

THE NEWSLETTER

We welcome everyone who welcomes everyone!

Union Congregational Church of Hancock, UCC

March 2014

The view from the parsonage window...

CIAO, ITALIA!



Members and friends of our church who support our new children's ministry were transported from Hancock to Italy at the "Loving Lasagna Dinner" in honor of St. Valentine's Day last month. With the fluorescent lights replaced by tiny white lights entwined in the winter-bare birch trees used at the Bamford-Nadeau wedding and with clutter replaced by original Moise paintings on the walls, our social hall and choir room were transformed into a *ristorante Italiano*. Tall white candles and red checkered cloths on each of many small tables nurtured intimate conversation. Many people said that, as they stepped from outside into the church, the beauty of it took their breath away. Others said it was a miracle. "This is so beautiful!" said Gertrude Wildes. "We used to do things like this many years ago. I'm so glad we're doing them again now."

A three-course meal was served including vegetable salads, eight different kinds of lasagna, and a variety of desserts too wicked to be named in a church newsletter. (Thanks to all the hidden chefs behind the magic.) A lacy film hung between the kitchen and the social hall that was both pretty and functional, enhancing our dining experience. But those who peeked behind the curtain saw wizards Norm and Brad conducting a true dance of the munchkins, as the children of our church carried orders to and from the kitchen.

Everyone agreed that the true Valentine's miracle was our church children serving as waiters and waitresses. Consistently polite, rushing but never running, friendly and yet *very* serious about their jobs, the little ones kept water glasses full, took orders, served meals and delivered desserts without one accident all night. Bruce Croteau remarked, "I've never seen waiters in such a hurry to serve their customers!" The dinner was free, but diners gave tips totaling \$384. The money will go to send our children to Pilgrim Lodge, the UCC's Maine summer camp.



MUSIC ROCKS OUR SANCTUARY

Popular local singer and songwriter, Chris Ross, rocked our sanctuary on Wednesday night, February 19, at 7:00 pm. Postponed from the night of the Loving Lasagna dinner because Chris had a sore throat, this night it started to snow shortly before the concert. But we refused to postpone again. Forty fans braved the snowfall and attended the concert. It was wonderful to have so many non-church community members visiting our church. We hope to have other such outreach efforts to grow our congregation. “This place has great acoustics,” Chris said. The fundraiser gifted us with \$432. Thanks, Chris!

THE SEASON OF LENT

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5. This spiritual season lasts 40 days and takes us to Easter. Traditionally, the gospel stories on the six Sundays of Lent are about what happened as Jesus journeyed from Galilee to Jerusalem. The season invites us to figuratively follow Jesus on this journey, each in our own way.

We’ve all heard stories of people who feel *so* oppressed because they were asked as kids to give up candy for Lent and give the candy-money they saved to poor children in a Third World country or here at home. Perhaps it’s characteristic of our culture to look at learning self-discipline and charity as oppressive.

In the UCC, we don’t think of Lent as “giving up” as much as “taking on.” Perhaps we take on 10 minutes to pray or 20 minutes to walk each of these 40 days. Or we decide to bring food for *Loaves & Fishes* not just on communion Sunday but each Sunday during Lent. Or we think of six people we feel alienated from and (after spiritually preparing ourselves for possible rejection) reach out to one of them each week in Christ’s spirit of reconciliation. Or perhaps we want to join the growing movement in our congregation to use community prayer time on Sundays not only to lift up tragedies, but also to thank God for something good and joyful that happened to us that week. *Lent* is the old Anglo-Saxon word for *spring*, so it’s an especially good time to take on something these 40 days to help our environment and/or enhance our spiritual joy and rebirth.



Be creative—come up with an idea that fits you personally. Tell your friends at church what you plan to do so that they can support you on your Lenten journey. Who knows where you’ll end up by Easter? If you choose to give up candy for these 40 days, you could lose some weight and feel better about yourself!

