

THE CHIMES

THE NEWS LETTER OF THE BAR HARBOR CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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March, 2006

From the Pastor

I used to think it was simple to be a part of a church. I thought that if I went to church on Sunday, that would be the extent of my involvement. We would sing some songs, the minister would preach a sermon, we would pray, have refreshments and then go home until the next week. Little did I know that going to church could be so “involved!”

When we decide to be a part of a congregation, we are taking on two primary responsibilities: 1. We are claiming Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and 2. We are saying that we will support and be a part of a vital, living organism called the Body of Christ. Each of these responsibilities is important and life-changing. Just ask anyone who thought they would just come and warm a pew on Sundays!

Right within our congregation we find many things to deal with. Members get sick. Members die. There are requests for our monetary support as well as our prayers. Members of the congregation go off on mission trips to Honduras while some of us stay behind to support them and pray for them. Children are born. Folks get married. We hear the scriptures and are asked to respond to them. We hear sermons and are alternately moved and disturbed; sometimes we are left cold by the minister’s words. We serve on Boards and committees. We write and re-write by-laws so we can function more efficiently. We love each other. We become aggravated with each other. We struggle with what it means to follow Jesus. We struggle with the meaning of life and the challenge of death. We examine our covenantal responsibilities as members of the United Church of Christ. We live up to our obligations as a part of a larger church.

And that’s just in the congregation! We are a church, but we are not isolated from the world and so the cares and concerns of the world enter into our life together. Everything that affects us in the world of politics, science, sexuality, other religions, war and peace and so many other issues touch us as a church community. We do not try to deny that Jesus expects us to be involved in the world that He came to save. But it gets so complicated, doesn’t it? If we all agreed on how to handle the aforementioned issues, that would be one thing, but we don’t agree, do we? And so the church becomes for many a place where we struggle with some very difficult things.

And so we ask ourselves, how can we worship together with all these distractions? How can we fulfill our primary obligation to seek and follow the will of God in Christ if we are pushed and pulled in so many directions? Where shall we place our energy and our devotion?

Within the United Church of Christ, as in other denominations, we are struggling with some important issues. Our Conference Minister, David Gaewski, has raised the question about how we will deal with these issues. Please take the time to read his letter in this month’s *Chimes*. Feel free to discuss his letter with me and with one another. Together, as a congregation, we will decide how we will deal with what it means to be a part of this precious church. I hope we will let our voices be heard.

Since I came to be your pastor in 1998, we have worked together to make this church a place where all are welcome and everyone feels safe. I have always believed that a church must be a place where we treat one another with respect. After all, we are all created in the image of God. The fact that we may not agree on every issue that comes before us should, in my opinion, never affect our ability and willingness to worship and work together to the glory of God. Although I have rather strong opinions about many things, it is my belief that those opinions do not need to be proclaimed from the pulpit or in my daily ministry with you. It has been wonderful for me to have been accepted for who I am and I hope each of you enjoys the same experience in our church.

However, this is not to say that we cannot engage in difficult discussions. I know that our congregation is strong enough in faith and friendship to weather any storm of disagreement. As the days and years pass, I hope our church will always be a calm, clear, voice of what it means to be committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

I still love to come to worship every Sunday, but I no longer think that’s all there is to it.

Sandra M. Reed

A message from the Maine Conference UCC pastor, David Gaewski

“My Thoughts” is a weekly email from David Gaewski to the clergy of the Maine Conference. Clergy, I do grant permission for you to share this particular “My Thoughts” with your church members if you wish.

On My Mind

For many weeks now there have been two issues weighing heavily on my mind. Each week when I come to this point of writing my “weekly thoughts” to you, I have struggled mightily with finding the right words, and they haven’t come. So here it is, another Monday, and I find my writer’s block persists. Why? Because there are two things that have weighed heavily on my mind... and I haven’t found the right words.

So these may not be the “right” words, but in order to communicate openly and honestly, I need to get this out of the way. The two issues are: Same Sex Marriage and OCWM.

