matthew 7:16
(CEV)

Classifieds

FOR RENT - Leesburg, Fl. Beautiful Pennbrooke Fairways - golf courses, pools, tennis etc. Cute one bedroom, fully furnished - available 4/05, \$800./mo. Ginny 926-3524

Solid Maple (wood) Table with self-storing leaf. Four legs. (29" W x 40"L with 10" leaf) Great for apartment or small kitchen. - \$85.00 or best offer. Contact Chick or Madelene Taylor at 207-657-7201

Steelmaster Office Desk - med. gray with black top, 2 pedestal, 6 drawer (includes 1 deep file drawer). 30" deep x 60 inches long x 29 inches high. \$100. or best offer. Contact Chick or Madelene Taylor at 207-657-7201

ON GOING

Bible Study Wednesday's at 9:30 AM. Contact Rev. Tom at 657-2009 for more information.

Women's Group Every 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7 PM (6:30 when going out to eat). Contact Julie Frost.

Choir Rehearsal Thursday at 7 PM and Sunday at 9:30 AM. Contact Dawn Sample at 892-4286.

Sunday School Sunday at 8:45 AM. Preschool through Adult. Contact Cally Bartholomae at 428-3569.

Youth Group every other Sunday evening. Contact Rae Elliott.

Administrative Council meet every third Sunday directly after service. Contact Vinal Doody at 892-0787.

Important Dates

Children's clothing swap at the church. March 19th, 10-2. Contact the Outreach committee FMI.

March 5. Tres Dias Secretariat and Fourth Day Celebration at Good Shepherd. There is a pot luck at 5:30 with a Celebration service to follow at 7:00 PM. All are welcome. Please see Russ or Judi Shoberg FMI.

Bake Sale at the Windham Wal-Mart. Saturday, June 11 from 9:30 AM to 1 PM.

“A Treacherous Night on a Midnight Train” being performed by the Good Shepherd Players at Spring Meadows Golf and Country Club, Gray. April 2, 8, & 9. Please Contact Rae Elliott.

Lenten Series sponsored by the Portland Cluster. This year's theme is "The Places of the Cross" See Natalie Blake for more information.

Celebration of Methodism in Maine. April 9, at 3 PM at the Chestnut Street Church. Bishop Weaver will be one of the many special speakers. Hosted by the Portland Cluster. Contact Natalie Blake for more information.

A Prayer from a Heart of Pain

By R. Randy Day

How, O God, can we joyously greet a new year
When thousands of Asians lie dead on the shores?
How can we sing songs?
The earth shakes, and the tides roar, and children
Vanish from their mothers' arms to perish in the deep.
How can we rejoice?
Homes and hearths are gone from Thailand to Africa.
Sumatra and Sri Lanka are islands of death.
How can we be happy?
Parents in India wail for their little ones;
Little ones in Malaysia search for their parents.
How can we eat and drink?
A generation of Indonesians vanishes in a flash;
We are numb with disbelief and agony,
How can we dance?
We cannot go on, O God, except for our trust in You.
The pain is too great, the tears too heavy.
We cannot go on,

Unless we hold fast to your love and find hope
In Your promises of eternal care and consolation;
Unless we anchor ourselves in the strength of faith.
The pain is too great, the tears too heavy,
Unless in faith we respond with love and care,
To the fathers who have lost their daughters,
And the sons who have lost their mothers.
How, O God, can we not greet a new year with
Thanksgiving and wonder at your steadfast love?
Even in times of bewilderment and terror
You go with us up the mountains and into the sea.
Without You, O God, we are nothing but tumbling
Stones upon the sand.
With You, O God, we find purpose in life and in death,
And greet tomorrow, greet another new year,
Confident in You through our tears and pain.
You alone, O God, are a sure foundation.

-Rev. R. Randy Day is general secretary of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.