

CHURCH LIFE



APRIL 2011



Middlebury Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
The Green
1242 Whittemore Rd.
Middlebury CT 06762
203-758-2671
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Dear Friends,

As this newsletter arrives in your homes we will be in the middle of Lent. The Lenten scriptures lead us to the final week of Christ's life and the ultimate statement of God: the resurrection. This account of the rising from the grave has been discussed for many centuries.

Some feel it is mere story, others feel it is fantasy and others can only see it as a miraculous action by God. God would not allow Jesus and everything he taught and lived to end. The grave which was created by sin would be conquered by truth and love.

The resurrection is a statement of love. The love God had for Jesus and for those of us who follow his teaching. It is an affirmation of the Word.

If we choose to dwell on the miracle and its veracity we destroy all that preceded it. Bernard Brandon Scott in his Book *Hear now the Parable* he speaks of over analysis of scripture. We are instructed to read scripture as if we were discovering a rare archeological find. We need to brush away the dust of time with a feather and not excavate with a pick ax.

Hence, our understanding of the resurrection should an earnest study of all scripture which leads us to this one dramatic moment in time. We can then ask if God is capable of such an act. In my study I have come to the conclusion that God in God's majesty is capable of anything. Resurrection to say the least is only one of God's actions in an array of may miracles.

I believe in God's miracles. Some are immense and others are minimal. One does not over shadow the other. So I invite you in this Lenten, pre Easter season, to study the scripture and come to your own conclusions about resurrection and eternity.

See you at the empty tomb.

Ken







Throughout February and the beginning of March, the children learned about the parable of "The Prodigal Son". In their lessons, the children learned about God's grace. They learned how forgiving God is and that He has unconditional love for all of us. Thank you to our teachers for this unit, Pam Albon, Erika Carrington, Ann Marie Niesobecki, and Marnee Palladino.

In March and April, our students will be learning about the Easter story through our "Crucifixion and Resurrection" unit. These lessons also focus on God's love, grace, and forgiveness of sins. There are also many fun activities ahead for the children at MCC. On April 17th (Palm Sunday), the children will participate in an Easter Workshop. This was an idea that some of our older kids had last year, and I'm excited to try it out. It will be similar to our Advent Workshop in December, except the kids will be making crafts related to Easter. Following the workshop and church, we will be having our 2nd annual Easter Egg Hunt! In May, we will be putting on the Creation Pageant. Please look for more information on these fun events in the upcoming weeks!

Valerie Beard

CALENDAR OF LENTEN EVENTS	
Palm/Passion Sunday Service	Sun., April 17 th - 10:00 am
Easter Egg Hunt	Sun., April 17 th - 11:00 am
Maundy Thursday Service	Thurs., April 21 st - 7:00 pm
Service of Shadows	Fri., April 22 nd - 7:00 pm
Easter	Sun., April 24 th
Community Sunrise Service	6:00 - am
Family Service	9:00 - am
Family Service	11:00 - am
Scripture Discussion	Wednesdays, Mar. 23 & 30 April 6, 13, & 20 10:00 am & 7:00 am

Sunday School Grade Schedule
April 2011
"Crucifixion and Resurrection"

	<u>Apr. 3</u> C&R Week 3	<u>Apr. 10</u> C&R Week 4	<u>Apr. 17</u>	<u>Apr. 24</u>
Noah's Ark 	2 nd /3 rd	K/1 st		
Storytelling Tent 	4 th /5 th	6 th /7 th	All in Noah's Ark	All in Church
Bibleland Theatre 	6 th /7 th	4 th /5 th		
Mary & Martha's Kitchen 	K/1 st	2 nd /3 rd	for Easter Workshop	for Easter
Youth Room				

2nd Annual Easter Egg Hunt!

WHO: Kids up through grade 7

WHAT: an Easter Egg Hunt for the Kids at MCC

WHEN: Sunday, April 17th, following church

WHERE: Grades K and younger - on the playground
 Grades 1-7 - the Green, the front parsonage lawn, the front church lawn

PLEASE BRING: an Easter basket



We hope to see you there!