With you in God’s grace,

Dan

Pastor Dan

LANSING HAMMOND (1906-1980)

Last month I received this email:

Greetings, Rev. Geslin,

I am seeking information regarding Lansing Hammond, a former member of your church who died December 2, 1980. We are doing research on his parents, William Churchill Hammond and Fanny Reed Hammond who lived here in Holyoke. Any data that you have related to his life or membership at your church would be most appreciated. I believe a memorial fund was established at the time of his death in care of a Sarah Gustam.

Thank you,
Rev. A.L. Stanley, Archivist
UCC of Holyoke, MA

By asking around, I learned about this good man who did a lot for the youth of Hancock Point through teaching them classical music. I was able to put the Rev. Stanley in touch with Edie Lounder, Clint Ritchie and Lois Johnson. He replied:

Dan,

I appreciate your sermon on the Maine Sea Coast Mission and the history of your church. Thanks for your thoughtful reminder that we stand upon the shoulders of those faithful ones who have gone before us.

Lansing Hammond was doing the same in relation to his progenitors. His grandfather was Dr. Edward Allen Reed, a graduate of Auburn Seminary in 1871. He pastored in Springfield, Massachusetts, then in New York City, and finally here in Holyoke for nearly 30 years. He was Pastor Emeritus of the Second Congregational Church of Holyoke when he died in 1928. Lansing's mother, Fanny Reed Hammond, was one of two children of Dr. & Mrs. Reed, as she had married the church organist, William Churchill Hammond.

William Hammond had quite a career, not only as organist for Second Church, but as head of the music department at Mt. Holyoke College as well as college organist and choir director. It is said that he gave over 2,000 free organ concerts over a 30-year period here in Holyoke for the benefit of the mill workers and general public. At Mt. Holyoke College in the music building, the second floor is named in his memory. So "the beat goes on." When the weather improves, I would like to get up your way to research some of the material in your town archives. Best wishes in your ministry and thanks for your help.

Faithfully,
Art Stanley

ASH WEDNESDAY — MARCH 5 — 7 PM



Start your Lenten journey with your church family.

ECUMENICAL LENTEN SERVICES—Wednesdays at 7:00 pm
Theme: “Following Jesus”

March 12: St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church

Preacher: Rev. Sara Huisjen, Unitarian-Universalist Society

March 19: Community of Christ Church

Preacher: Rev. Scott Mower, St. Joseph’s Catholic Church

March 26: Union Cong’l Church Ellsworth Falls, UCC

Preacher: Mr. Jim Heard, Church of Life and Praise

April 2: United Methodist Church of Ellsworth

Preacher: Johanna Johannson, Priest-In-Charge, St. Dunstan Episcopal

April 9: First Congregational Church of Ellsworth, UCC

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Dan Geslin, Union Cong’l Church of Hancock, UCC

Worship services will be followed by coffee and refreshments.

An offering will be taken for the Church Discretionary Fund (CDF)
administered by the Emmaus Center.

Please make checks payable to: *Emmaus Center/CDF*.

“THANK YOU”

I would like to thank everyone who donated to the "Vicky Fund" last month. Thank you also for the kind words and the special cards or envelopes that were handed to myself or Everett. We appreciated it very much. I was deeply affected by the generosity of everyone!

Love to you all, Vicky

A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

Bummed out by all the cold, snow, and ice we've had this winter? Longing for spring and warmer weather? The following annual church events are sure signs that warmer weather is on the way. Post them on your calendar and get ready for the spring we all look forward to!

Saturday April 12th – Annual Boy Scout clean-up of our parking lot and grounds. We need flat shovels, push brooms, rakes, wheel barrows and volunteers to get the job done. Call Kenny Stratton (422-3292) if you can help.

Saturday May 3rd – Guild Spring Rummage Sale. Donations of gently used summer clothing, household linens, bedding, fabric, yarn and other craft items needed and appreciated. Please keep this project in mind as you do spring housecleaning and transition your wardrobe to warmer weather. Call Gertrude Wildes (422-3539) with any questions.

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