



The Messenger

Volume 57 No. 4

First Congregational Church

Fairhaven, Massachusetts

May 2008

The First Congregational Church

34 Center Street
Fairhaven, MA
02719

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www.firstcongfairhaven.com



Pastor

Rev. Bette McClure
508-990-7513
bettemc2@juno.com

Administrator

Sharon M. Dorian

Music Director

Mr. David Touchette

Organist

Ms. Jackie Maillet

Office Hours

Mon thru Fri
8:30am - Noon



God is Still
Speaking,

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Members Ask for Revised Budget

At the Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church held on Sunday, April 27, the members rejected the 2008-2009 budget proposed by the Council and asked for a revised budget by September.

Following the regular annual business of receiving annual reports and electing officers, the budget article was presented for discussion. The budget presented by the Council estimated income of \$90,800 for FY09 and expenses of \$140,162.62 leaving a deficit of nearly \$50,000.

A ten year history of deficit spending - using invested funds' principal to supplement the operating budget - and borrowing from our larger investment accounts to supplement the elevator construction - has left the church with less than \$15,000 in unrestricted investment funds.

In FY 2003 \$15,000 was used to cover operating expenses. Since then increases in fixed operating costs and decreases in pledge income has seen that amount grow to a high of \$37,500 withdrawn for operating expenses. "We simply cannot continue," said one member.

Several members spoke to the need to revitalize our faith community while seeking bigger and better ways of using the church's largest asset, the building, to increase revenues.

In the end the members agreed that the budget presented needs to be revised and the congregation and committees need to work together on solutions. A three month update will be given to the membership by the Council and in the meantime monthly expenses will be paid as approved by the Finance Committee.

It was suggested that members could consider tithing their federal stimulus checks to the church to address immediate concerns, while the members and committees work to touch base with "missing" members and work on programs to inspire and motivate attendance.

We are still in need of a Clerk of the Corporation. The Clerk's main job is to be secretary at the meetings of the Church Council and to occasionally sign correspondence. The Council meets on the second Tuesday of every month. Anyone interested should call the church office.

Quote of the Month

"I knew this was a place of Carbonated Holiness" -Greta MacRae -
*reflecting on hearing the laughter coming from the
Teaching Parish Committee before her first interview here.*



Those in Service

Sgt. Jonathan M. Rice, ARMY,
Drill Instructor, Ft. Benning, GA

P.O. Christopher H. Rice, NAVY,
NAS Iraq

Betty Monk's Grandsons

Lt. Marc Lavoie, RCC 94th Iraq
son of friends of Ann & Jim Cochran

Brandon Fish & Balto, K-9
Detection Services - Kandahar
AFB, Afghanistan
nephew of Sharon Dorian

Volunteers Needed

Hot Dog Booth Homecoming Fair

Saturday, June 27th

**Sign up sheets will be
available soon or speak to
any member of Action for
Christ if you can help.**

"Our mission is to provide opportunities to experience God's presence and in humble and caring ways to use all of our resources to welcome, love, challenge, and equip each other for Christ's ministry in our community and the world."



-Rev. Bette McClure-

Dear Friends,

DON'T COME TO CHURCH ANYMORE! That's right, your eyes are not deceiving you. I'm suggesting that you stop attending church. In fact, I'll put that even more strongly. **YOU CANNOT COME TO CHURCH ANYMORE!**

Now before you think I have been off on Sabbatical for too long and have completely lost my mind, let me explain something. During my travels in Central Europe I learned lots of interesting things. One thing I learned is that Poland is the most religious country on the European continent, and according to some sources, the country has the fifth highest percentage of church attendees in the world. A *Boston Globe* article in May 2005 reported that Poland was the exception to a dramatic decline in church attendance throughout Europe. For example, the *Globe* reported that "in Italy, where 97 percent of the population considers itself Catholic, church attendance has fallen to 30 percent." Similarly, "in France, where 76 percent of the population considers itself Catholic, only 12 percent say they go to church on Sunday." Some 96 percent of Poles are Roman Catholic and reports indicate a full 60% attend church at least once a week. Conversely, the Czech Republic, a neighbor of Poland, is reported to have 54-61% of its citizens declare themselves as agnostics or atheists and less than 12% of the population attends church once a month or more.

