

**A Message from our Senior Minister Emeritus
Rev. Dennis Knight**

Dear Friends,

A recent Garfield (who is a cat, which creature some people consider gifted with unique insight) cartoon strip featured him walking by some unidentified character sitting with a cup of coffee. As Garfield approaches, he mentally offers a “hello,” and as he passes, he also silently says “goodbye.” The last frame of the strip has him musing to himself “avoiding the stuff in between is the key to a good relationship.”

That observation certainly prompted an “oh, yes, how true” response within me. The thought of just being able to say hello and goodbye is tantalizingly appealing, because, as Garfield implies, it avoids all the litter that lies in between. Relationships can be cumbersome, awkward, imposing, frustrating, unfulfilling, and messy.

As whimsically enticing as this notion of an eclipsed relationship might be, it is neither realist nor of consequence. Relationships are all about what happens “in between.” The substantive part of any relationship forms itself in the rhythms and even plodding moments of that relationship as it moves onward in measured pace from day to day.

I write this message on the eve of the inauguration of a new American President. The festivities are underway, and they are monumental. In a sense, the nation is saying hello to its newest leader. It will be four years, or possibly eight, before we say goodbye to this same person. For all the glamour associated with this moment, this man’s place in history will be measured not by the festivities surrounding the hello, or the occasion of his departure, but by all that lies between those moments. Even as he celebrates his new role and status on one day, he will have to appear at his desk for work the next morning, and the substance of his Presidency

will begin to take form only then. His worthiness as a leader will show itself, or not, by what he does in the routines of his daily activities in the months to come.

Those traditions, such as Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, and Lutheran among others, that follow a liturgical calendar recognize two periods during the church year that are identified as “ordinary time.” In short, ordinary time denotes those weeks in the year that fall between the major seasons of Christmas and Easter. Ordinary time actually occupies the bulk of the liturgical year. The same is true of our individual lives. We experience high points that are analogous to Christmas or Easter, or the hello and goodbye, or an inauguration for a President, but our lives really play out in ordinary time, and it is how we conduct ourselves in ordinary time that ultimately defines who we are.

This suggests that what we might otherwise consider inconsequential is in fact of immense significance. The quality of a marriage is measured not in the pomp of the wedding, but in the daily expressions of regard and affection that the couple share with each other. The measure of an employee’s contribution to an organization does not rest in the resume s/he brings to the first day on the job, but by the quality of his/her ongoing contribution week after week. The strength of a building is not instilled by the turn of a shovel at groundbreaking, but by the careful attentions of each worker who over time pounds nails, cuts lumber, pours cement, lays bricks, and installs windows.

As quippy as Garfield’s comment was, it was misguided. The reality is that we build better relationships by attending to all that lies between the hello and the goodbye. Avoiding all “that stuff” in between will only result in failed, hollow, or meaningless relationships. Successful relationships, on the other hand, evolve from sustained, deliberate, and thoughtful effort offered on a daily basis, and in a consistently worthy manner.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

David Stebbins	3
Peg Gifford.....	5
Avilla Clarkson	14
Alex Carlson.....	20
MacArthur Mills.....	26



Welcome to President Barak Obama.

He is in our thoughts and our prayers as he takes office and continues to bring leadership to our nation.

We offer our blessing to George and Laura Bush as they embrace private life.



WHAT'S COOKIN' PAKACHOAG?

We are ... and we need your recipes. We know you're pulling out all those fabulous recipes for the holidays, so why not share them with us too. To share your recipes, log on to:

www.gandrpublishing.com

In the upper right hand corner of their home page enter:

Username: pakachoag

Password: church

or bring them to church and give them to Lynn or Cathy Blanchard.

Here's a peek at one of the recipes from our upcoming recipe book. How about you share yours too :o)

Cranberry Pumpkin Cookies

by Jackie Hawkins

- ½ cup butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla ext
- 1 egg
- 1 cup pureed cooked pumpkin
- 2 ¼ cup flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 cup cranberries cut in half
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 Tbsp orange zest
- ½ cup chopped nuts

Preheat oven to 375° & grease cookie sheet. Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in vanilla, egg and pumpkin. Sift together the flour, baking powder, soda, salt and cinnamon. Add to mixture. Mix well until blended. Add cranberries, orange zest and nuts. Drop by tsp onto cookie sheet, bake 10-12 minutes.



