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The Pilgrims Land in America

By Dave Buchan
Interim Senior Minister

It took more than two months for 102 people to cross the Atlantic on the Mayflower.

And when at long last the sand hills and trees of Cape Cod were sighted, the first thing those Pilgrims did was to kneel down and thank God for bringing them to a new land.

William Bradford describes the occasion in this way: "Being arrived in a good harbor and brought safe to land, they fell on their knees and blessed the God of Heaven who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the perils thereof, again to set their feet on the firm and stable earth, their proper element."

Today many people in the pilgrimage of their own lives have also successfully crossed stormy seas to reach a new land. And like those pilgrims of old, we kneel down and give thanks to our God.

On Sunday morning, November 18, we will have a special Thanksgiving service.

Come, join us for this special celebration – and bring a friend with you. Worship is held at 9:00 and 11:00.

In Christ,
Dave Buchan
Interim Senior Minister

Budget Meeting Set For December 9

A church budget meeting will be held Sunday, December 9. There will be one service at 10:00, with the meeting in the Parish Hall immediately following the service.

All First Congregational Church members are urged to attend. Although our life as a faith community involves much more than dollars and cents, deciding on a working and worshipful budget is an important part of fulfilling our Christian mission.

Child care will be provided.

Fall Church Clean-Up Day

The Board of Trustees invites everyone to join our church family to help clean up the church grounds. The date is Saturday, November 17 (The rain or snow date is the following Saturday, November 24).

Time is 9 a.m. to noon. All groups and all ages are invited to participate. Bring rakes, blowers and tarps and other tools for leaf removal. Thanks in advance!

Worship Schedule For November

Worship is at 9:00 and 11:00.

Child care and Church School will be provided at both hours.

Sunday, November 4: Dave Buchan will continue his “Biblical Insights into Daily Living” series with “Dealing with Gossip.” (James 3:2-10) Communion Sunday; please bring food offerings.

Sunday, November 11: Dave Buchan will conclude his “Biblical Insights into Daily Living” series with “Finding Hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11, Romans 15:13, Hebrews 6:19)

Sunday, November 18: Thanksgiving Sunday; Dave Buchan preaching on “To Be a Pilgrim.” (Hebrews 11: 13-16)

Sunday, November 25: Alison McCaffrey preaching.

Church Thursdays

Thursday nights are “Church Thursdays.” We begin with a shared dinner, then either a large group presentation or small groups. (See Page 6.)

Our evenings end with a brief worship in the compline (evening prayer) tradition. Dinners will be held in the Parish Hall or in the parsonage, according to our schedule of events. Here is the schedule for November and December:

November 1: Dinner at 6:30 in the Parish Hall, with 7:15 p.m. presentation on our own First Congregational Church history by Henry McNulty. The dinner (soup, salad, dessert) is sponsored by Donna Mead’s Dinner Group; cost is \$3 per person, and under age 5 is free. Child care will be provided. There’s a signup board in the parlor, or you may call Audrey Finkenstadt at 272-9438.

November 8, November 15, November 29, December 6, December 13: Parsonage Potlucks: We gather at 6:15 p.m. in the parsonage for a shared meal. Come for dinner, come for a small group, or come for both!



If You’re Hospitalized...

If you or a member of your family is in the hospital, please remember to tell First Congregational Church. Federal privacy laws make it impossible for the church to find out if a member or a friend of the church is hospitalized simply by asking, the way it was done in the past.

Pigs, Wardens, and Stewardship

Here's more from *Ask, Thank, Tell* by Charles R. Lane:

What is a Steward? Someone in charge of the wine at a fancy restaurant? The person in the aisles on an airplane? Joseph in the Egyptian court, managing the royal accounts?

It's all of us in the pews.

The word comes from the old English sty-warden. In medieval times, the sty-warden was appointed by the lord of the manor to manage the pig farm. This person was entrusted not only with the pigs, but also with the pig keepers.

Pigs were valuable, a source of good meat all year long, and thrifty to domesticate and feed. But they needed care, to keep them cool in summer, warm in winter, protected from predators, and well slopped all year long. Pig caretakers on larger farms needed teaching and supervision to know their way around some ornery but important creatures.