Why such differences? I am sure there are many diverse factors that have contributed to these statistics. One, however, that intrigued me was the one offered by our tour director, a native and life-long Polish citizen. Richard explained that during the years Poland was under Communist control (1945-1989) religion was, at best, discouraged. Despite that, and despite the fact that at least one Roman Catholic priest was murdered for standing up against the Communists, Poles continued to attend church in large numbers. The church flourished, in fact! Richard's explanation was that the Polish people are very stubborn folks and when they are told to do or not do something, they do exactly the opposite!

So, I thought I'd try to see how stubborn we New Englanders here on the South Coast of Massachusetts are. Maybe, just maybe, it will work and our pews on Sunday morning will be filled once again. So, I'll tell you one more time, **DON'T COME TO CHURCH ANYMORE!**

Blessings,

Bette

Book Study Group

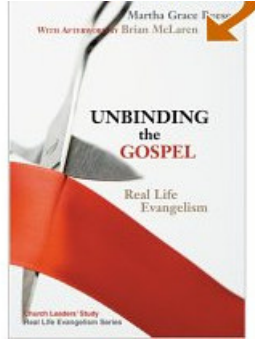
"Unbinding the Gospel - Real Life Evangelism"

In *Unbinding the Gospel – Real Life Evangelism*, Martha Grace Reese “gently but persistently lures the mainline back to the ministry of evangelism that is the heart of the church.”

Based on her studies of 150 churches and interviews with over 1000 people the author offers ideas and suggestions for new ways of thinking about evangelism – about growing in faith and sharing that faith with others. Reese firmly believes that “at its core, evangelism is people sharing with others their personal understandings that life is better, richer, truer if one has faith in Christ and lives in a faith community.”

A group of folks in our church have begun reading and discussing the book and are very excited about it and would like others to have the same experience. Please consider joining us in this new venture of growing spiritually and revitalizing our church. Books can be ordered through Amazon.com or check with the office as we have some extra copies.

First meeting will be on Thursday, May 8, 7:00 p.m. Additional meeting dates will be set by the group that night. If there is interest, we can also start a daytime group.



Don't forget to get your scholarship applications in before their due dates:

Women's Fellowship - May 1st
 FCCS Arts Scholarship - May 1st
 UCC Undergrad Scholarships - May 18th
 Matt Richard Summer Study - June 1st



Join us on May 11th for a special service of Confirmation as **Kaitlyn Arbec, Doug Braley and Kristen Fields** confirm their faith and formally join our membership. **Final meeting and rehearsal is on Sunday May at 6:30 p.m.**



Church Women United Friendship Day will be celebrated in our sanctuary on Friday, May 2nd at 7:30 p.m.



International Pot Luck

Friday, May 30, 2008
 6:30 p.m.

Come and bring a favorite dish representing your national/ethnic origin. Or bring a dish from a country you've always wanted to visit! Everyone – individuals, families, young and older – is invited to share a meal and fellowship together. Rev. Bette will present a short program sharing experiences and photos from her recent trip to Central Europe (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic). We hope to see many of you there for an interesting and enjoyable evening.

GoodSearch

Use www.goodsearch.com for all your web browsing and on-line shopping. (AMAZON.COM has been added!) Indicate the First Congregational Church of Fairhaven as your charity of choice. We will receive at least \$.01 for every search made in our name.

shaws
 Crazy about food.

We are still collecting Shaw's Receipts!

We receive 1% of the eligible register receipt amount from all receipts collected and turned in to Shaw's Receipts Reward Program. Tell your friends and family to save them as well.



On April 6th -- In loving memory of **Joyce Menard** by the Wheelers.
 On April 13th -- In celebration of **Alison & Doug Kuechler's** birthdays.
 On April 20th -- In loving memory of **John M. & Ellen E. Rex** by their daughter Alice Cooney.

Congratulations

To **Nicole Marie Cayer and Jeffrey Rego** on the April 6th baptism of their son **Maisen Scott Rego**. The family is from Dartmouth.

Our Prayers are with...

Jean Campbell, Juliet Tripp, Matt Desimas, Karen Elliott, Bob Heskett, Janet Whiting, Maggie Fields, Suzanne Gonsalves, Jean Condon, Grace Battistelli, Lois Goulart, Alma Johnson, Elsie Jacobsen, Ruth Rebello.

Hi folks,

It's Andrew and guess what... I'm finally graduating from seminary this spring. I want you all to know how much I have appreciated your support and prayers over the last six years of this journey. This leg is almost over. (Amen.)