Musical Notes **by Randy Bloom, Interim Organist**

February 9 marks the two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of the German composer Felix Mendelssohn. Born into a Jewish home of privilege and tremendous intellectual stimulation, Mendelssohn demonstrated his musical genius at a young age. The family's conversion to Christianity early in Mendelssohn's life also had a profound influence on him inspiring him to compose a number of sacred works that are considered masterpieces today. Over the next few weeks, some of these compositions will be part of the worship experience at Pakachoag Church in honor of this great composer of the nineteenth century.



Powerless **by Marilyn Kulesa, Deacon**

I read the headlines in the morning newspaper after the devastating ice storm which hit New England on December 12, 2008. Thousands of homes and businesses were left powerless when ice laden tree limbs and electrical wires fell to the ground.

Yes, we were among the powerless after being awakened at 4am on Friday morning by the sound of crashing tree limbs falling through ice covered tree branches not far from our house. Losing power was not an unusual occurrence in our neighborhood, it has happened many times in the past but this was no ordinary storm. The ice that formed on many tree branches and wires was an inch thick or more. The devastation resembled a disaster area with fallen trees, branches and wires on our street and the surrounding area. After 3 1/2 days of being powerless, our electricity was restored and we were very grateful.

During that time, I felt powerless over the situation. I had no control over our loss of electricity or the length of time it may take for it to be restored. I have felt that powerlessness before in other situations in my life, such as sickness, job loss, financial worries and other unforeseen circumstances. When feeling powerless, I may not like the situation, but accepting it and trusting in God's loving care for me, I can meet the challenge with courage and hope.

I am encouraged by a scripture reading from Psalms 28:7
"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to Him."

Gratitude for caring family members and friends during the inconveniences of the ice storm, for an intact house without damage, and for an appreciation of electricity and the comforts it brings, I realized that I am *not* powerless over attitudes such as gratitude, a positive outlook, and faith and trust in God. Gratitude is more than just thankfulness. It is a deeper awareness that God is present within every person and situation. By accepting situations in which I have no control, I can focus on creating a positive attitude and gratitude no matter what the situation may be.



YOUTH GROUP ACTIVITIES

Souper Bowl of Caring

On **Sunday, February 1**, the Youth Group will be receiving a special offering of can goods and money to be given to Auburn Youth and Family Services. The congregation is invited to a luncheon of soup and bread following worship.



Youth Group Meeting

Our regular Youth Group meeting will take place on **Sunday, February 8** from 2:00 to 4:00 PM.

30-Hour Famine - February 27-28

Our youth are going to starve for food! Right now more than 840 million people around the world do not have enough to eat. Annually, more than 9 million children under the age of five die from disease and malnutrition as a result of hunger. In the United States of America there are approx 10 million hungry people. One in thirty does not get enough to eat.

Our middle school students are choosing to make a difference. They are getting ready to take part in World Visions 30 Hour Famine. They are going to raise money by not eating for 30 hours so that children around the world can eat every day. In the coming weeks you will hear more about the 30-Hour Famine through announcements and bulletin inserts.

So here's where you come in: please pray for the Famine participants and then prayerfully consider how you can offer your financial support to help save children's lives.



FAMILY MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

United Church of Christ's Women's Week: February 1 -8. On **February 1**, we will celebrate with a special service of Holy Communion in honor of women's week!