The sty warden/steward didn't own the pigs or the pig keepers. He was their warden. The job was to manage the accounts and the pig keepers who managed the pigs, the sties and the barns. The steward's job was to return a profit for the owner. In later times, the position of steward was a royal appointment, generously rewarded for important good work.

So we're all appointed stewards over what we have on earth – cars, homes, careers and jobs, time and skills, families – to manage for the good of the Lord, who expects a good profit. It's all His in the first place—and our stewardship at church simply returns to the Lord a portion of the income he has lent us, to continue his work on earth.

So when the Lord calls for an accounting from his able stewards, will you be able to show him how well the farm is doing?

Our current stewardship season, when we account for this year and plan for next, is going well. As of October 18, the church had received 90 pledges, with \$116,619 raised to support the church in 2008.

It's time to show our accounts as God's wardens on earth.

The Board of Stewardship



Caring Crafts Ministry

The Caring Crafts Ministry will meet Monday, November 26, at 7 p.m. at Donna Mead's home, 15 Conifer Drive, Hamden. Please feel free to call Donna for directions or questions (248-9576). All are welcome, whether you know how to knit or would like to learn. Beginner materials are available.

Notes from the Executive Board

The purpose of the Executive Board is to coordinate, promote and evaluate the program and welfare of the church. The Board meets monthly, and is composed of representatives of the majority of church boards and committees. Here are topics discussed at the October Board meeting:

Congregational meetings and activities

- Comments received from the congregation regarding the September 23 meeting were reviewed and will be shared with the Budget Committee. Planning is underway for the December meeting, scheduled for Sunday, December 9. There will be one service at 10:00, with the meeting in the Parish Hall immediately following the service.
- The success of the Thursday night suppers and small groups was celebrated, with the next Thursday Night Supper speaker scheduled for November 1.
- Upcoming church activities: Fall Clean-Up Day - Nov. 17; Malawi Concert – Nov. 18; Church Budget Meeting – Dec. 9. Planning is also underway for the Thanksgiving and Christmas services.

Communication Task Force

Task Force members are: Jane Montgomery, Karl Stephan, Andrew Stephan, and Chair, Henry McNulty; and the team is assisted by Webmaster Carolyn Brown and Martha Lape and Leslie Meyer from the Church Office. The two highest priority items for the Task Force have been the Parish Post and the Church web

site. Focus on Parish Post content and editing has brought positive results, noted and praised by the Executive Board. Work continues on the web site, with the goal of making it a major communication vehicle for all church activities. The Task Force is asking for help in maintaining the web site. If you see something on the church's site that is outdated or incorrect, please advise Henry. He can be reached at hmcnulty@aol.com or by calling his home phone, 203-271-1377.

Response Team

Work continues to close recommendations of the Response Team. Draft updates to the Yutes Safety Manual and the Safe and Nurturing Policy were well received by the Revs. Ron Brown and Mike Penn-Strah from the UCC. Final review of these documents is underway.

Membership Update

Deacons will review the statement of faith covenant from the bylaws and help to develop a definitive process to determine when a person moves from active status to inactive status. Deacons will continue to work on this with the Membership Verification Team and will report back to Executive.

Strategic and succession planning

Discussion was held around the topic of instituting more formal processes for these important leadership functions of the Church.



There's a Lot Happening with the Youth Groups

Pot Luck Open House

We will hold an open house on Sunday, November 4, at 5 p.m. in the Parish Hall. This is open to anyone interested in what the Yutes are all about, including adults who might be thinking about becoming involved in some way. *Please note: At least one parent of regular attending youth is expected to join us.* There will be a pot luck dinner with a short information session to follow. Youth will then attend their regular program with pick-up at 7 p.m.

Lock-in planned

On November 16 and 17, the Yutes will enjoy their first major event of the year with an all night lock-in at the church. We will meet at 6 p.m. on Friday and be



LOCK-IN!

picked up at noon the next day. Please have your mandatory permission slips submitted as far in advance as possible. They are available on the Yutes web site (www.yutes.org) – and no one may attend without one!