I have listened to many conversations around Maine regarding the UCC’s actions in Atlanta. If you have not read the resolutions, but think you know what they say, please take the time to read them: ucc.org/synod. Also if you have not read the Maine Conference resolution “Quality and Equality of Marriage” which was tabled at our Annual Meeting last year, please read it: www.maineucc.org/annualmeeting/2005. Our tabled resolution will come before Annual Meeting in 2006, however, I do not believe our conference is ready for it in its present form.

Just as our country has divided into the red and the blue, what I have seen over and over again is the membership in local churches dividing themselves into red and blue camps (each side thinking they are the sheep and the other side the goats...). And what I see coming down the road for us in September is the dividing of our Maine Conference into the red and blue (sheep and goat) churches. This is not good.

However, the issue of Same Sex Marriage is one which is not going to go away. We can not and God knows we should not avoid it. My belief is that EVERY church must engage in many conversations about the meaning of covenant, marriage, and all this in the context of human sexuality (which, after all, IS a gift from God). However, I do not believe that passing a resolution at Annual Meeting 2006 will further this process. We need another way. Can we pray together for God to show us another way?

The other issue on my heart is OCWM. I have given this report in several contexts over the last three weeks. Here are the facts: in 2005 more benevolent dollars came into the Maine Conference than ever before: 1.3 Million (this does not include the PL or Rockcraft budgets). It is good news that Maine generosity has provided over 200 thousand dollars to Katrina Relief as a result of the disaster team’s challenge. It is also good news that our church members sent over 100 thousand dollars for Tsunami relief (as a result of the national UCC effort). Not so good, but still notable is over 15 thousand dollars for Earthquake Relief.

It is my belief that because of this generosity, as well as very strong giving to Neighbors in Need, The Christmas Fund and OGHs (and more to Strengthen the Church than before), together with realized increases to fuel costs and insurance premiums, the Maine Conference OCWM suffered in ’05. There was a reduction in OCWM from ’04 levels amounting to 37 thousand dollars. Also, while Fellowship Dues was increased substantially, even so, they came in about 10 thousand less than what we had anticipated. Because of very significant frugality on the part of the conference staff and the Commissions, as well as one significant \$10K gift, the conference ended the year with a \$10K surplus. But this is not good news. It means that because of a shortfall of funds, we did not accomplish the mission we set out to do. In 2005, fifty-one churches gave more to OCWM than in 2004; fifty churches gave less; fifty churches gave the same amount; and 20 churches gave \$0 in both years. Increases and decreases can not be assigned to geography or size of church. While some decreases may have occurred as a response to General Synod, I am assured that more favorable responses prompted increased OCWM.

As we begin 2006 I am aware of several churches, large churches, facing very significant financial challenges. I am aware of a potential loss of AN ADDITIONAL \$38 thousand dollars. I am also aware of many churches that have made heroic strides in increasing their support to the Maine Conference. I am also aware of many pastors who have come to odds with their lay leadership, as well as laity, who have come to odds with church executive committees over this issue.

I am sensing that this type of impact on OCWM will require amputative surgery, there is no more liposuction to be done. I am encouraged by the wisdom and energy of the Finance Committee as we address this issue. But more, I would again ask you to pray with me about this so that God may, here too, show us another way.

I've wanted very much to share my thoughts on these two issues with you for many weeks, but I couldn't find the "right" words. While these words may not be "right" please know that they come from the heart.



The SEARCH IS ON...

The Hancock-Waldo Association is looking for a new lay member to the Church & Ministry Committee. The Committee is made up of a group of eight laypersons and clergy from UCC churches all over Hancock and Waldo counties who meet once a month. Simply put, they aid in the "care and nurturing" of congregations, ministers, and students studying for the ministry and ensure that all parties live up to their covenantal obligations. It is this committee that determines if a clergy person is authorized to function as a member of the UCC clergy.

The Church and Ministry Committee:

- decides whether or not to recommend that the Association offer a student who is studying for the ministry "in care" status;
- decides whether or not to recommend to the Association that an individual be ordained as a UCC clergy person;
- meets with newly called interim or settled pastors and representatives from their congregation and review the call (contract) to make sure it treats all parties fairly;
- conducts exit interviews with pastors who leave a congregation.
- meets with clergy from other denominations who wish to go through the "Privilege of Call" process so they can accept a call to a UCC church.
- conducts "periodic review" interviews with pastors. These are "check-in" type interviews done with all clergy in the Association.
- decides whether or not to license a layperson to perform ministerial duties.