I shall be graduating on Friday May 16th at 1:00 PM. Commencement is being held on the Portland campus this year. It's a little wierd for me in that I have never been there, but many of my fellow grads are Bangor students whom I have known for 1-6 years. I invite you all to attend as you are able. The Portland campus of Bangor Theological Seminary is at the State Street Congregational UCC on State St. in Portland. I shall be sending the "official" printed invitation to Rev. Bette and to the office as soon as I have one in my hands. I'll include directions and etc. for you all.

I continue to pastor First Congregational UCC in East Millinocket (100 miles north of home) but shall soon be seeking a full-time call in the New England region. I ask that as you continue in my prayers, I continue in yours.

Along with this invitation, please receive God's gracious blessing upon your lives and ministries in Fairhaven.

Yours, Andrew MacLeod



Choir Concert

Concert & Tea Sunday, May 4, 2008 3:00 p.m. Ecumenical Choir Directed by Dave Touchette

St. Anthony of Padua Church
 1359 Acushnet Avenue, New Bedford
 Free Will Offering to benefit St. Anthony
 Restoration Fund

April 5, 2008

Dear Friends-

This will be short but long on blessings & thanks for the cards and flowers. They are a bright spot in my days.

I am progressing well. Will be able to leave when I get shoes that don't slip - then probably move to the next step while my home is readied for me.... Thanks for your prayers.

Jean Campbell

(Jean moved on April 25th to Atria Assisted Living, 391 Alden Rd, Fairhaven.)

Interested in Learning More about Our church?

Perhaps you have been attending First Congregational Church for some time but have never decided to become a member. Maybe you are more of a newcomer and are curious about the church, how it operates, its beliefs and the denomination to which it belongs, the United Church of Christ. We will be hosting an informational meeting on Sunday evening, May 18th from 6:30-8:00. We will provide an overview of the church and although attending the meeting is not a commitment to be coming a member, we will provide information about what member is all about. Come join us with any questions you might have. Please call the office at 508-993-3368 and let us know of your plans to attend.



Fairhaven Community Concert Series

<http://fhvnccs.googlepages.com/>

Preview our 2008-2009 Season

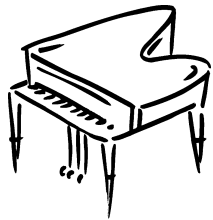
October 19, 2008 7:00
Javier Cabellero - cellist
Dinner & Concert

November 16, 2008 2:00
North Shore Acappella

January 25, 2009 2:00
Synergy Brass

February 22, 2009 7:00
Matt Richard Quintet
Mardi Gras Dinner

March 8, 2009 2:00
Fumito Nunoya - Marimbas



Ambassador Music Academy

Group piano instruction, theory, technique presented in a casual, fun and informal style by diverse instructors. Bring your own keyboard. All ages & skill levels welcome. Six week sessions at

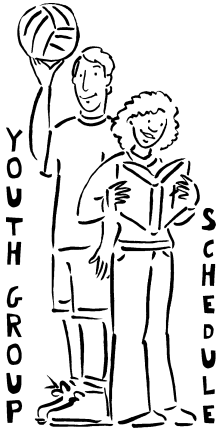
45 minutes per session only \$75.00. For more information contact Jackie Maillet 508-264-3790. If there is enough interest sessions will be held at the church.



Concert tickets are \$10.
Children are FREE with an
adult.

Dinner tickets are \$10 for adults
and \$5 for children.

**Help us make
communications
faster/easier. Receive
announcements,
reminders and the
Messenger via e-mail
by sending your your
e-mail address to
fccof@juno.com.**



Kid's Supper Klub -
4th & 5th Graders
May 18th 4:00 p.m.

Youth Group -
Middle & High School
May 18th 6:30 p.m.
June 29th TBD

**"Soaring to New Heights
 with God"**

VACATION BIBLE CAMP **August 11 - 15, 2008**

Bible Adventures Sunday School

Children's Sunday

Sunday, June 1st is our celebration of Children's Sunday.

On this morning the children and youth will be a significant part of worship. They will share some special insights into faith that they have learned during their classes. Make sure to attend worship that morning and share the joy!

Following worship, a special coffee hour is planned – a good old fashioned Ice Cream Social where you can concoct your own ice cream sundae and enjoy it while mingling and chatting with other families. All are invited and welcome to attend – whether you have children or are a child at heart!