This will be a great night of fun, friends and faith, so plan to be there. Our theme will be witness and mission.

Bring a pillow, a sleeping bag, and a

snack to share. There will be separate programs for Middle School and Senior High. Although we might be a little bleary-eyed, we all will participate in the church leaf clean-up in the morning!! So bring a rake.



Senior High Winter Retreat

Something new this year! Our winter retreat for Senior High is scheduled for January 11 to 13 at the Monadnock Bible Center in Jaffrey, New Hampshire! Visit our web site to see the link. The cost is subsidized at \$75 per youth, and includes all meals and activities.

There are only 20 slots available, so if you plan to go, get a deposit of \$25 to Roger Olander or the church office, along with the permission slip, as soon as possible.

Summer Mission Trip

Our mission trip to Wilmington, Del., will be held from July 20 through 26, 2008, so keep those dates open if you plan to attend. Lots more information will follow in the weeks to come.

Small Groups – Big Ministries. Join Us!

Here's some of what the Small Groups at First Congregational Church will be doing in November and December. If a group meets on Thursdays, please note that there will be no meeting on November 22, Thanksgiving Day.

Bereavement Group: The Courage to Hope led by Ginny Humphrey, Jan Garthwait, and Frank Scinto at 7 p.m. in Room 10, and worship service on Friday evening, Dec 21.

For those who grieve, the holidays can be an especially difficult time. A new small group is being formed for anyone who is grieving, to offer comfort, understanding, and support. Leaders are Ginny Humphrey, Jan Garthwait, and Frank Scinto.

Ginny is a Registered Nurse and experienced bereavement group leader. She is joined by Jan and Frank, both trained Stephen Ministers.



Bible Study with Dave Buchan
Thursdays at 7:15 p.m. in the parlor.

The Rev. Dave Buchan, interim senior minister, is our leader for a journey of heart, spirit, and mind through various books of the Bible. We begin with the Book of Acts. No previous Biblical knowledge is required; lively discussion encouraged!

The Bible and Terrorism led by John Afman and Bob Mead.

The attacks of September 11, 2001, shook the foundations of our nation and our faith. It may help to know that Old Testament Hebrews and the first Christians were targeted, too! Listening to their stories will echo our fears today, and provide substance for our faith. Their prayers of anguish and hope are also in Scripture for our use.

We will blend discussion and prayer — discussion of parallels between Bible times and now, with earnest prayers for America and the world during the next year. John is a retired minister and Bob is a retired Army Air Force colonel.

Meetings are once a month. Dates are: Thursday, November 8, 7 p.m. in the Whiting House or Sunday, Nov. 18, 10:05 a.m. in the Chapel. The group will also meet December 13 and 16.

Genealogy with Donna Mead, 248-9576

Have you ever wanted to trace your family's roots, but didn't know how or where to start? Now you will have that chance with this beginner's course. Bring your pen, your memory, and your sense of adventure, and join us for a walk down memory lane.

The group meets Thursdays at 7:15 p.m. from November 8 (Nov. 8 in the Parsonage) through December 13 in the Library.

More Exciting Happenings at First Congregational

Here are some of the events planned for this month and next at the church. Please plan to take part!

Photography Show November 3

All ages are invited to our all church Photography Show. Members and friends have submitted photos based on the theme: “Where do you see God?” We have amazing entries of pictures taken all over the world and in our own backyards of people, places – once in a lifetime moments of God at work captured on film.

Join us for the showing and gala reception in the Parish Hall on Saturday evening, November 3, from 6 to 8 p.m. Bring a friend or a neighbor. (This is not a contest, but a time to share in the beauty of God through the arts.)

The Inferno November 7

Corrupt politicians, disappointing and dishonest civil and religious leaders – sound familiar? It’s not only today. This was also the situation in late 13th century Florence when the great Italian writer Dante wrote his Comedy. Join with a small group to read and discuss Part I, The Inferno, where Dante describes his journey into Hell. Please bring your own copy of the book; any version is fine. The leader is Susan Mancinelli: (860) 426-2467.

