



The Messenger, January 2009

Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Luke 12:24

A new year has begun. Many people are happy to say farewell to 2008. It was a difficult year for many. The economic issues that held our attention throughout the past few months are now part of the history books, and we have entered a new year.

The reality is that we will continue to face challenges in the new year. The economic issues that began in 2008 will be with us for some time to come. We cannot change reality, nor can we simply ignore the world in which we live. We, as disciples of Jesus Christ, need to find ways to respond faithfully to the world today.

First Church, as a community, and all of us, as individuals, will need to make some serious choices about how we will weather this storm. First Church will be meeting to consider these questions in January as well as at our Annual Meeting in February. We need to hear from all our members to be sure we know what people think should be done.

The questions are sobering. Will we reduce staff positions? Will we opt for having a part time pastor? Will we choose to use investments and drop our balance below the historical principal value of our endowment? Will we find another answer? These questions have no easy answers, but these are the questions we face. Perhaps the biggest question is: how does God want us to respond to these questions? What is God calling First Church to do and be in this time?

The First Church of Monson is a treasure. We are a community founded on the Good News of Jesus Christ, and it is Good News indeed! The new year may present us with some difficult questions and new challenges, but, if we remember to walk with faith, we may find that the best days of First Church are still ahead of us.

What is your treasure? Where is your heart?

See you in church, Bob



Friday, January 16th 7-10 pm

Fellowship Hall

Featuring Blackstone Valley Bluegrass

www.blackstonevalleybluegrass.com

\$10 admission includes bottomless
coffee/tea

Desserts & other beverages for sale
Ages 17+ welcome

HEARTS WILLING CLUB

JANUARY 28, 2009

FELLOWSHIP HALL ~ 7 PM

ALL WOMEN OF FIRST CHURCH ARE INVITED TO BRING YOUR
FAVORITE GAME



THIS PROMISES TO BE AN EVENING OF CHALLENGE AND FUN!

COME FOR FELLOWSHIP AND REFRESHMENTS!

Islam 101

Myths, Misconceptions, & More Information



Join us for an informative discussion of the Islamic faith. Sarah Kofke-Egger, (daughter of Crystal and Jim) is a recent convert to Islam, and she will talk to us about her faith journey and her decision to convert. Sarah lives in the United Arab Emirates with her husband, Said Mandhry. She is back in MA for a brief vacation, and has agreed to share her experiences with us. Learn about the five tenets of Islam, what life is like for an American woman living in a Muslim country, and the differences and similarities between Islam and Christianity. This will be an informal, open, and participatory conversation, so come with your questions. All are welcome.

Sunday, January 18, 2009 at 11:30 a.m.

First Church Library

A light lunch of homemade soup and bread will be served.

Alternative Gift Market 2008

"Those who are generous are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor."

Proverbs 22:9

Thanks to everyone who supported this year's Gift Market. The following organizations were blessed by your generosity.

Church World Service ~ \$174.50

Equal Exchange/Fair Trade ~ \$246.00

Habitat for Humanity ~ \$40.00

Heifer Project ~ \$265.00*

*** (an additional donation of \$500.00 was mailed directly to Heifer International)**

Nomads of Hope ~ \$476.00

SERRV International ~ \$110.95

You have never lived until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.

-John Bunyan



Recycle your returnable bottles and cans at First Church! Support the Nomads of Hope at the same time! This is an on-going collection, not a one-time event. You may leave rinsed bottles and cans at the Church in the former Open Pantry area (downstairs) or contact shorettelw@gmail.com.

Sunday Sermon Titles & Scripture Readings



January 4, 2009, Epiphany Sunday
Sermon: A Very Bright Light
Isaiah 60:1-6 and Matthew 2:1-12

January 11, 2009 ~ Sermon: Regular Folk
Acts 19:1-7 and Mark 1:4-11

January 18, 2009 ~ Sermon: Profitable
1 Corinthians 6:12-20 and John 1:43-51

January 25, 2009 ~ Sermon: Free
1 Corinthians 7:29-31 and Mark 1:14-20

Daily Lectionary readings for January 2009 can be found at
<http://www.macucc.org/education/documents/lectJan09.pdf>

The Nomads are collecting “My Coke Reward” points found on the bottle caps and multi-pack cartons of Coca-Cola products. A collection box is located in the Fellowship Room.