

The Shepherd's Good News

Good Shepherd United Methodist Church

Winter 2006

Rev. Tom's Corner

The major festivals of the church year, Christmas and Easter, annually stir up feelings of faith, hope and love. Choirs learn special music. Artists create pieces to enhance our worship space (remember the Christmas banners), preachers try very hard to find new ways of expressing the restoring and reconciling acts of God in Jesus Christ. The miracles of birth and resurrection deserve all our attention and our best efforts.

However, I suggest that in between the great festivals we come to church looking for some of the minor wonders and graces that give us all cause to hope. Choose some particular part of the worship service to pay special attention to each week for a while: not critically, but rather keenly observing to discover what you might have been missing. I suggest this because lately, since many others have been doing the children's time, I have had the opportunity to observe rather than to do and have noticed some wonderful things. A close look and listen at the music or prayers or readings just might yield up minor wonders from time to time. TRM

Greater Portland UMC Cluster News

Natalie Blake, Lay Leader

The Greater Portland Cluster Council is sponsoring an Ash Wednesday Breakfast on March 1, at Clark Memorial UMC on Forrest Ave in Portland. All are invited to come and refresh your souls as we enter this solemn time in the church calendar. Potluck breakfast at 6:30 AM. Worship service at 7. Please contact me for more information.

Chick

Chick and Madelene Taylor found Good Shepherd Congregation on Easter a few years ago, and we have been blessed by their presence since then. Chick's contribution of kneelers for our worship will remain a beautiful reminder of his generosity and craftsmanship. The wood that the small crosses on the kneelers is made of is called *purple heart*. The color you see is all natural - no stain or paint. The wood is also extremely hard. Chick told me that he had to sharpen his router bits several times while making the crosses. Life itself handed Chick some hard tasks, particularly in the last few months. He handled them with grace. May God bless his soul. TRM

Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee (SPPRC)

Sara Bruce, chair

Reverend Tom has agreed to stay another year with us here at Good Shepherd. You'd think he'd be tired of us by now. So, as long as Bishop Weaver doesn't think we need someone new at the pulpit, Tom will be with us until (at least) June 2007.

Evaluations for the child care are currently being done, and the music team is up for review in February. If you would like to contribute to these evaluations, please let me know and I can get you the appropriate form to complete, or just drop me a line at www.sasalyn@maine.rr.com. No form necessary.

Finance Report

Rick Smart, Chair

Our 2005 budget was a leap of faith, but a leap worth taking as many blessings followed... The generous donations 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 ways.

On the operating side, we spent about \$6,000 more than we took in. Since we had about that much in the bank at the beginning of the year, we're still in the black. Once again this year we were able to pay our full conference apportionment. We also paid all of our apportionments from previous years; we are now paid in full for the first time in the history of Good Shepherd. Also for the first time in our history, we were able to pay the conference minimum salary to our pastor. And since all that was not enough, we found enough money to pay for a new computer, a new projector and a new sound system.

The building fund had another excellent year in 2005. We were able to pay our monthly mortgage payments and pay down the mortgage on our building by about \$14,000. Our remaining balance is about \$222,000.

The operating budget for 2006 will be very similar to 2005. We are expecting very few increased operating expenses this year. We are looking at budgeted operating expenses of approximately \$80,000 for this year. In addition, we are hoping to make another large reduction in our mortgage balance. A preliminary budget has been discussed and we should have a final budget passed at the next Administrative Council meeting on February 12. Please join us.

Many thanks to those who gave in 2005.

Rick Smart, Chair of Finance Committee

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Finance Team: Natalie Blake, Sara Bruce, Linda Cox, Michele DeRoche – Treasurer, Dan Frost – Recording Secretary, Tom Merrill

Music Team Notes

This last quarter of 2005 the music team has been blessed by new members to the choir as well as the continuation of our faithful long term choir members! We have supplemented our music selections with new choir anthems and old favorites. It is our goal through music ministry to provide a variety of musical styles to compliment the worship service. The team welcome suggestions for anthems that you would like to hear. We also welcome new voices to the choir; rehearsals are Thursday evenings 7 pm at the church for Jr. High students and up.

