

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
300 Central Street
Saugus, MA 01906
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www.1stchurchsaugus.org

“THE MESSENGER”



Epiphany!

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
300 CENTRAL STREET, SAUGUS CENTER
SAUGUS, MASSACHUSETTS
JANUARY 2012**



Dear Friends,

The Feast of the Epiphany, celebrated Jan. 6, has mysterious origins. Unlike Passover and Pentecost, it was not borrowed from Judaism, from which the majority of Christian festivals come. It may have originated in Egypt, the place from which the "Magi from the east" traveled to pay homage to the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. It may have originated from the miraculous baptism of Jesus, when "the Spirit of God descended like a dove and a voice from heaven was heard saying, 'This is my Son with whom I am well pleased.'" Or it may have come from the first miracle of Jesus, the wedding of Cana, when he turned the water into wine.

Wherever or however these sacred events originated, they have one thing in common – they are each an "epiphany," an appearance of the divine. The Magi came west because the star showed them the way to the cradle of God's son; God's voice was heard baptizing Jesus for his ministry; and certainly, water does not become wine without divine intervention!

Do epiphanies happen today? Are there times we recognize the divine among us?

In our everyday life together as a church, God may appear among us in many ways. Surprised? Think of worship. Has there been a time when you hear something in worship – a prayer, a song, a child's response – that suddenly hits you like never before? Think of Christmas. Was your heart touched while you were shopping for an Angel Tree gift? Think of fellowship. Were the meaning of the scriptures suddenly opened to you during a Bible study here? Is it possible that God was working in those moments to touch you with a bit of the Divine Holy Spirit?

What does it mean to us that God became human in the form of Jesus? What does it matter to us and the world? Jesus brought us a whole new way of looking at the divine. He walked among us and along with us; he put his hands on us and healed us; he lived as a poor person, owning nothing, having no home to call his own.

What kind of divinity is that? The kind that loves to manifest itself to us, surprise us and want us to draw closer. We have a God that comes to us in so many ways – by camel from the east, in the fluttery form of a white baptism dove, in the cup of wine drawn to celebrate a wedding. God the Creator is always creating ways to reach us, not the least of which was Jesus Christ, the ultimate epiphany of God.

In this new year, let's take time to examine those seemingly ordinary experiences to perhaps discover how God is working among us. One thing is for sure, when we are dealing with the Divine, anything is possible. Thanks be to our great and mysterious God!

Epiphany Blessings,
Reverend Martha Leahy

U2charist!

Hey everyone! Do you like U2 music? Are you curious about how to worship God in a different way? Come to our U2charist on the Epiphany!

U2 + Eucharist = U2charist! Epiphany = a sudden, intuitive perception



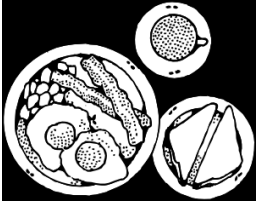
U2charists are inter-denominational worship services that feature U2 music and Holy Eucharist (Communion). The band U2 spends much of their time focusing on global reconciliation, justice for the poor and oppressed, and the importance of caring for one's neighbor. Led by the global MDG ambassador, Bono, U2 is calling people worldwide to a deeper faith and engagement with God's mission. The U2charist seeks to be an extension of this ministry.

In keeping with this goal, Fr. Kevin Olds (St John's Episcopal Church in Saugus) and the Rev. Jill Olds (Old North Church, UCC in Marblehead) will be co-leading a U2charist. In the spirit of U2's global efforts, the proceeds from the offering will go towards Saugus Public Schools. We hope to see you there!

Date: Friday, January 6th

Time: 7:30 PM

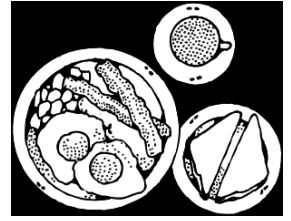
Place: St. John's Episcopal Church, 8 Prospect, Saugus



Come to the

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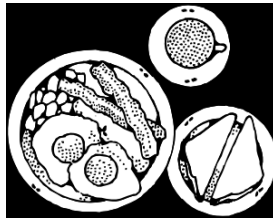
at First Congregational Church
Saugus Center



COMMUNITY BREAKFAST

Saturday, January 14, 2012

7:00-10:00 am



French toast, ham, sausages, home fries, scrambled eggs, homemade beans, pastries
and drinks

