

The Courier

Semi-monthly Newsletter

December 5, 2007

Melrose
Highlands
Congregational
Church

www.mhcc-ucc.org

DECEMBER WORSHIP PLANS



December 2

First Sunday of Advent

Hanging of the Greens
Food Pantry Collection
Luncheon to follow!!

December 9

Second Sunday of Advent

"Unlikely Heirs"
Matthew 3:1-12

December 16

Third Sunday of Advent

Poinsettia Sunday

"Are You The One?"
Matthew 11:2-11

December 23

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Music Sunday

"God is With Us"
Matthew 1:18-25

December 24

5:30PM – Intergenerational
Service

11:00PM – Lessons and Carols
Note - No Church School either service

December 30

Guest Preacher

Memorial Wreaths

In loving memory



FRONT DOORS

Mr. & Mrs. Allison Hayes
& Beth-Alison Janes

FRANKLIN STREET DOORS

Leo B. Lind, Sr.

& James Worrall

from the

Lind-Worrall Family

Betty Rowland, wife of Richard

Rowland & mother of Barbara

Bemiss,

Ken Rowland &

Charlotte Woodard

WEST HIGHLAND

AVENUE DOOR

Lucy Ann & Walter Miner

& son, Steven Miner

REAR OF SANCTUARY

Mr. & Mrs. Gardner W. Oakes

Mr. & Mrs. Robert L.

Hutchinson

FRONT OF SANCTUARY

The loved ones of

Fred & Meg Steele Wingerath

NARTHEX

The loved ones of

Ronald & Dianne Cheney

The Parents & daughter Susan

of Robert & Eileen Perry

NURSERY SCHOOL DOOR

Bonnie Bowden

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

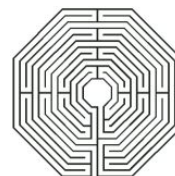


There has been a change in plans for the Christmas pageant; it will now take place at the 5:30 p.m. Intergenerational service on Christmas Eve.

The centerpiece of the service will be the telling of the Christmas story. It will be done through carols and narration. The children, in costumes, will enact the story slowly filling the stable with characters, animals and angels.

There will be some rehearsals in December – dates TBA. There will be both speaking & non-speaking parts. Please let MaryAnn Barriss know if your child is interested in participating by calling MaryAnn at 781.665.3594 or by email at barrissfamily@comcast.net

LABYRINTH WALK



December 12 @7:30 PM

**For some peaceful moments in
the holiday rush – come walk the
Labyrinth!**



Come to Church School

Blessed are those who...

...teach the children for they will be rewarded with joy!

With the new year fast approaching, we are in need of filling the teacher & shepherd roles for the next story in the Rotation Workshop Program: *The Beatitudes*. You may choose to be a teacher or assist as a shepherd.

Share your time in an area of your liking; workshops include art, drama, cooking or movie. A four week commitment is all that is needed. Lesson plans are provided for this fun and rewarding experience. The dates for this story are January 6, 13, 27 & February 3. Please contact MaryAnn at barrissfamily@comcast.net if you are able to volunteer.

Thanks to All for a Successful Highlands Christmas Fair



Once again, our Church was transformed into a “Winter Wonderland” of beautiful hand-crafted items, delicious home-baked foods, mission opportunities, crafts for children, and lovely music and decorations. A heart-felt “thank-you” to all who helped—in a multitude of ways—to make this event a success.

In addition to being a successful day of fellowship and fun, the Fair raised \$6,500 for Women’s Guild missions and the MHCC General Fund and \$884 for *Rosie’s Place*. Donors to our “Giving Tree” will be providing gifts for 27 low-income children and parents. We also had a successful launch for this year’s New Orleans Mission trip fundraiser.

One of the best things about this Fair is the opportunity for members of our congregation to work together in Jesus’ name toward a common goal, renewing ties, making new friends, and having fun along the way. It has truly been a pleasure for me to work with all of you in making this event happen these past three years. Now it is time for me to step down as Fair Coordinator and let someone else bring their vision and ideas to this opportunity.

I wish you all the Joy of Christmas now and throughout the year.

Anne Gilbert, Fair Coordinator

What is a Liturgist?

On the back of the Courier you will see under the heading of staff, “Ministers... the people of the church.” One of the ways we live out this belief is the regular participation of members and friends in our worship and praise of God.

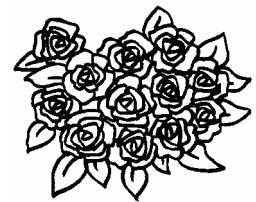


Each Sunday the scripture is read and other pieces of the worship service are led by the

liturgist which literally means, “worship leader.” The variety of voices adds a richness to our worship service.

If you would like your name added to a list to call to be a liturgist, please be in touch with Teri Vienot, the Deacon charged with signing up liturgists for each week. No special knowledge is required only a heart for worship. Teri can be reached by email at ktvienot@comcast.net or by phone at 781.662.1757.

FLOWER MEMORIAL NOVEMBER



The flowers that grace the altar are given

November 4 – in loving memory of the loved ones of the Lyons Family.

