



THOTS FROM TOM

Well, it's time for more snow! Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow! However, spring is coming! It is less than sixty days away, and for snow lovers, what a paradise this winter has been! I am in awe of the power of this season. I have never seen more snow fall than what fell in mid-January in that one-day storm. I had over twenty-seven inches on my back deck. Growing up in the snowbelt of Ohio, that says something. Of course, if you ever lived in Buffalo, the snow we have experienced so far is fairly routine.

Which brings up a point – there is always another perspective. When one thinks that things are as bad as they can be, there is always another who can say that things really aren't that bad after all.

This could be applied to the fiscal health of our church as we embrace 2011. The economy is still bad, with unemployment in Connecticut hovering at over nine percent. We have people in our own parish struggling to find employment. Things are bad, and as our Finance Committee prepared to put together our annual budget, they braced for the worst. Our Intentional Giving Committee did an excellent job at describing the needs of the church as we journey together in faith. The committee encouraged people to respond in faith to the needs of the church, and both the Intentional Giving Committee and the Finance Committee hoped for the best even as they braced for the worst in terms of the results of our pledge campaign. Both committees had wonderful positive attitudes, but always there was the air of caution, that maybe we would face another year of huge budget cuts in a budget that could not be cut any more. And were we all surprised!

You see, there was a different perspective, a perspective that said that despite how bad things are economically speaking, the church is important in people's lives. We had more people pledge than ever before, and we surpassed the dollars pledged for 2010. We also ended the year 2010 in a positive cash position, with no deficit. What good news!

God's spirit is moving among and through us, and the support engendered by the friends and members of the congregation is tangible proof of this. I eagerly look forward to joining with you in continuing to grow the church, amidst a climate of on-going doom and gloom in our state, as we confound the prognosticators. God is good!

Looking ahead, I invite all of you who can come to attend our First Friday worship service to be held February 4. We will hold this service at 6:30 pm in the lounge, so that we don't have to heat the sanctuary in the midst of this very cold winter. Our last service, held January 7, also provided a different perspective. We held the service after a snowstorm (of course!) and we expected a slim turnout. Much to our surprise (confounded again!) we had an excellent response, as people braved the snow to attend a wonderfully intimate gathering of worshippers in our chancel, with superlative music and participants, to celebrate the Epiphany of Christ. It was a wonderfully moving service. Our service on February 4 promises to be another wonderful service, as we look forward to the return of the Light into our world, amidst the darkness of Winter. I hope to see you there!

Have a wonderful month, and stay warm!

Peace,

Tom



COSA MATTERS

The Christian Outreach and Social Action committee continues to be very busy.

We are planning a Blood Drive that will take place at our church on February 12th from 8:00am until 12:45pm. Registration is requested, so we will have a sign up table in Fellowship Hall. We hope to exceed last year's blood donation of fifty five pints. This year donors are also eligible to be entered in a drawing for one month of free heat.

Please consider giving the gift of life.

We are also developing our relationship with both the Department of Social Services in town and the East Hampton Housing Authority. As we determine the details, we'll let you know what is needed.

We have also established a connection with Family Advocacy for an ongoing program called Maternal and Child Health. We have sixty requests from Middlesex Hospital for items needed by first time parents. Things like crib sheets and diapers. This is a year round program that provides support to these families through the first five years of their children's lives. This will be another opportunity to take tags and support local families. We expect the program to begin in March.

Please consider offering the use of your truck when it is needed. There is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall.

Lastly, we want to say again what tremendous support we had at Christmas time. We had the largest need ever requested and we got the biggest response. On the day the tags were due, each one had been returned. COSA collected gifts from our generous Congregation for thirty DCF children in Middletown; eleven children for the East Hampton Food Bank's Project Christmas and twenty three children at Bielfield School through Middlesex Family Advocacy Program. Amazing.

The Food Bank has not yet moved and the date has not been set. We'll hold on donations until after the move.

INTENTIONAL GIVING

It is with deep gratitude and much joy that we let everyone know the Intentional Giving response from the Congregation was outstanding! We came a long way from the conclusion of the giving campaign on November 14th when we had received 94 pledges and promised pledge income of about \$116,000. We launched a second effort in church and through the mail which concluded on December 23rd. We asked everyone who pledged to consider increasing their pledge and asked those who had not yet pledged to consider doing so. Forty responded to the request. We increased to 120 pledges with ten new pledges. That concluded with over \$151,000 in promised pledge income. Since then, the Congregation has continued to pledge and step up. The latest numbers as of January 11th are 122 pledges totaling \$157,571. This is such a wonderful testament to the commitment of our Congregation.

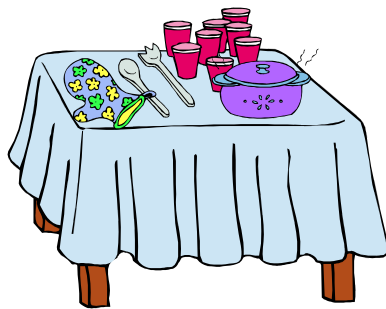
THE MUSIC COMMITTEE

The Music Committee is pleased to announce that the High School Church Group and Christopher Hemingway's Poems have been submitted and accepted for musical composition. Keumok will begin working on this, so look for these to be sung in church soon! Congratulations and thank you for your submission.