Advent Labyrinth: A Walk into the Waiting December 2

The labyrinth is an ancient sacred spiritual tool for prayer and contemplation and a tangible expression of spiritual preparation in this Advent season of waiting for God. One walks the labyrinth in a spirit of prayer, centering the heart toward God. There is one way in and one way out, yet one’s heart can be profoundly moved through this prayer experience. We will carpool from church at 3:30 p.m. on December 2, to an area labyrinth for a planned walk. For further information, ask Alison McCaffrey.

“Lord, I Want to be a Christian” Women’s Retreat December 8

Women of the church are invited to an all-day retreat in the season of Advent, at Peggy Allen’s home. Join us for this opportunity to reflect and renew as we share in song, story, scripture and each other’s company. The event is limited to 12 people; a waiting list will be created. Please let Peggy Allen or Alison McCaffrey know of your interest.

Christmas Social December 20

Thursday, December 20, at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. All ages are invited for a Christmas Social with hors d’oeuvres, desserts, and singing Christmas carols around the piano.

Capital Giving Opportunities Abound

The church has recently received a donation of \$4,000 to support the waterproofing of the basement of the meetinghouse and installation of sump pumps, to make sure that the lower rooms are always dry, usable, and hospitable. This generous donation comes from a relatively new member, who has lived in Cheshire for four years.

As she said: “Why not enjoy the pleasure of giving to the church something they need? I’d rather give it now when people can use it. I don’t want to leave it in my will.” A former church treasurer elsewhere, she understands the importance of giving. Her name is Katherine Saulnier, and we thank her for her understanding of the church’s need to maintain the building for the present and future.

Other capital giving opportunities are available, especially for the Parsonage. The basement has experienced flooding, and the fire department has pumped out the water; the furnace requires maintenance after each flood. A sump pump and waterproofing of the basement would solve this problem (\$6,200). The fireplaces need repointing, the front and side porches need rebuilding, the upstairs bathroom needs renovation, and the floors need refinishing. Much of the work is being done by a wonderful tradesman from the congregation, but he requires materials to work with (\$21,000).

The Parish Hall needs a new roof (\$13,100), as does the connector (\$30,000); the Whiting House bathroom, front porch,

and garage are in serious need of attention (\$13,000). Please consider a donation to support the buildings and grounds of this church, which so reliably provide sanctuary and service all day, every day, and not just on Sunday.



Church School Snacks!

All 3-year olds through first graders are served snacks and juice on Sunday mornings. We have found that asking parents to contribute once a year helps us keep within our budget. We welcome all contributions, and offer a schedule as a suggested way to remember.

We ask that snacks not contain nuts, peanut butter, or peanut oil, so please read the ingredient labels.

Some suggestions of purchased cookies that are OK include: nut free varieties of Chips Ahoy, Oreos, Teddy Grahams,

Vanilla Wafers, and Lorna Doone.



Families whose last name begins with A-B, please bring snacks in September. C-D, October; E-G,

November; H-J, December; K-M, January; N-Q, February; R-S, March; T-V, April; W-Z, May. Thank you!

The Beatitudes Featured in Church School

The Bible Journeys workshop rotation Church School program is for children and youth in grades 2-6 this fall. Children will know what workshop they will go to by the schedule below, the Bulletin, or the Bible Journeys Board in the hallway across from Room 8.

Grades 3 to 6 will go to class when dismissed from church. Grade 2 at the 9 a.m. service only will leave for Chapel in the early part of the service. After Chapel, they will go with their shepherd to their Bible Journeys workshop. Parents may find their children in the classrooms listed in the bulletin at the end of Church School.

This Month: The Beatitudes

Thou Art in Room 8: Each student will create a word poster as a reminder of attitudes and situations for which God blesses us. They will read together from Matthew 5:1-12 the Beatitudes (blessings) Jesus talks about for those who love God.

Red Sea Productions in Room 9: Students will understand the Beatitudes through discussion, creating and acting. They will videotape themselves, and will understand the Beatitudes are a description of how God's community of believers acts.

Desert Tales in Room 10: Students will watch the video about the Sermon on the Mount. They will learn that Jesus talked about a different kind of kingdom and will

identify through discussion people who are blessed as in the Beatitudes.