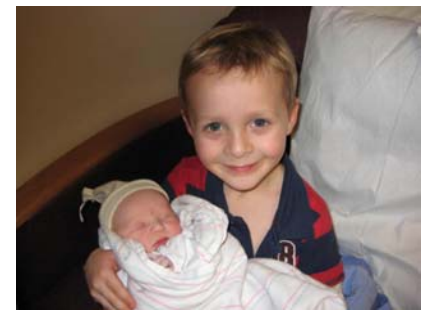
Join us for an **afternoon of games, fun and fellowship on Sunday, February 15** at Dennis' residence, 1303 Forest Park Drive, Auburn. Please bring along food to share for lunch and your favorite board game (no videos or game boys). Come and have fun!!!

Women's Night Out is scheduled for **Friday, February 20**. More details to follow so check your bulletins and the bulletin board at the church.

Mardi Gras Party on Wednesday, February 25 at 5:30 PM. Join us for the celebration of Fat Tuesday (a day late)! Come and eat pancakes and yummy desserts! Listen to, even dance to, music from Carnival! Celebrate before the Fast of Lent begins! Costumes, masks and beads encouraged. Fun for the whole family! Following the festivities, join us for our **Ash Wednesday Service**.



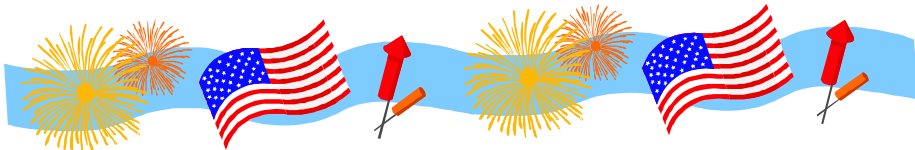
Congratulations to Jen and Jeff LaBonte on the birth of their son Joshua Stephen born January 21, 2009. Joshua weighed 7 lbs 6 oz. Joshua has a brother, Luke (pictured on the right) and two sisters, Cecelia and Jillian.



Pakachoag Soldier of the month

Many of us have family and friends in the armed forces, each month we will feature at least one soldier from our church family. We ask that you keep all our men and women in the armed services in your thoughts and prayers. Perhaps you could send a letter of support, donate to a package for this soldier (you can drop items off at the church), or even send a care package of your own.

Thank you to all who serve, and the families who support them.



SFC Carl Corey 5-4 Calvary Delta Troop APO AE 09344

Carl was brought up in Leicester and enlisted at 17 to be sworn in when he turned 18. He actually spent his 18th birthday en route to basic training! He has three more years before he completes his 20 and retires. At this time he is a Sgt 1st class but is on the list for promotion. He has served overseas in Panama, Korea, Kuwait, Germany and now Iraq. In the States he has been to Hood, Drum and Riley. He has a daughter, Alyssa, who lives in Charlton. His wife, Dee; son, Nick, and step-daughter, Lauren, all are keeping the home fires burning in Kansas, which is home base at this time. Carl is



Carl and his wife
Dee.

just outside of Bagdad, he arrived there in November for a one year tour. He has been in charge of Motor Pools, is trained in retrieving broken down vehicles and is currently involved in supply convoys.

Carl has achieved many accolades during his time in the Army; he is a member of the SGT Audey Murphy Club, a founding member of the United States Military Motorcycle Riders (www.usmmr.com), A graduate of Drill Sergeant School. In addition he has received praise from both the Army and the City of Watertown, NY for pulling a disabled elderly man and his dog from a burning vehicle, and has recruited a number of his soldiers to participate in a Polar Dip to benefit a local hospital.

His activities outside of the Army include being a DJ, teaching country line dancing and riding his motorcycle. He likes to relate the story of the time Ken and I went to see him in Kansas and we all attended a rally that was taking place. Carl took a group of us HOG riders on a tour of the base and loves to tell everyone he had an entire group of Harleys following him on his Suzuki!

Although, he is in harm's way all his emails home assure his family he and his fellow soldiers are well trained and prepared for all the challenges that face them.

His email is: torqued247@yahoo.com

Web-site to check out: www.booksforsoldiers.com



Inspirations from Today

By Lynn Blanchard

There are two things that have always helped me in my faith. One is hearing about others faith, what strengthens them, what gets them through the day. The second has been being able to share my ups and downs here with all of you. I consider it a gift and a privilege. I share my experiences and thoughts, in hopes of helping you find a path closer to God, look at things from another perspective, and even challenge some of your beliefs. Not that I want to be confrontational, but I've learned much about my own faith in hearing about others. Sometimes it's a "YES", "that's it", and sometimes it's a "No, that's not for me". Either way, it helps me to grow. It makes me stop and think about what I believe and why.

