When you read this we should be in Holy Week, the time we remember and celebrate the Passion of our Lord. It begins with Palm Sunday on March 28th and of course we all remember the procession of children with palm leaves and then the Palm Sunday Brunch after worship planned again for this year. During the week we have Maundy Thursday services April 1st beginning at 6 pm with a potluck and then Communion and Tenebrae following at 7 pm. Good Friday services are April 2nd at 7 pm with the United Methodist and Episcopal churches of Littleton and the Shared Ministry of Lisbon joining us and bringing their combined choirs. Rector Kurt Weisner of All Saints’ Episcopal Church will bring the message. The Annual Pre-Easter Prayer Vigil then begins Friday at 8 pm through 8 am the next morning. The wonder of Easter with all the special music and the flowers and the joy of the resurrection is April 4th. The deacons have a special coffee fellowship planned and the Christian Ed. Committee has a Resurrection Egg Hunt planned for the children. So, lots of activities and special services the next few weeks. That is just the surface of things. On a deeper level the Church Council and the various committees are busy looking at our direction as a church and how we can be true to our mission as followers of Jesus Christ and more effective in that mission in this world, place and time we live in today.

Those efforts are part of the preparation for the coming of a new pastor in the near future. We don’t know how long that will be for sure but the Search Committee is hard at work and will continue giving us periodic reports. We do know that this process opens all kinds of opportunities and possibilities for us as a church. How these opportunities and possibilities are used and how effective they will be is going to be up to you. There will probably be changes and some will welcome these and some will be unsure. Here is where your prayers are especially needed. We need to be praying for God’s will for this church. What does the Lord want and how can each of us be open to that new future?

Years ago you may have fallen in love and gotten married. There was romance and excitement and then the honeymoon ended. He didn’t pick up his socks and she wore hair curlers to breakfast. It was good but not perfect, not what we dreamed. That is life and those of us who have been married for a long time have learned that in spite of human imperfections that love can grow stronger and deeper with time.

You will go through this; give it time and pray for the work of the Search Committee, for the church to make the right decisions, for the leadership of the church, and for each other as you work through these coming days. With faith and trust they are exciting; a whole new possibility of new life awaits. In fact it’s a whole lot like the resurrection, the new life given by God. Thanks be to God!

Your friend and Interim Pastor,

Gene
“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28: 19-20 (ESV)
Meet our Newest Members!

New member, Hilda Little, has lived in Beattie House in Littleton for three years. Thanks to Jean Kimball, her sponsor, she has joined with us in worship and work. Born in New York (Central Square), she has lived in many places with Massachusetts being the last stop before New Hampshire. She and her husband were active members of the Springfield Congregational Church. Widowed in 1986, she moved to Bethlehem where she lived for nine years before moving to Littleton. Today she maintains her membership in Eastern Star. With her cat, Holly, she enjoys friends and family (Massachusetts) and the opportunity to make new friends within our church family. She has joined the Ladies Society and has already started her knitting project for our knitting ministry. Please welcome Hilda into our family.

Coffee and Conversation with Kim Smith

Meet Kim Smith, one of our newest members. She and husband, Tom, (grandson of Clara Smith), live in Lyman with son, Curran, who will turn one year old in April - and is quite the charmer! Kim grew up in Londonderry and has been active in the Methodist church since third grade. She has been active in many areas of church work. Her last activity was teaching sacred dance to children to adults.

She was graduated from UNH in 2002 in Environmental Conservations. She moved to Littleton to work at Horizon Engineering and it during this period that she met her husband (there is a wonderful story about their meeting - be sure to ask her about that!). Kim is vitally interested in "care of the earth" and this seems a perfect fit for our denomination and its vision.

A very special thank you

To the many who sent me get well and birthday cards while I was in the Morrison, I thank you very much. These were very much appreciated. God bless you all.

From Bev Nute

Special Olympian

Jeff Beasley is displaying one of 3 medals that he earned in snow shoe events at the NH Special Olympics held at Waterville Valley on March 2nd and 3rd. He competed with the White Mountain Special Olympians. His medals were bronze in the 50 meter and 100 meter and gold in the 200 meter. He's a long distance guy!
Holy Week and Easter Services
March 28th – 10:00 AM
Palm Sunday Service
Palm Sunday Brunch to follow
April 1 – 6:00 PM
Maundy Thursday Pot Luck and service
April 2 – 7:00 PM Good Friday Service and start of Prayer Vigil
April 3 – Prayer Vigil concludes until 8:00 am.
April 4 – 10:00 AM
Easter Sunday Service
Children’s Egg Hunt

Next Dinner Bell
April 6, 2010
Please sign up now to help out or bring casseroles, salads, or desserts.
Or, call Lars or Cynthia Nielson at 444-1339
Your help is needed to support our community in these tough financial times.