Gospel Games in Room 11: They will use the computer game "Kids Pix 3" to create an illustrated dictionary of the Beatitudes. They will be able to pick two items from a list to illustrate.

The Jesus Dolls

Our Jesus dolls and journal will be making the rounds in our families this year.

Children will receive the doll and journal to bring home for a week. Parents are asked to help the children with the journal, with prayers, and with conversations that the young children have about having Jesus visit their home.

We encourage you to pray with your child and Jesus. Read to them from the Bible and talk about the stories. The following week, please bring the doll and the journal back to church so another child may take them home.

UNICEF

"Trick or treat for UNICEF" has been a tradition for American children for more than 50 years. The funds collected help UNICEF provide clean water and sanitation, healthcare, nutrition, education and emergency relief to the world's most vulnerable children. This year, 50 percent of the money collected will go to the children and families in the Gulf Coast.

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Our church has had a tradition of mission partnership with UNICEF at Halloween. Families decided if they wanted to participate in this mission opportunity. (Please return money to the church school class or Christian Ed office by the first week of this month.)

It is most helpful if you count the money together as a family and then write a check (made out to the First Congregational Church with a memo reading UNICEF) or send it in bills rather than return the box of change. This expedites the counting for the people here who count the money.

Children received their boxes on Sunday, October 28. We are glad to make our children aware of the needs of other children around the world!

Christmas Pageant

This is a casting call for all teens and children (grades 2 through 8) who want to participate in the Christmas Pageant on December 9.

Auditions will be held on Sunday, October 21 and Sunday, October 28 at 10:30 a.m. in Room 10.

The Pageant will be held December 9 at 4 p.m. There will be a dress rehearsal the day before, December 8, from 9:45 a.m. to noon at the church. There will be a blocking rehearsal Saturday, December 1, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. at the church. Line rehearsals will be November 4, 11, 18, and 25, and Dec. 2 (Sundays) at 10:30.

There will be signups in November for

younger angels, shepherds, and sheep. Adults are needed to help with rehearsing the speaking roles and helping the younger children on the day of dress rehearsal and the play.

Please speak to Debbie Gravell if you are able to help.

Celebrating Church School Volunteers

Three and four year old children have specific spiritual needs. Our volunteers in the preschool class at our 9:00 and 11:00 church school hours spend time creating a lesson to meet those specific spiritual needs.

They minister to our preschoolers through their creative lesson preparation, gathering of creative props and materials, developing age-appropriate crafts and especially their love of the children.

When you see our preschool teachers, please thank them for their ministry to this age group.

Thanks to: Carol, Pete and Eric Ploch; Sandra Harmer; and Diane Weller, our wonderful team of preschool teachers at the 9:00 church school. Thanks to their helpers: Anne Eisbach, Patrick Hackett, and Maureen Crowley.

Thanks to: Suzanne Lawson and Martha Triplett, our wonderful team of preschool teachers at the 11:00 church school. Thanks to their helpers: Leslie Parys and Beth Rojas.

Your ministry to our children is so special!



Church School Schedule

9:00

Date	Thou Art	Red Sea Prod.	Desert Tales	Gospel Games
Nov. 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grades 2 & 3	Grade 4
Nov. 11	Grade 6	Grades 2 & 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Nov. 18	Grades 2 & 3	Grade 4	Grades 5	Grade 6
Nov. 25	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grades 2 & 3

11:00

Date	Thou Art	Red Sea Prod.	Desert Tales	Gospel Games
Nov. 4	Worship	Worship	Worship	Worship
Nov. 11	Grade 6	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grades 2 & 3
Nov. 18	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grades 2 & 3	Grade 4
Nov. 25	Grades 2 & 3	Grade 5	Grade 4	Grade 6

Notes from the Deacons

“Homecoming Sunday” was a fantastic success! It was wonderful to experience the congregation worshipping and enjoying fellowship together... and the music! The Deacons were unanimous in agreeing to make this an annual event. Thank you to all who worked so hard to make it happen.

The ministers and Deacons have also decided to present “Our Gift of Thanks” as a part of the service on November 18, the Sunday before Thanksgiving. This will be a very special offering of Thanksgiving, and we will be looking for volunteers to participate.