The New England Chamber Choir will be performing at our Church on Feb. 13th at 4pm. This is a free concert. Please join us for the concert and reception after. Also, for those interested in volunteering, a sign-up sheet is posted in Fellowship Hall to make cookies, cheese and crackers or sandwiches for this event.



Y2K Calendar
 Middle School Youth Group
 One meeting this month
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9th
 5:30-6:45
 Bring \$4 for hot dogs and
 stuff your own baked potato!
 Friends Welcome!
 Note- there is no Y2K during
 Winter vacation



**WOMEN'S POTLUCK AND
 BOOK DISCUSSION**

Monday, February 7 at 6:30 PM at the home of
 Lorraine Barlow 5 Fairlawn Ave. Call Lorraine
 the day of at 860-267-0175 to see if there is street
 parking available. If not we will meet at 6:30 at the
 HS and carpool down to Lorraine's house Bring a
 dish to share! We will be discussing the non fiction
 book "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks" by
 Rebecca Skloot



HELPING HANDS

Be sure to let Jill Walker (860-267-7180) or the
 church office (860-267-4959) know if you or
 someone you know of from our church family is in
 need of some helping hands. We have volunteers
 that can provide meals, drives to appointments,
 help with simple household tasks or just come and
 visit until you are up and about again. Let us know
 how we can be of help!



SECRET PRAYER

Secret Prayer Pals Kicks off February 6th!
 Our 3rd, 4th and 5th graders have been paired with a
 "secret prayer pal adult" from our congregation.
 Everyone participating has a secret partner to pray
 for, send notes to and do small acts of kindness for

(Continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 3)

over the next 4 weeks. There is a post office set up in Fellowship Hall so participants can drop off items for their secret pal without giving away who has who! Those participating will receive all the rules and how to's by Sunday February, 6th.

All prayer pals will have a special table set up during our church family Pancake Brunch after worship on Sunday, March 6th. At that time everyone will reveal who their prayer pal is and then all will sit together while eating so they can get to know each other better.

LOOKING AHEAD!

The CE Committee, Parish Life Committee and our High School class invite all to a "Fat Sunday" Pancake Brunch following worship on March 6th

This is the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, when people traditionally began to empty their homes of all fats, in preparation for the Lenten fast, by having feasts and celebrations, before the somber Lenten season. This is where the Mardi Gras celebration got its roots.

Join us for pancakes, sausages and beverages. A free will offering will be taken. Proceeds will benefit the HS class mission project to sponsor a HS student in school for a year as part of the SHADE program in Africa, and miscellaneous CE programs.



KUDOS KORNER

The church mice were out in full force during January- cooking, shoveling and more shoveling! Thanks to the following for helping with the snow removal- Rick Walker, Paul Provost and his might backhoe, Betsy, Caleb and Rosse Gates for clearing the long and winding sidewalk to the front and then up the stairs!

Thank you to the following for assisting with a warm funeral reception for the family of Pete Standley: Lisa Aarrestad, Joanne Kneeland, Karen Gallmon, Jill Walker, Whitney Fielding, Joyce Jansenski, Lynda Tinney, Adeline Pasternak, Cindy Pasternak, Donna Marsden, Lorraine Barlow, Nancy Brown, Lynn Szkoda, Jackie Hooper-Hage, Bonnie Parkinson, Liz Rinaldo, Lanette Zabrowski, Nancy Dolde, Teri Schlosser and the numerous Scout families that baked desserts. Thanks also to Whitney Fielding for being a friend to all and a helper whenever needed!



February 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Tiger Cubs, 6:30-7:30pm Boy Scouts, 7pm	2 Art Class, 9:30-11:30am Bible Study, noon Y2K, 5:30-6:45pm AA, 8pm	3 Bell Choir, 6-7pm Sr. Choir, 7:10-8:30pm	4	5
6 Communion Sunday Worship, 10am AA, 8pm	7 Women's Potluck 6:30pm Host: Lorraine Barlow 5 Fairlawn Ave	8 Boy Scouts, 7pm	9 Art Class, 9:30-11:30am Bible Study, noon Daisy Troop, 6pm Cub Scout Leaders/Parents, 7-9pm AA, 8pm	10 Bell Choir, 6-7pm Sr. Choir, 7:10-8:30pm	11	12
13 Worship, 10am Deacons, 11:30am NE Chamber Choir, 4pm AA, 8pm	14 9/16&V21W&S @ 11?	15 Boy Scouts, 7pm	16 Art Class, 9:30-11:30am Bible Study, noon Y2K, 5:30-6:45pm AA, 8pm	17 Bell Choir, 6-7pm Sr. Choir, 7:10-8:30pm	18	19
20 Worship, 10am AA, 8pm	21 No School	22 Church Council, 7pm Boy Scouts, 7pm	SCHOOL VACATION			
27 Worship, 10am AA, 8pm	28 Mom's Group, 10am Cub Scouts, 6:30-7:30pm		23 Art Class, 9:30-11:30am Bible Study, noon AA, 8pm	24 Bell Choir, 6-7pm Sr. Choir, 7:10-8:30pm	25	26