Needless to say these responsibilities are incredibly important to the support of our UCC churches. Working on this committee is a tremendous learning experience that is both challenging and rewarding. If you have an interest in serving on this committee, please speak with Kathy Woodside (288-5160/home or 288-4245/work).

What's Going on in the Maine Conference

Honduras Partnership Lenten Calendar

Attention Sunday School teachers, students, and other interested folks. Click on the following link and print our Lenten Calendar <http://www.maineucc.org/honduras/honduras1>. The money collected will help support CEVER Vocational School in Yoro, Honduras. CEVER educates students in areas of computer skills, woodworking, welding, car mechanics, sewing and also gives the students a high school education. For more information on CEVER please visit www.theceverproject.org

Church Leaders' Convocation

The theme of this year's Church Leaders Convocation is "Growing Edges", and the worship, workshops, and displays will all enact and explore some of those growing edges for church leaders and pastors on Saturday, May 13th, at the Church of Universal Fellowship in Orono. The event will run from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Conference Minister David Gaewski will preach and Steve Carnahan, pastor of Open House UCC in Portland, will lead worship. Seven workshops will be offered, as well as displays and a bookstore. Follow this link to a flyer/poster on the Conference web site:

<http://www.maineucc.org/convocation/2006/clc06flyer.pdf>

Online Catalog

THE UPGRADED VERSION OF THE ONLINE CATALOG IS NOW FULLY FUNCTIONAL! If in the past you have tried without success to use the new feature of the Resource Center online catalog, i.e. the ability to select the items you want sent to you in a "shopping cart" and then have this message sent directly to the Resource Center with the click of your mouse, please try again. The problem we were experiencing with this feature has been fixed, and it works now. You will also notice that you have more search options under "Advanced Search" than formerly. The addition of the age level search field is particularly helpful.

<http://www.maineucc.org/resourcecenter/frontpacercenter>

Ash Wednesday Service Announcement:

Please join us for the **Ash Wednesday Service on March 1 at 7:00 PM** here at the church. The service will consist of prayer, song, and the imposition of ashes for those who so desire. Plan to begin your Lenten journey in worship.

LENTEN SECOND HOURS

During the season of Lent, we will have a five-week series of Bible study, reflection and discussion that will be held each Sunday at 11:30 AM downstairs in Fellowship Hall. The Second Hours will be led by Sandra Reed, but participation by those in attendance will be crucial. We will look at Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection, and the events leading up to them, as reported in the four Gospels. We will observe the various ways in which these events are depicted in the different Gospels.

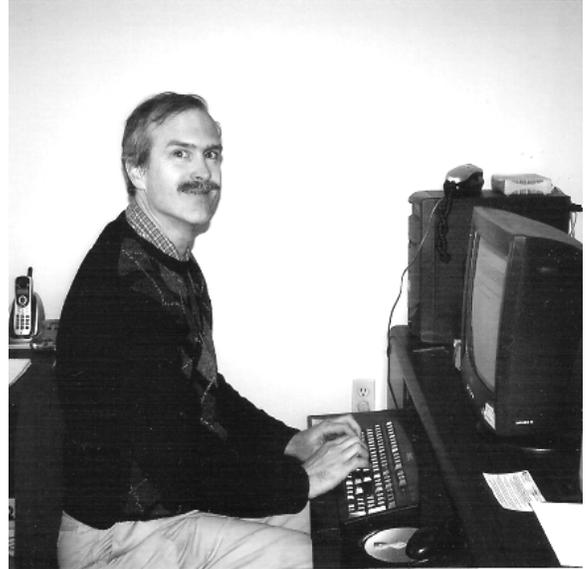
The only materials needed are a Bible, some paper, and something to write with. Please feel free to bring your snacks from Coffee Hour to our group. We will end promptly each week at 12:30 PM. Please plan to participate in this study and enhance our Lenten experience.

The Second Hours will be held on the following dates: March 5, 19, 26, and April 2 and 9.

If you have any questions, please call Sandra Reed at 288-3280.