NOTICE!
Ballroom Dancing is on SUNDAY nights.
We have been working on basic waltz and swing. We will be adding steps in both and teaching basic foxtrot.
Join us at 7:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall.
Donation is $5.00 per couple
For more information: contact Marti Faulkner

Financial Report
AS OF Feb. 28, 2010
Pledge Income: $22,895.66
Other income: $1739.00
Transf. from Trust Funds: $3378.68
Total Income: $28,014.22
Total Expenses: $25,243.32
Net: $2770.09

Shining Lights Learning Center
We are anticipating a lot of openings in the Pre-School for the upcoming school year.
If you know of anyone interested in a Christian Pre-school, please let them know.
Contact Dianah Hale at the center for more information 444-7379

Food Collection Sunday – April 25, 2010
The Food Cupboard suggests the following items: shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hand/bath soap, toilet tissue, baby diapers, coffee, teabags, hot chocolate mix, canned milk. Dry milk, Jell-O puddings & gelatins, soups, canned meat (turkey, chicken, ham, tuna corned beef, Spam). Dry cereals, instant oatmeal, rice mixes, pasta, canned beans, canned vegetables, cake mixes, frostings, crackers. Dog and cat food- canned and dry.

“Yesterday was a cancelled check. Tomorrow is a promissory note. Today is cash–Spend it wisely.”

ANNOUNCEMENT
Shaw’s has announced the termination of its community awards program as of April 30, 2010. It plans to redirect charitable giving to the community in other ways.
Our church will receive its final check in May.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE
The NH Conference Church Media Center is located at 140 Sheep Davis Road Pembroke, NH. We are a lending library that is open 9 am -1pm on Tuesday – Friday and we are open on Monday evenings from 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm. You can also access our catalog online at www.nhcmc.org.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Church Media Center at 224-7020. If you are unable to come to the CMC, we are more than happy to mail materials to you. All that we ask is that you reimburse us for postage.
Church Council News Summary

The Church Council met March 16th, 2010. Roger Petit opened the meeting with a devotional reading on hope and change. Change is always difficult with the first step being the hardest. The power of God will help you. Minutes were approved from Feb. meeting. Dr. Gene reported on activities for the month high-lighting Lenten “Nooma” series with good attendance, Easter week services, which are all set, and he will be working with Christian Ed on media possibilities for the church.

Christian Ed: Palm Sunday brunch all set to go. A Resurrection Egg hunt is planned during coffee hour on Easter. The current curriculum has been discarded as it was not working well and the teachers have found one previously used that is working out better. They are trying to work on activities that might interest the children more to encourage better attendance. May 23rd there will be the Christian Ed. Celebration, but Sunday School will continue through June 12th. There will be special activities for the children that day with a light lunch and make your own sundae.

Property: Issues with the freezer have been fixed. The odor from the heat registers has not been identified. Property will continue to look into this.

Search Committee: The search process is progressing.

Shining Lights: Continues to thrive. Ten preschoolers will be headed off to kindergarten in the fall and there will be openings in the preschool room. Four toddlers are expected to move up. The cookie dough fundraiser is commencing and order forms will be available soon. SLLC would like to look at rearranging the space in the preschool area to include removing a partial wall that is not a load bearing wall. The entry way needs to be re-configured to ease congestion around the cubbies and bathroom. The windows are also leaky and should be replaced, but that needs to wait until the elevator issue has been resolved.

Finance: Trackable income for the year is $29,800.99. Loose offerings are $1092.00, prior year pledges- $825.00. Capital Campaign $2020.00. Shaw’s community rewards program is ending as of April 30, 2010 with the final check in May. Shaw’s sent a letter to the effect that they were going to redirect their charitable giving.

Mission: Our turn for Dinner Bell is April 6th with sign up in the church. Mission committee proposed a joint fundraiser with Habitat for Humanity. Council approved a January date for that. They would like to do a more “hands on project” to benefit the people of Haiti. Christian Ed would like to join in. More research is needed on what is needed (tools, supplies, hygiene products- etc.). It may be that it is best to send money, but they would like to see an intergenerational effort of some kind.