The Deacons continue to work on the church’s membership verification, to accurately determine the number of our congregation’s active and inactive members.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns for the Deacons, please find

one of us at a service, or you can contact Ford Cole at 271-9041 or fcoble7619@cox.net.

November Lectionary

Sunday, November 4: Habakkuk 1: 1-4; 2 – 1-4; Psalm 119: 137-144; Isaiah 1: 10-18; Psalm 32: 1-7; 2 Thessalonians 1: 1-4, 11-12; Luke 19: 1-10.

Sunday, November 11: Haggai 1: 15-2:9; Psalm 145: 1-5, 17-21; Psalm 98; Job 19: 23-27; Psalm 17: 1-9; 2 Thessalonians 2: 1-5, 13-17; Luke 20: 27-38.

Sunday, November 18: 1 Samuel 1: 4-20 and 2: 1-10; Daniel 12: 13-3; Psalm 16; Hebrews 10: 11-25; Mark 13: 1-8.

Sunday, November 25: Jeremiah 23: 1-6; Luke 1: 68-79; Psalm 46; Colossians 1: 11-20; Luke 23: 22-43.

Letters of Thanks

I want to thank you for the beautiful flowers I received last Sunday; they've been a beautiful and loving reminder of the fantastic support and wonderful home we have found here. Any time I have started to feel worried or nervous about my upcoming surgery, I only had to look at the friendly card and to 'stop and smell the flowers.' Thank you for your prayers. My family and I love it here; we look forward to sharing it for many, many years to come.

Michelle J. Barbour

Thank you so much for the very nice baby blanket you sent for Monica's birth in June. Sorry we haven't been around to see anyone; we continue to appreciate all your prayers. Everyone is really doing well. Monica is now smiling a lot, giggling and cooing. What a wonderful gift from God.

Karl, Ly, Leo, and Monica Ehrenfels

Thank you for the beautiful flowers that Jackie Cole brought to celebrate Larry's birthday and our anniversary. We appreciate being remembered, and I did enjoy my visit with Jackie.

Abby Bray

I want to thank everyone for the many cards and phone calls I received with the passing of my husband, Lindsay; also for the lovely bouquet of flowers that Jackie Cole delivered. Your thoughtfulness will long be remembered.

Anne Tait

Covenant to Care

Thank you to Tom Capobianco for donating a car seat for a one-year-old. Thanks also to Laurie Mann and her generous neighbors for the donation of three car seats.

Transitions

in the life of our church family

Baptisms:

Max Mitchell, son of Glen and Kristina Mitchell, and Kacey's little brother, was baptized at Yale-New Haven Hospital on September 23. While the family would have wished to have Max baptized at church during worship, the church was present to them at the hospital: A card for Max had been signed by members and friends during worship, as well as a birthday card for 2 year old Kacey. Alison brought along the baptismal bowl. Matt McCaffrey stood as witness for the congregation, and took photos for the family.

Deaths:

Lindsay Tait died on September 20; his memorial service was held September 22.

Maerita Guertin died September 29; her memorial service was held October 6.

Both memorial services were conducted by the Rev. Alison McCaffrey.

Christmastime is Poinsettia Time

...and that means the Flower Committee is already turning its time and attention to filling the church with the color and beauty of poinsettias. Early? Perhaps. But it's now time to order your Christmas poinsettias. You have the option of either picking up your poinsettia after the 11 p.m. service on Christmas Eve or giving it to someone in the hospital or a shut-in. Remember, you will not be bringing a plant to church. Instead, please fill out the enclosed form to order your flowers. The cost of each poinsettia plant is \$10. Orders must be received no later than December 9. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Sharon Graver at 272-4786.

POINSETTIAS



To order a poinsettia for the Christmas Eve services, please fill out this form and send it to the church office, along with \$10 per plant, no later than Sunday, December 9. Payment must accompany the order.

YOUR NAME(S) _____

_____ Please give this poinsettia to someone in the hospital or to a shut-in.

_____ I will pick it up after the 11 p.m. service on Christmas Eve.

_____ IN MEMORY OF

_____ IN HONOR OF