Holy Week Service Schedule

April 13, **Maundy Thursday**
7 pm at the church
April 14, **Ecumenical Good Friday Service**
12 noon, location to be announced
April 16, **Easter**
Sunrise Service at Schooner Head
Overlook Breakfast after Sunrise Service
10 am **Regular Worship Service**



We welcome Paul Dickson as our new Administrative Assistant. A familiar face to many, he is a great asset to this position. The office is now open Monday through Friday, 9:00AM-3:00PM. Please make yourself known to him and welcome him to this position in our church.

Kimberly Haller

THANK YOU, KIMBERLY

Many thanks to Kimberly Haller for working as our Administrative Assistant for the past several months.

We all appreciated your good work, your pleasant voice on the telephone, your hospitality when we came to the office and your awesome organizational skills. We want you to know that we are so glad that you could help us out in this important way.

Sandra Reed

CHOIR NOTES

COME JOIN US IN SONG!

The Adult Choir will rehearse the Holy week and Easter anthems on March 16, 23, 30 and April 6 (Thursdays) from 7:00-7:45PM, devoting the remainder of the choir rehearsal to other anthems (you are more than welcome to stay and join in!). Please speak to me if you are interested in joining us for these special anthems, even if you have "note-reading reservations".

Kimberly Haller

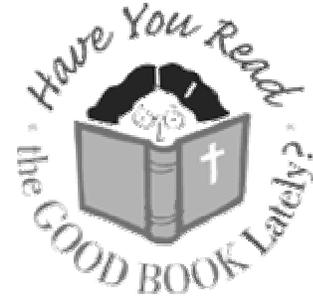
WELCOME BACK POTLUCK LUNCHEON

On Sunday, March 12, we will hold a "Welcome Back" pot luck luncheon for our returning Honduras Mission Team. The gathering will begin immediately after the church service and will be held downstairs in the Fellowship Hall. Please bring your favorite main dish or salad and come prepared to hear the story and see the pictures of our folks' trip. Hopefully, many of them will be able to attend. Dessert, bread and beverages will be provided. Our Mission Team returns on February 28, but we want to give them a bit to get some rest and get their pictures developed so that they can share them with us. Please come and give our folks a hearty "Welcome Back!" If you can help with set-up or clean-up, please contact Sandra Reed at 288-3280.

Called to Care

Valentine Care packages were sent to eight college students in February. We would like to thank Judy Fuller, Debbie Hammond, Cindy Lambert, Cindy Fox, Yvonne Tabb, Sue McKay, and Ann Warner for donating wonderful goodies. The packages were fabulous and we couldn't have done it without you!

Thanks, Barb Steele



The **Bible Study Group** will meet every Thursday at 10 am. The location will be announced each week in the church bulletin.

You may also call the church office (288-3280) for details. We are currently studying Paul's Letter to the Romans.

Have Fun, Flee the Construction Parties

Fun was had by one and all who were involved with our first round of Flee the Construction Parties. Thanks go to our hosts and hostesses for wonderfully planned events. We did have a few glitches like being snowed out and unable to accommodate people that were going to Honduras.

We will catch all of you in March when we have our second round of parties. If you have been hearing about all the fun from those of us who participated, and you were not on the original list, please give us a call so you can join us.

Also if you were a guest and would like to host a party, we would be glad to hear from you. Come join in the feasting and fellowship. Please call either the church office, Donna Beals 244-0491 or Barb Steele 288-5871.

Easter Flowers

Please contact Roxie Brechlin (288-4859) or Billie Mitchell (288-3691) to order your Easter Flowers. We ask that everyone have their order in by March 17th. There will be lilies or tulips. The cost is \$15.00 payment can be given to Roxie, Billie or the church office. Please make all checks payable to Bar Harbor Congregational Church, UCC.

Thank You!

The Flower Committee

Flower Committee

The Flower Committee invites you to donate flowers. We are contacting donors from last year but want to include everyone. If you would like to donate flowers during the coming year – contact a member, or Paul at the church office 288-3280.