Youth News!

The youth group once again completed the 30 Hour Famine. A small but mighty group, we raised approximately \$500 this year as well as donations of food for the Middlebury food bank. The youth learn a lot about what goes on in other countries during this fasting lock-in, this year they learned about what it has been like in Haiti since the earthquake last year. They also learned a new appreciation for food!

In March we gathered for a fun outing of laser-tag. Some of us were a little better at this than others, but it was great fun! Later in March we will volunteer at Animals for Life, the Middlebury animal shelter.


Future adventures we are planning are a church clean up in April, and of course our mission trip to Louisiana. In May we look forward to a hiking trip, perhaps to Kent Falls, as well as the possibility of helping some of our church members with lawn clean up.

Thankfully submitted,
Mary Brown

MISSION LENTEN PROJECT

This year our mission for Lent will be to fill the tool belts! We have purchased 10 tool belts and we would like you to help us fill them from the list below. When completed, they will be given to Simply Smiles for this year's excursions to South Dakota.

Items needed:

- 16 – 20 oz. hammers
- 25-30' tape measures
- Any size putty knives
- Multi-head screw drivers
- Utility knives
- Utility knife blades
- Small pry bars with nail pull (9 – 10" in length )

Music Notes



Considering taking on a new challenge, or providing something special for the church for Lent? Join the choir! Preparing for Easter is a great time to get comfortable without having to dive straight into the deep end, and still make a special contribution to the holiest time of the year.

Choir Calendar

Sunday, March 27: rehearsal, 4-5:30

Sunday, April 3: rehearsal, 4-5:30

Sunday, April 10: rehearsal, 4-5:30

Sunday, April 17: rehearsal, 4-5:30

Saturday, April 23: rehearsal with brass, 11-12

Sunday, April 24: 8 a.m. warm up for 9 a.m. service, 10 a.m. breakfast before 11 a.m. service

Saturday, April 30: Creation Pageant dress rehearsal

The Deacons' Bench

Remember Cheers, the fictional TV bar where "everybody knows your name?" Wouldn't it be great if your church were like that? It isn't. Yet. But we're working on it. With more than 600 members on the books and new friends and visitors every week, chances are you don't know everyone's name, even if you know many of their faces.

One week recently, a longtime member of the church asked me who that young fellow up in the choir was. Coincidentally, I've known Len Beard for a long time. We knew the Beard family from our previous church. When I went to answer, though, I slipped and gave his father's name instead.

I realized I'd made a mistake, but wasn't sure, so I ducked out to the narthex and checked his name tag, which was still in the rack. The good news was that I was able to correct my error. The bad news was that the tag, like most others, was on the wall, not on the person.

Our name tags are an important resource that we often overlook. Other churches may use them only during the social hour, but ours are in the narthex, ready when you come in to worship.

As a Christian community, we're called to minister to each other and to the world at large. Knowing the names, families, and a little personal history of others in the community helps us do that better.

Many people are wary of greeting or welcoming someone they don't know, for fear that they will be "welcoming" someone who has been a member for years. Wearing name tags prevents those awkward moments and encourages us to meet each other. Perhaps when we do, we'll reach out to people whom we haven't met because they've been away for a while, and we'll encourage them to return. As in business, keeping an existing relationship is much easier than starting a new one.

We'll also know that the stranger who isn't wearing a name tag is probably not a member, and therefore someone you'll want to greet. Maybe he or she is a friend or relative of a member, or maybe a visitor. That's a person we want to feel welcome, and to come back.

In the coming weeks, you'll probably hear more about name tags and get the occasional reminder to use them. Give them a try; it's part of our ministry to each other and to the world at large. If you don't have your own name tag, contact Jeanine Bonaventure. She can help you get back to a place where everybody knows your name.