Many of you may have noticed the new speakers and sound system cabinet up front. Thanks to donations, and Tim Warrow's sound shopping skills, Good Shepherds' new sound system has been purchased. The speakers need to be mounted on the walls, racks installed in the cabinet and then the system will be ready for final tuning. In celebration of the many blessings we have been given we would like to bring you a night of music on Saturday February 25, 2006 beginning at 7pm. Please mark your calendars to reserve the evening as Tim, Jody, Bethany, Dawn, and guest musicians bring you a night of music in celebration of the many gifts we have been given to enhance your worship service through music. Stay tuned for the final program. Listen in Faith-Bethany, Dawn, Jody, & Tim

New Web Address

We have a new web address and site. No longer do you need to remember that long and complicated address www.gbmg-umc.org/gsumc-me, the new address is simply www.goodshepumc.org. Pretty easy to remember, huh? With the new site, we also have a lot more space. Is there anything you'd like to see on the web page? Drop me a line at admin@goodshep.org.

Clothing Ministry

Bethany Smart

As you receive your newsletter, the clothing swap will be just days away, or perhaps just recently concluded for this quarter. But I'd like to take a moment to tell you a little bit about how the clothing swap actually happens. First, many, many boxes and bags of clothing donations come in from our church family and friends between and just prior to each swap. If you have donated clothing, you have helped this ministry be successful – thank you!! Second, we have for the past few swaps done the majority of the set up during Tuesday morning Bible Study. This means that Julie, Sara, Brandie, Libby and I and sometimes others of you have spent most of a morning sorting and sorting the new donations into our Rubbermaid totes which are labeled by size. If you have never seen the swap (or the attic), there is a tote for each size from infant to about 12-14 for boys and for girls. This makes for over 25 totes at least. In addition there are coats, mittens, boots, other shoes, etc. A big thank you goes to everyone who has helped set this up, take it down, and load it back up into the attic, which is not easy work. The fun part begins on Saturday morning at 8am when folks start showing up to swap clothing. Most bring in more donations, which our faithful workers sort during the day, and then our “swappers” hit the totes, ready to go through them and find what they can use! But it is okay if people cannot, or do not bring anything, because there is plenty. It reminds me of the parable of the fish and the loaves. There is always plenty. When we set up, there are totes overflowing, and we wonder how we'll ever get the lids on to put them away. At the end of the swap, generally, all the lids fit just right. It really works out perfectly every time! So I encourage you to come see how it works. I haven't even told you the most amazing part; that is, meeting all the people who come, hearing their stories and just connecting while they “shop”. We keep an email list of folks who felt comfortable giving us their e-address so that we can remind them of future swaps. Connections are made, names are learned and we see them again next time. We hope that some may feel comfortable enough

with us to try coming to service some Sunday. But most importantly, we are sharing God's abundance and love through the means of clothing and saving a family's budget just a bit. Caring for the community around us, and building the community at Good Shepherd through working together. Please join in if you'd like to help out!



This little girl found some beautiful new outfits in one of our tubs during the last swap.

Women's Group

Julie Frost, Chair

The Women's Group had a very festive Christmas gathering in December. We met at the Goldilox Restaurant in Windham and had a wonderful Chinese meal. I think everyone went home with their lunch for the next day! After the meal we did a traditional Yankee Swap. There were many lovely gifts to be exchanged – some got exchanged more than others and more than some people wanted them to be exchanged!! But everyone went home with a gift, a full belly, and a wonderful feeling of love and friendship.

Our January meeting was held on a stormy night. The attendance was low but it was a night full of meaningful and friendship building conversation for those who were able to make it.

Our next meeting will be at Rose's Italian Eatery in Windham on February 15th. We will meet there at 6:30pm and have some fine Italian food and some wonderful dinner conversation! Come out and get to know your sisters in Christ.

Youth Group

Doug Kerr

The youth group had a wonderful Christmas season this year. Festivities started early in December with the group making about 75 Christmas cards. Card-stock, glitter pens, stickers, stamps, a bunch of enthusiasm, and a whole lot of laughter. Hallmark has got nothing on this group! We wrapped up (no pun intended) with choosing the carols we would sing and got the ol' vocal chords warmed up.