Donation \$5.95 per person



CHURCH ACTIVITIES

January 2012 thru June 2012

Saturday, January 14th - Breakfast - 7:00-10:00AM - \$5.95 Donation

Saturday, February 11th - Pasta Dinner & Bake Sale - 5:00-7:00PM - \$8.50

Saturday, March 10th - Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner (2 Seatings) - 4:00PM & 6:00PM - \$10

Sunday, March 25th - after Church Pot Luck Dinner

Sunday, April 8th - Easter Sunday Breakfast - 6:30-9:00AM - \$5.95 Donation

Saturday, April 14th - Time & Talent Auction w/Roast Pork Dinner - 5:00-7:00PM - \$9.95
What's your talent? Do you have time you can donate? Talk to the Stewardship Team.

Saturday, May 12th - Breakfast & Bake Sale 7:00-10:00AM - \$5.95 Donation

Sunday, June 10th - Children's Day Ice Cream Social after Church Service

Sunday, June 24th - Church Pot Luck Luncheon after Church Service



PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Prayer Shawl Ministry and Bible Study Continues in 2012

Dear Friends,

During the four weeks of Advent the Prayer Shawl Ministry knitted, prayed and studied the Bible together discussing the birth stories of Jesus' found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Our discussions were lively and thought provoking as we asked questions and shared stories of our experiences of God will reading the passages from scripture.

Beginning on Wednesday, January 4th, at 10:00 a.m. the Prayer Shawl Ministry we will meet to knit, pray and continue our study as we focus on the Gospel of Matthew. During our time together we will look closely at the parables and the other teachings of Jesus.

A REMINDER - The Prayer Shawl Ministry is open to all - whether you knit our not. Come as you are! We will be meeting on the first and third Wednesdays of the month in Rev. Martha's Office. If you have any questions, please contact Student Pastor Intern Kate Pinkham at katepinkham@gmail.com.

Kate Pinkham's Ecclesiastical Council

At the November 2010 meeting of the Essex Association Church & Ministry Committee, we voted unanimously to approve Kate Pinkham for her Ecclesiastical Council. This is the next-to-last step for Kate on her path to ordination to the ministry. You are invited to join us at the Second Congregational Church in Beverly on Sunday, March 4, 2012 at 3 p.m. to support Kate as she fields questions on her ordination paper from all the delegates present. If you want to come early and have refreshments, arrive at 2:30 p.m.

We are very excited that our own Student Pastor Intern has come this far. If you would like a copy of Kate's ordination paper to read beforehand, please see me. We wish Kate abundant blessings for a wonderful day on March 4! Peace, *Rev. Martha Leahy*

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
Sunday, January 22, 2012
Following the worship service

Deadline for reports 1/8/11



"Come, follow me."

Come to worship on January 22 to reflect on the lessons of Mark 1:14-20, when Jesus called his first disciples. Then stay for our annual Congregational meeting, a New England tradition since the time of the first settlers. Vote for new officers and committee members and pray for their good work in 2012. Thank those whose terms are finished for the fine work they have done for the church. Teach those who have never attended an Annual Meeting how the Congregational system works. Be a part of this loving, energetic community!

For those who write annual reports, please submit them to Cindy Turco, Church Clerk, by the deadline of Sunday, January 8th. This is so we can have a completed report to hand out on Sunday, January 15th for you to read ahead of the meeting.

"Come, follow me," Jesus said to those gathered at the Sea of Galilee and to those gathered here today.

A NOTE FROM OUR FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Dear Congregation,

Pledge envelopes are available for the new year. You can find them on the table in the narthex. Thanks to all who pledged their support of our church.

Jessie Allison
Financial Secretary



STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE UPDATE

"Count Yourself Blessed"

"Give and it will be given you.

A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap, for the measure you give will be the measure you get back." Luke 6:38

Thanks to all to answered the call to pledge for 2012. Your gifts are appreciated and much-needed, as we all know our members are our source of income. As of the end of December, we have \$35,508.00 pledged for 2012. Compared to last year, the pledged amount for 2011 was \$38,414.00, a shortfall of \$2,908.00. We had a total of 41 pledges for 2011 and a total of 38 pledges for 2012. If you have simply forgotten to sign a card or didn't receive one, there are some on the table in the narthex. As we give to sustain our church, we also give to keep it alive and vibrant for our community.