Jan. & Jul.	Billie Mitchell	288-3691
Feb. & Oct.	Lynne Richardson	288-4030
Mar. & Apr.	Roxie Brechlin	288-4859
May & Jun.	Dottie Robins	288-3787
Aug. & Sep.	Nancy Pelletier	288-4036
Nov. & Dec.	Joy Kelly	288-9499

THANK YOU!

It took a lot of hard working people to make our directory a success. Starting with the callers: Yvonne Tabb, Jan Varnum, Fran Fry and Beth Paradis.

Once the appointments were made the hosts and hostesses stepped in: Margaret and Bruce Blake, Ann and Doug Lee, Cindy and Rod Fox, Ginny and Ben Blaney, Carolyn Miller, Anne Warner, and Debby Hammond. Our time at the Sea Coast Mission was warm and accommodating thanks to Elsa Gettleman and Gary DeLong.

Helping from the office were Billie, Kimberly, and of course love and support from Sandra.

Then I went to Florida and left the largest and most difficult part, layout, to Kathy MacCulloch and Donna Beals. They put in many hours to finalize this project.

I hope I haven't forgotten anyone, but please know I thank you all, and look forward to seeing the finished product.

In Gratitude,
Nancy Pelletier

Cas Dowden, Advocate

Cas Dowden represented Bar Harbor's YWCA as a board member at the YWCA's National Conference to "Eliminate Racism and Empower Women," as reported in the *Mount Desert Islander's* Living Section.

"The soft-spoken yet intense owner of a small catering business first moved to Bar Harbor in the 1980's. She grew up in New York City and moved for a time to Burlington, Vt." "After living in Bar Harbor for so long, Ms. Dowden says she feels like an integral part of the community. 'People know me now. I put myself out there and get involved.'"

She notes that "with more minorities and people from other countries living in town, it is now more important than ever for people of different races, religions, nationalities and backgrounds to work together to make sure social divides don't form." "We are much more diverse than we were when I came here 17 years ago. We need to see how we can make sure everyone fits in and can grow."

"The YWCA has been involved in the fight for equality and fair treatment for all of its 150 years.... 'The struggle isn't finished.'"

Maryanne Starbird, Artist

The *Mount Desert Islander's* Arts section applauded the work of Maryanne – "A successful artist with a degree in studio painting from the University of Houston... [who] has been inducted into the National Watercolor Society and shown her work nationally and internationally." These include fine art galleries in Rockland and Bar Harbor. "Ms. Starbird works in a studio tucked away at the north end of the stunning contemporary home she shares with her husband, Rick, and their golden retriever, Caddie, named for Cadillac Mountain. The mountain forms part of the spectacular view from the home's top floor."

"Based for many years in Houston, where Rick [who led the church's successful capital campaign for the church addition] was an executive for Exxon, she sold her artwork through commercial galleries and to banks and corporations as well as individual collectors."

"My motto is to work every day possible, because when you do, things happen.... Always work from your own experience and love what you do. Then the journey will be exciting and full of surprises."

JUST FOR KIDS

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United Church of Christ
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Temporary Office & Mailing Address:
36 Kennebec Place, Suite 14
Bar Harbor, Maine 04609**



Special dates:

- Ash Wednesday, March 1, 2006
- World Day of Prayer, March 3, 2006
- Girl Scout Sunday, March 12, 2006
- St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2006
- First Day of Spring, March 20, 2006

Spring Cleaning

March 1st 2006, is Ash Wednesday. From that day until Easter we will be into the 40 days of Lent. Lent hints of spring, a time when the earth begins to awaken from a winter's nap, and new growth bursts forth all about us. More personally, it is an opportunity to enter into springtime for our spirit. For centuries Christians have used the 40 days of Lent to seek spiritual growth. Sincere repentance, a changing of heart, casting off old sinful practices and seeking to commune with our Creator help us go in the right direction. Spending serious time in silence and prayer focuses our attention. Reading spiritual literature, becoming more knowledgeable about the New Testament, meeting in small groups with other Christians to share personal stories of faith can all be immensely stimulating. Joining with others to serve the helpless and hopeless can strengthen our spiritual life. Lent is a time to let God do "spring cleaning" within us. It's our opportunity to allow God to help us toss out the "stuff" that hinders us, and then freshen up the "new creature" we are meant to be as followers of Christ.