Two weeks later we gathered at the nursing home on 115 in Windham. For about an hour the youth group sang up and down the halls, and in and out of rooms. They brought so much joy to everyone there, elderly and staff alike. Bright smiles and teary eyes showed the group how much their songs meant. It was a truly remarkable event that I was honored to be a part of.

So now we are welcoming in the new year and have many plans to make. If anyone in the congregation would like something of the Youth Group please let one of the leaders know. We are always open to suggestions and opportunities. Thank you and God Bless.

Tres Dias Secuela

Natalie Blake

For all of those who have attended a Tres Dias weekend and all who would like more information, please join us at the next Southern Maine Tres Dias Secuela event to be held February 17, at 7:00pm at School Street UMC in Gorham. Uplift your soul with a Faith Speaker, music from the Praise Band, discussion groups, fellowship, renewing acquaintances, and perhaps just making a new friend or two. For information see Natalie, Russ, Judi or any of the others who attended a Secuela.

Worship Committee

Judi Shoberg

The Worship committee worked hard during advent on a large banner project. Seven people pooled their creative talents and with lots of prayer and determination, were able to complete six banners for our worship area. The Christmas/Epiphany banners were hung during Advent and added a wonderful dimension to our Christmas worship season.

We had a shepherd/lamb banner from Louanne Doody; an angel banner from Brandie Bauder; a star banner from Beverly Merrill and Laura Church; a banner of the holy family from Judi Shoberg; and two banners depicting the three wisemen, one from Pat Cleaves and one from Judi Shoberg. Judi's step-mother, Theresa Price, and Judi's mother-in-law, Johnette Shoberg, got the project off the ground by tracing patterns and helping to sew the banner backgrounds and borders. All in all, it was a huge undertaking, but one well worth it. Many, many thanks to everyone that helped plan, encourage, sew, cut, glue and iron!!! If you see any of these people at church, please let them know how much their hard work is appreciated!

A new banner project is in the very beginning stages of planning. Rev. Tom is hoping to have a new banner hung each week of Lent and I am looking for families that may want to volunteer their talents. If you are worried about what it would take, just talk to some of the "veteran" banner makers – they will assure you how very capable you are! If you might be interested, please talk to me (or phone/e-mail me). Lent will be here before we know it!

Again, a very special thank you to Pat, Louanne, Beverly, Laura, Brandie, Theresa and Johnette!

May we continue to praise God with our prayers, our presence, our gifts and our talents.

Your sister in Christ – Judi Shoberg

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Book Review by Natalie Blake

The Messiah, a novel by Marjorie Holmes

This book is the final volume in her Trilogy on the Life of Christ, the first two being, *Two From Galilee* and *Three from Galilee*. This book is a novel, a work of fiction and represents a version of how things could have happened during the years of Jesus' Ministry.

It begins with what some say is his first miracle, the changing of the water into wine at the wedding feast and continues through His Crucifixion and Resurrection. Homes captures the mood of the day and especially the everyday lives of the people while telling the story. The imagery is rich, believable and dramatic and gives the reader a chance to experience Jesus through the eyes of his Mother, brothers, other relatives, friends and the Disciples. And you have a chance to hear some of the parables and Biblical stories told in a new and very meaningful way.

This is a book that I can heartily recommend for all, especially during the upcoming Lenten Season. Grace and Peace.

Upcoming events

Feb 4 - Clothing Swap 8am to noon.

Feb 9 through 12 - Women's Tres Dias weekend at Camp Mechawana

Feb 17- Tres Dias Secuela 7pm at School Street UMC in Gorham

Feb 25 - Music Extravaganza at 7 pm

March 25 & April 8 - Advanced Lay Speaking course (part 1) in Portsmouth, NH

April 1, 8 & 9 - Mystery Dinner Theater at Spring Meadows

On Going

Bible Study Tuesday's at 9:30 am. Contact Sara Bruce.

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

Choir Rehearsal Thursday at 7 pm and Sunday at 9:15 am. Contact Dawn Sample.

Sunday School 8:45am Preschool through Adult.

Youth Group every other Sunday evening. Contact Doug Kerr.

Administrative Council 3rd Sunday of the month following service. Contact Vinal Doody.