-- Howard Fielding for the Board of Deacons

MISSION MOMENTS

On behalf of the 18 volunteers going to Louisiana from April 17 to 23, I would like to thank everyone who supported or worked at the Pancake Breakfast held on March 6. Many people did so much before, during and after the breakfast, but I would especially like to recognize the kitchen staff of Ellen Aronheim, Diane Barnard, Erika Carrington, Howie Gay, and Alberta Weller for their hard work and delicious food! This event raised \$1438 which will significantly help defray the costs of our mission trip. We are so grateful to have the support of this church and appreciate your participation in this service project.

SAVE THE DATE!

lia sophia

SHARE THE LOVE OF JEWELRY™

There will be a Lia Sophia jewelry fundraiser on Friday evening, April 29 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the social hall. Please invite all your friends and family to this event because 20% of sales will be donated to the Southbury/Middlebury Youth and Family Services. This organization provides counseling services and support groups to many children and families in Southbury and Middlebury.



What We Learned About

In Sunday School

By: Claire Niesobecki and Brittany Romaniello

We are learning about The Prodigal Son in Sunday School. This is the story about the son who was lost but then was found. The Prodigal Son took all of his dad's money and squandered all the money in a far off land. He had no money while there was a famine going on. The son decided to go to his home and work for his father. He got down on his hands and knees and begged his father for forgiveness. His father called to his servants and asked them to get the best robe they could find, put a ring on the son's finger, and put sandals on his feet. For a celebration for the son's safe return, the servants went to kill the fatted calf.

The older son called over a servant and asked, "Why is there a celebration for my brother?". The older brother got angry and his father came over and said, "Your brother was dead and now he is alive. He was lost and now he is found."

This story tells us about God's forgiveness. The father was like God because even when the son asked for forgiveness the father gave it to him. Jesus tells us that when we sin, if we pray and ask God for forgiveness, he will always love us.



Mission Scholarship

Through Pomperaug High School

The Mission Committee is awarding one \$500.00 scholarship to a 12th grader who resides in Middlebury or Southbury to use toward their higher education needs. Students must use the application that will be on file at Pomperaug High School and available through the Middlebury Congregational Church website. Application requires a recommendation and an essay stating how the applicant has demonstrated generosity of time, talent and/or treasure to improve the lives of others. Application deadline is April 31, 2011

SCRIPTURES & SERMONS

by Rev. Dr. Ken Hoyt

April 3rd

Psalm 23

1 Samuel 16:1-13

John 9:1-41

Sermon: "When is Healing Appropriate?"



April 10th

Psalm 130

Ezekiel 37:1-14

John 11:1-45

Sermon: "So They Would Believe"



April 17th

PALM SUNDAY

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Matthew 21:1-11

Sermon: "Let's Watch the Parade"



April 22nd

Service of Shadows

Tenebrae



April 24th

EASTER

6:00 Sunrise Service

9:00 Worship

11:00 Worship

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

Acts 10:34-43

John 20:1-18

STEWARDSHIP

Scripture Discussion

March 23 & 30, April 6, 13 & 20
10:00 am & 7:00 pm

SCRIPTURES FOR DISCUSSION:

March 23

Romans 5:1-11
John 4:5-42

March 30

Romans 8:16-11
John 9:1-41

April 6

Romans 8:6-11
John 11:1-45

April 13

Matthew 21:1-11

April 20

Philippians 2:5-11
Matthew 26:14-27: 66

As many of you know, my son and his wife are again living in Japan. Thankfully, oh so thankfully, I can tell you that they are well south of all the disaster. But understandably, I have been watching the news with deep interest.

As I was watching the film clips and videos of the unimaginable tragedy (tragedies, really), and I was so struck by what I did NOT see. No pushing or shoving to get to the front of lines. No violence, stealing or looting.

I was blown away by the one clip that showed an elderly woman. She was handed one then another vegetable after waiting on the long food line. She waved a hand at the second. She did not NEED it, and left it for someone who did. There was another person who, after waiting on a long fuel line, was told it was reserved for health care and emergency workers. He did not rage or turn on the worker. He understood that others had more need than he did.

What incredible respect for, and caring for, others. In this “It’s all about me” time, it was not “all about me” there.