November 11 - in loving memory of all those MHCC members that have passed before us.

November 18 - In loving memory of the parents and loved ones of Fred and Lee Rosseland.

November 25 – in loving memory of David Cheney.



FROM THE STAGE OF THE FAIR!

The winner of the jelly beans in a jar contest was

CALEIGH CARVILL. Congratulations!! Actual number of beans was 363.

NEXT COURIER DEADLINE
Friday, December 16th at noon.



This past Sunday was the annual Hanging of the Greens service and church members of all ages helped.

It was also the first Sunday in Advent and so we lit the first of four candles in our Advent Wreath.

Had there been time for a reading and sermon we would have heard Matthew 24:36-44, which tells us that no one knows the hour or the day when Christ will return and so we must be ready, watch, and wait.

These are the three bywords for Advent and worth examination as we enter into this the season that begins the church (that's church with a capital C) year.

The purpose of Advent is for us to prepare ourselves for two events. The first is the birth of Jesus, which we celebrate at Christmas. The second is inextricably attached to Christmas and it is Easter, the resurrection. We await the birth because it leads to the resurrection, the whole reason for our faith. But to understand the resurrection we have to travel with Jesus from his birth, to his baptism, and along the road that leads to Jerusalem where we share in the last supper, go up the hill to the cross, witness his death, discover the empty tomb, and then finally receive the good news of the resurrection. Without the resurrection there would be no reason to celebrate the birth and without the birth there would be no resurrection.

These two events, the hallmarks of our faith, are connected by the journey, the road to Jerusalem. It is the journey we will begin in the New Year. And like any journey of any importance, the better we prepare for it the more we will get from it. And so, we have Advent, the time for preparation.

I encourage you to take advantage of Advent this year to think beyond Christmas. Consider the journey that lays ahead of us and the purpose for the journey.

If you do this an almost magical thing happens...Christmas becomes a beginning, instead of an end in itself. In the process it becomes a doorway for the rest of the story. You might worry that seeing Christmas this way will rob it of its excitement. And perhaps it does lose some of the "birthday party" energy that the secular celebration of Christmas promotes but what you get is, in my humble opinion, better. Christmas becomes a blessed event that is full of hope and wonder.

So follow the Advent path this year. Take time to prepare for the journey. Light candles at home every night. Say a prayer before meals. Ask for Jesus to be born in your heart in a new way this year. And watch and wait...God comes in unexpected ways, in unusual circumstances, and always when we least expect it.

May this season of Advent be a blessing for you all.

Rev. Peggy O'Connor

Spiritual Growth Opportunity!

Are you interested in prayer but not quite sure how you are supposed to be doing it? Are you worried that you are not doing it "right"? Do you like the idea of praying but have trouble actually praying? Or are you a veteran prayer, with a regular practice, who would like to be part of a group of others?



If you answered yes to any of these, or if you are just plain curious what a prayer group does, then come to the introductory session of the yet

to be named group on January 10, at 10:30 AM. At that meeting we will explore what we mean by prayer and what you would like to get out of a group dedicated to prayer.

There are no texts, no tests, and no pre-requisites. So what do you have to lose? Come on by and see if it isn't what's been missing in your life.

Hope to see you there.

Rev. Peggy O'Connor

LUNCH BUNCH



Wednesday, December 12th
12:30 p.m.

Café Escadrille
Route 3, Burlington

For reservations, directions and rides, please call Ann and Les at 781.665.3989. All are welcome!

FROM THE TREASURER'S OFFICE

Did you know for the first 6-months of our 2007-2008 Church year budget, we received the following income:

Plate:	\$6,046.80
Pledges:	\$44,993.53
Individual Contributions:	\$10,057.66
Income from Invested Funds:	\$20,783.67
Use of our Facility:	\$8,430.00
Miscellaneous:	\$10,948.61
Total Income:	\$101,260.27
Total Expenses:	\$120,397.50

But our expenses were greater than our income by: \$19,137.23



Please remember that your contributions to MHCC made through December 31, 2007 can be deducted from your 2007 income taxes.

THE CHRISTMAS FUND

The Christmas Fund Offering (formerly the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross), one of four Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ (UCC), is an important way of sharing our joy at God's renewing and life-giving grace. The Offering, which is administered by the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance of the Pension Boards on behalf of the UCC, is an expression of joy and gratitude to, and for, those who serve the church.

Gifts to the Christmas Fund help provide pension and health premium supplementation to low-income retirees, emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay employees and Christmas Gift Checks to hundreds of annuitants.

Facts taken from a 1953 publication indicate that: "In 1902, a little money was collected and special Christmas gifts were sent to ten older ministers." The same article also reports that \$121,054 was received for the Christmas Fund in 1952.

A little more than 50 years later, in 2006 the Christmas Fund received \$1,438,000 and nearly 1,500 families were assisted. Our goal is to be able to provide at least \$1,500,000 in assistance from the 2007 appeal.

Your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. This is your opportunity to participate in God's promise of renewal by enabling this ministry of compassion and care.

[Taken from the UCC website.]

STAFF

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