After a year off because of construction, we have another fun and exciting Vacation Bible Camp (VBC) in the works for all children from Pre-school through fifth grade. You are invited to become Sky Scouts and to soar off to new heights with God. The program offers fun, interactive activities that combine the world of hot air ballooning with the discovery of how to reach new heights with God. Activities will include Bible stories, science activities, songs, crafts, games and yummy snacks. On the last day of camp we will share what we learned at a special program for parents, grandparents and other family members and friends. VBC is open to church members as well as children from the community. See you there!



HELP WANTED - If you are willing to help with planning VBC and/or sharing your time with our children during that week, please speak with Rev. Bette or any member of the Christian Education Committee



April Mission Donations

Food Vouchers	\$200
Coalition Against Poverty	\$100
FHS After Prom Party	\$100
Habitat for Humanity	\$100
Figri - special collection	\$203

Coming Soon

Rummage Sale

***Like New or Gently Used
 Clothing & Linens Only***
Details TBD

Kristen's "People to People" European Adventure



I know it's been a while, but I would again like to thank everyone here at the First Congregational Church for all their support as I made my way to Europe last summer. I can't believe it's been almost a year since I left on July first with my People To People delega-

tion. Now, I would like to share my trip with you.

On Monday, July 2nd, we arrived in Rome. We were all very tired, but excited. That afternoon we got a look at the Forum and the Coliseum. Tuesday we visited the Piazza Navona, the Pantheon, Spanish Steps, and the Trevi fountain. I threw in a coin and wished to come back to Rome. That afternoon, we went to the Vatican and saw Saint Peters, the biggest church in the world.

On July fourth, we went on to Assisi, the birth place of Saint Francis. I got to rapel down a tower and test my fear of heights. It was scary but I did it! By the sixth, we were in Florence where we toured the Duomo (cathedral), and saw Michelangelo's "David" in the Ufizzi Gallery. Saturday and Sunday, we went on to Pisa and the cinque terre region. We all took pictures of the leaning tower so that it looked like we were holding it up. It was time to move on to France.

Passing through Monaco, we arrived in Nice, where Allison Daigle and I stayed in the home of a French family. They had two girls who liked to play Uno. We ate the local food and discovered that our hosts were Red Sox fans! They liked our "Boston" accents. The mother even drove us around a rotary over and over again because she knew that we have them in Massachusetts. We spent two more days there learning about how French kids our age lived, and what they studied in school. After exchanging email addresses, we moved on to Lyon where we got a chance to try more French cuisine. By the 14th, we were on our way to Paris. They were celebrating Bastille Day.

Paris was busy and noisy. In the middle of the city was the Eiffel Tower. We went all the way to the top



where we could see all of Paris. On Sunday afternoon, we saw the cathedral of Notre Dame. It was huge and beautiful. That night we ate cheeseburgers at the Hard Rock Café. It was good to have American food again; we were all a little home sick. On the 16th we spent the day at the Louvre museum. I learned that you can take a picture of the Mona Lisa although the guard had a different opinion. There were so many beautiful works of art; it was all a blur after a while. With four days left, we traveled on to Normandy to see Omaha Beach, one of the sites of the D-Day invasion at the end of World War Two.

On the 17th, we said goodbye to France and took the overnight ferry to Portsmouth England where we had breakfast and started out for London. When we arrived, our delegation got to meet a Member of Parliament who taught us about the British House of Commons. Thursday was our next to last day in Europe. We went to Buckingham Palace, and visited the Tower of London. It was scary! The afternoon was spent buying souvenirs for our families and exchanging info with new friends we traveled with along the way. That night was really great. We went to the Theater District and saw *Lord of the Rings*. The next morning came so fast! It was July 20th already. We said our goodbyes at Heathrow airport and were on our way home. I really miss the friends I made from the Massachusetts and Michigan delegations. On the way home I thought about how I missed my family especially my Nana and our dog Panda. The 21st came and we were home at last! Mom and Dad were there to pick me up at Logan airport. It was good to be home. The first thing I did was get a Dunkin' Donuts coffee on the way home.

Now I look at the photos and e-mail my friends from the trip. The trip made me more outgoing and willing to try new things. I look at the world differently now. We are all more the same than we are different. So, thanks to all of you who made my journey possible. It was an experience I will take with me for the rest of my life!

And to Meghan Dorian, YOU GO GIRL!!!!!!
Enjoy every minute in Australia! You'll make friends for a lifetime!!

Thanks, Kristen Fields





To the Youth Group for cleaning up the church yard on April 13th.