CALENDAR OF WORSHIP & SUNDAY SCHOOL 2012



Good news of great joy! Jean Brooks has agreed to coordinate a Sunday School program for the remainder of this church year. Love to talk to kids? Co-teachers are always needed. We always learn from kids when we teach them. The plan is as follows:

Communion Sundays: Kids gather in Sunday School until Communion Hymn played; then they will enter sanctuary & sit in front pews with a Shepherd.

All other Sundays: Kids gather in sanctuary for the beginning of the service; after the Children's Message, they will go to Sunday School.

Nursery: For kids ages 0-4. Caregiving will be shared by Jodi Comeau, Liane Patterson & Julie Robbins.

Craft Sundays: Same plan as for a regular Sunday. Kids in church first, then to Fellowship Hall.

Here is the worship calendar so far, subject to change as the Spirit moves us:

January 8	Communion & Kids Craft Sunday – "Epiphany", (visit of the Magi/baptism of Jesus)
January 15	Worship Theme: "Psalm 139: God knows us before we are born"
January 22	Worship Theme: "Mark 1:14-20, Jesus calls the disciples" Annual Congregational Meeting after church
January 29	Worship Theme: "Mark 1:21-28, Jesus faces evil"
February 5	Communion Sunday, Worship Theme: "Mark 1:29-39, Jesus heals"
February 12	Worship Theme: "Mark 1:40-45, Jesus heals a man with leprosy" Kids Craft Sunday – Called to Care Valentines with "Christian Conversation Hearts"
February 19	Worship Theme: "Mark 9:2-9, the Transfiguration"
February 26	First Sunday in Lent. Worship Theme: "Mark 1:9-15, Jesus is tempted in the wilderness"
March 11	Kids Craft Sunday - "One Great Hour of Sharing". Kady Bertrand will bring our pen pal letters from the Dominican Republic
April 8	Easter Sunday with an Easter Egg Hunt after worship
April 22	Earth Day – Steven Rich will lead us again this year in a cool project
May 13	Mother's Day – honoring the women in our lives who made us who we are
June 10	Children's Sunday Service with ice cream social following worship
June 17	Father's Day – who are the special men in your life?

!!!! BRING A FRIEND OR TWO TO CHURCH !!!!



PUMPKIN PATCH 2011

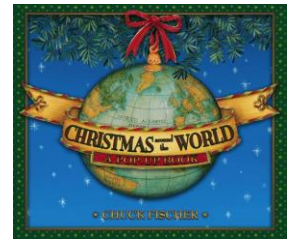
Thank you, thank you, and thank you!!!! To everyone who worked the "Patch". Your cooperation and helpfulness in working at the "Pumpkin Patch" was greatly appreciated. You all did a fine job and because of your dedication we realized a profit of \$16,000.00. To each of you many, many thanks and blessings.

Marilyn Panico & Carolyn Davis

"Christmas Around the World"

Thank you to everyone who attended our Christmas Concert. This year was a great success and I have each of you to thank. The choir was extraordinary! The soloists grand! I am truly grateful to everyone for their support to our music program. Thanks again. See you next year.

God bless, Carolyn Davis



CLEANING OUR SANCTUARY!!!

I am more than happy to clean the sanctuary and Narthex for the month of January and December. This leaves YOU to clean for the months of FEBRUARY - MARCH - APRIL - MAY - JUNE - JULY - AUGUST - SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER - NOVEMBER.

Cleaning requires 2 hours per week!!! You dust, vacuum the rug in the Sanctuary, Narthex, and the ramp in the hallway. Everything is there for you. It only requires YOU!!! Let a Trustee know what month you will do. Thank you, Carolyn Davis

NEW ADDITIONS TO THE CHURCH LIBRARY

Lilly Duncan gave Rev. Martha a lovely book that she wants to share with the congregation. It's called "Choosing to See," written by Mary Beth Chapman, wife of Christian musician Steve Chapman. It tells the story of a daughter the couple adopted from China and how she made a profound impact on the family, even after her death.



Richard Warbin donated a book called, "The Stranger and the Stateman: James Smithson, John Quincy Adams, and the Making of America's Greatest Museum, The Smithsonian." Pretty grand title, but then it's a pretty grand museum, too. This book is in large print so more of you can enjoy it.

Both books may be found in the bookcase in Fellowship Hall. Happy reading!