As I turn to the issue of stewardship here in our church, I wonder if – even here in this caring community – we show that kind of awareness of the importance of putting the needs of others on a par with our own.

Have you made a commitment to your side of this relationship in our church? Are you holding back? In this holiest of seasons, I would urge you to re-think your relationship here, and the value of this church to you, your family, our community and our world. Together, we are able to do wonderful things – the things that God has charged us to do.

Please, if you have not already done so, please roll the stone away from your heart and make a commitment today, to our church and each other. And if you have already made a commitment, thank you for being a part of a very special and caring church community.

Janine Sullivan-Wiley
Chairman, Stewardship Committee



CHARLES P. LUCKEY
MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
APPLICATIONS

Applications for the 2011 Charles P. Luckey Memorial Scholarship are available in the church office. In keeping with the original intentions of Charles P. Luckey, we provided scholarship money to students in need, we will be requiring information from your FAFSA form. We will also be asking for information about your church participation. Completed applications should be mailed to Chris Parker, The Green, 201 North Street, Middlebury, Connecticut 06762-2311 or dropped off in the church office. The deadline is May 16, 2011.



Auction & Flea Market
May 14, 2011

It's almost here -- Come one come all to the Annual Auction and Flea Market on May 14th. The proceeds of this event go directly to the mission outreach of our church.

We need donations! For the auction, we need items such as furniture, collectibles, and antiques in good condition. For the flea market we need things such as furniture, household items, toys, linens, jewelry, accessories, sports equipment, electronics etc. The silent auction crew always creates magic from the treasures around them.

Can you help us on Friday, May 13 or on Auction day? We need help in all areas to prepare for the auction and flea market. There is also a BIG for helpers to clean up after the Flea market and Auction. Look for sign-up sheets during the coffee hour or call the church office.

Do you like to cook or bake? To make our Auction and preview party a success, we need lots of appetizers, finger foods, and desserts. Please consider making something for this event. (COSTCO or BJ's have a great selection of frozen appetizers!)

Please invite your coworker, friends, and neighbors, especially if they love quaint older items and collectibles, and of course bargains of all sorts.

HOURS:

May 13 - set up at Shepardson 11:30 am until finished

May 14:

Flea market - 8:30 am early entrance (fee \$10); 9:00 am regular entrance until 2 pm

Preview Party and Silent Auction - 5:30 -7:00 pm

Live Auction - 7:00 pm-?

The cost for the evening is \$10 per person and includes entrance to the live auction and the Preview Party.

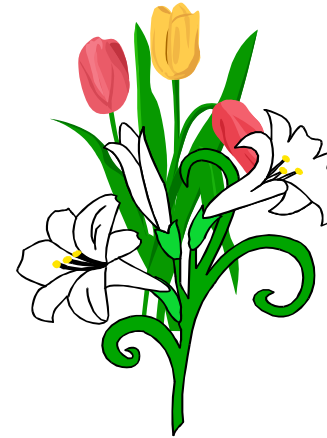
Questions:

Call Andrea Douyard 203-758-2135 or the church office

CHURCH RECORDS

BIRTHS

Madelynn Ella Shoemaker, daughter of Rebekah & Cliff Shoemaker and granddaughter of Karen & Bob Waranowicz born on March 10th



EASTER FLOWERS 2011

*The Deadline for May
Church Life:*

April 15th @ 9:00 a.m.

If you wish to contribute memorial flowers for Easter Sunday, please fill out the following form and leave in the offering plate or mail to the Church Office, 1242 Whittemore Rd. To ensure that your name will be included in the bulletin on Easter Sunday it must be received in the office by Monday, April 18th.

I wish to contribute \$_____ for Easter flowers

in memory of _____

Please Print

_____ I will pick up my plant following services on Easter Sunday.

_____ I would like the church to distribute my plant for me.

*Please **print** giver's name as it should appear in bulletin.*

Worship Attendance

*February 27th
77*

*March 6th
92*

*March 13th
72*