To the Concert Committee and all who helped with the April 13th dinner including: Alison Kuechler, Taryn MacGregor, Carol Lawton, Becky St. Amand, Ginny Motta.

To Sally & Jerry Wheeler, The Fields Family, the Burr Family, Dot Bungert, LeeAnn Wood, Peg & John Rogers for greeting and hosting coffee hour in April.

To Bob Heskett, Sally Wheeler, Skip Mills and Karen Elliott for worship leadership in April.

To all who took chances on the Australia or Bust Quilt Raffle. The winning ticket belonging to Molly Bobola was drawn on April 19th.

To Stacey & Chauncey Burr, Susan Burr, Pam Kuechler, Linda Ferland, Peg Rogers, Debbie Cordeiro, Bill Fields, and Jean Arbec for teaching and/or working with our youth.



Corner Cupboard: Replenishing Needed

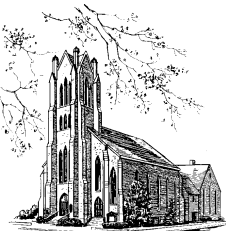
The Food Pantry is in need of replenishing. Traffic in the pantry was steady this month. Ten people were helped in April and supplies continue to dwindle. Thanks to all who have helped restock. Your donations are gratefully appreciated.



Next Messenger Deadline: May 23rd

The Messenger

First Congregational Church
34 Center Street
Fairhaven MA 02719-2931



EST 1794

*Please do not delay
Time value - dated material
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED*

NONPROFIT ORG.
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Permit No. 30

FY 4/2007 through 3/2008

For the twelve months ending March 31, 2008.

FY07 Actual

The actual amounts received or spent in 2006-2007.

FY08 Actual

The actual amounts spent or received in 2007-2008.

Revenues

Sunday Revenues	\$ 83,512.42
Other Income	<u>15,122.40</u>
Total Regular Income	\$98,624.82

\$ 84,158.58
<u>18,254.15</u>
\$102,412.73

<u>Unrealized gain on invest.</u>	39,638.65
Total Income	\$138,263.47

(32,942.64)
\$69,470.09

Expenses

Staff	\$62,645.15
Taxes & Benefits	19,415.50
Administration	4,925.41
Property	43,774.75
Worship	6,811.65
Christian Education	1,087.29
Other Expenses	<u>3,285.62*</u>
Total Expenses	144,055.75

\$60,092.42
19,850.01
5,029.80
44,416.31
3,603.96**
578.77
<u>2,831.00*</u>
\$136,402.27

*includes \$ for Old Colony per capita tax

** shows cost difference for no student minister

<u>Net Income (Loss)</u>	<u>(3,681.90)</u>
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<u>(66,932.18)</u>

<u>Transfers from Funds</u>	<u>\$40,000.00</u>
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<u>\$39,000.00</u>

Capital Campaign Account - 2 Year Total

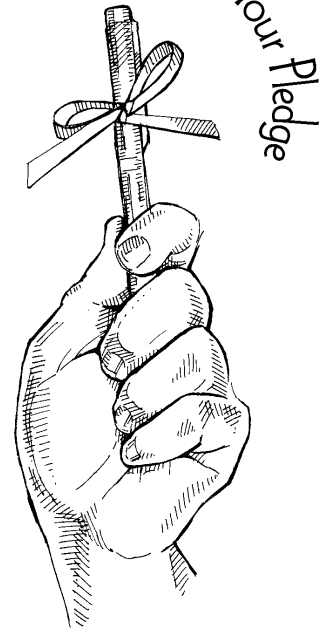
Revenues

Cash Pledges	\$90,824.35
Other Income	\$61,819.13
Transfer from Inv. Funds	<u>254,687.35</u>
Total Income	\$407,330.83

Expenses

Insurance	\$1,505.00
Elevator	253,744.85
Other Electrical	1,732.40
Architect	24,961.32
Masonry	25,000.00
Roof	143,050.00
Misc Permits/Fees	251.43
Painting	<u>16,900.00</u>
Total Expenditures	\$467,145.00

Don't Forget Your Pledge



**Is Your Pledge
up to date?**

**Even when you are
not here the church
expenses continue....
Thank you for your
stewardship.**

**Consider a
Planned Gift
today!**

**Annual Reports and
complete financials are
available from the
church office. Please call
508-993-3368 if you
would like them mailed
to you.**