Personnel: making plans to meet

Deacons: Since Easter is a busy Sunday, communion will be moved to April 11th. Deacons are reviewing their role. They are also concerned that church attendance has dropped off and have begun to look at what can be done to support the congregation in this interim time.

Music: Elaine Stroop has joined the music committee.

Budget report: Year to date income exceeds expenses by $2770.89, although ongoing member support is down by $3635 from January to February.

Other business: Discussion on use of facilities. The concern was raised groups using the facilities are growing and increased usage was costing more. Rates for use of facility were discussed. Will look at usage and rates again at the next meeting.

Strategic Planning: A schematic was presented to start the discussion on a visioning process. Many have noticed the symptom of declining numbers in worship and Sunday school. How do we move ahead in the 21st century? It was agreed that the bulk of this process will involve our new minister, but there are probably things we can do right now. Anything we do will involve change and we need to make ourselves ready and open to new possibilities.

Council approved the deacon’s request to spend $160.00 to be part of the Chamber of Commerce Map of Littleton. Deferred to next meeting: Safe Church Policy and update on fund raisers. Date of April Meeting: April 20, 2010 at 7:00 PM in Fellowship Hall.

We’ve missed you!

We have been noticing some of the empty seats on Sunday. There are many of us who are missing our members who haven’t been able to come to join all of us at church. Our beautiful stained glass windows do not seem as bright and shiny without you there; our hymns do not sound as joyful when you are not there; and the Children’s Moment is not as cheerful and fun without the children. We wish to send to everyone lots of love and hugs and hope to see you soon!
Search Committee Update

The Search Committee is continuing to look at profiles of potential candidates. We have dismissed some people as not appropriate and have spoken on the phone with others. We are praying, and hope you will join us, that God will show us the way to the right candidate. Please don’t get discouraged. We aren’t.

Ann Craxton, Chair

Earth Day, April 22, 2010

This year is the 40th anniversary of Earth Day. The United Church of Christ has been raising, and addressing concerns for a long time, working for a more just world and a more gently-used earth.

‘Everyone seems to be talking about “green” issues these days... We’re becoming more sensitized, more aware of the ways we use the good creation God provided for us. We’re mindful of our dependence on the earth for our food and air and water, and for the energy that provides light and heat and transportation. And we realize more and more the impact of the way we use these resources, and how we return them to the earth.’

Visit the web site below to find out more about resources available for caring for God’s earth.

http://www.ucc.org/earthcare/

Pilgrim’s Progress

All dressed up in our Sunday best!
Reevaluating our mission and purpose and getting ourselves spiritually back in shape

Spring is often the time when we look at our wardrobe, our house, or ourselves and think “My, it is time to clean out and shape up.” We diligently and critically look at what is there: what to keep and what to get rid of. Some things we want to keep for sentimental reason. They bring back memories and comforting thoughts of the past. Some things are still useful. But some things really have to go (like our favorite pair of shoes from 1982 or the winter pounds that crept up on us). It is like that in the life of the church as well. In our interim time, we have a ‘spring’ of sorts where we can look at ourselves critically to see where we need to shape up and clean out.

Churches need to revisit their mission and purpose often to see if what they are doing is what they said they would. We need to look at how we are meeting the needs of our congregation, our local community, and our worldwide community. What is the most important thing we should be doing? Are we really sharing our love, and thus the gospel of Christ in a way that is effective in this new millennium? What are we doing that works? What are we doing that doesn’t seem to be working? Are we focusing on the right thing? What do we need to do differently? How can we become a thriving ‘Body of Christ’?

The council is asking the various committees to take a close look at all these issues. In essence, get ready for a good spring cleaning to get our house (our body of Christ) in order for a new pastor. We would really like everyone in our congregation to engage in this process as well, all of us, and especially those of you who feel your needs are NOT being met. Your input is needed. We would like to encourage you to bring any thoughts or questions to either the deacons, Phil Krill, moderator, or Dr. Gene.

What is God calling us to do? Are we ready to move forward?
Shining Lights presents its second annual cookie dough sale fundraiser event. Cookie dough come in 2.7 lb. tubs and makes 48 large great tasting cookies. There are 14 varieties of cookies to choose from. Tub prices are $13 to $14, depending on variety.

These tubs are easily frozen tub and last up to 1 year in the freezer cookies! Remember how convenient they are. We (Board members) will be available in church to take orders. Or you can call Su Schott, Charron Sundman, Judy Clewes, or Alice Muh to place an order.

If you miss it, you’ll regret it!