You may have noticed a new feature in the *Messenger*. Last month it was an article by Pat Blanchard, this month it is an article by Marilyn Kulesa. I've asked them, and several other people to share with us something about their faith. I wanted to know what strengthens them, what carries them through the day, what inspires them. I love to hear about people's faith. Even though we worship together, we have different perspectives, different ways of comprehending, and different ways of celebrating our lives, and our faith.

I hope for their articles to inspire me - and they have; to inspire you; and maybe even more importantly, to inspire themselves. I wanted to share the gift I have of sharing their stories. It also occurred to me, that some of you reading the *Messenger* don't have the opportunity to come to church every Sunday. Maybe you aren't able to leave your home due to family circumstances, health, or maybe you moved out of the area. But that doesn't mean you can't celebrate with us, praise with us, and be inspired by us, as well as inspire us.

If I haven't yet spoken to you, come talk to me if you would like to share. I've only had the opportunity to speak to a few people. I wanted to see if it worked. But the few I have

spoken to about this new feature seemed as excited as I was. I hope you enjoy the articles, I know I am. I hope they are all as different as the people writing them. Thank you to those of you who have said yes, and I encourage you to share more with us.



Spotlight on...

This month we'll get to know Rev. Dennis Knight a little better.

Dennis is our Senior Minister Emeritus and is currently serving as our Interim Minister. He is a native of Rhode Island, and a lifelong member of Beneficent Congregational Church, where he was ordained in 1973, after graduating from the Chicago Theological Seminary with a Masters in Divinity. He also holds a BA from the University of Rhode Island. Previous to his 20 years of service to Pakachoag, he was the associate minister of the former Chestnut Street Congregational Church in Worcester, MA.



SAVE THE DATE

Pakachoag Community Music School presents its 21st annual Cabaret fundraiser "This Is My Song" – join local legend Sue Natoli singing an eclectic selection of serenades with family and friends.

Sue has sung alongside Tony Bennett, Natalie Cole and Frank Sinatra in venues across the country.

Join us for beautiful music, complimentary refreshments, and win great raffle and silent auction items.



Check the school's web site at www.pakmusic.org beginning March 2nd for a listing of silent auction items. Bidding begins one hour prior to show times.

Friday, April 3

12 Noon Raffle/Auction open for bidding
12:30 PM Boxed Lunch (by reservation)
1:00 PM Matinee

Saturday, April 4

1:00 PM Raffle/Auction open for bidding
1:15 PM Boxed Lunch (by reservation)
2:00 PM Matinee

6:00 PM Raffle/Auction open for bidding
Refreshments available
7:00 PM Show

Advance tickets are \$20/\$15 seniors/students. Tickets purchased at the door, or held & paid at the door are \$25. Boxed lunch is \$10 by reservation only; served 45 minutes prior to show times. Table reservations are available for parties of 8; reserved tables must be secured 30 minutes prior to show.

Proceeds support the music school's by providing financial aid, pursuing outreach and keeping tuition accessible. Help Pakachoag Community Music School remain a valuable community resource and change lives through music.

JUST WHAT IS VALENTINE' DAY

Every February we celebrate Valentine's Day. We do this in honor of Saint Valentine.

One legend is that Valentine was a priest who served during third century Rome. There was an Emperor who decided that single men made better soldiers than those that were married. With this thought in mind he outlawed marriage for young men in hopes of building a stronger military base. Father Valentine decided this decree just wasn't fair. He chose to marry young couples secretly. When Emperor Claudius II found out about Valentine's actions he had him put to death.

Another legend has it that Valentine was an imprisoned man who fell in love with his jailor's daughter. Before he was put to death he sent the first 'valentine' himself when he wrote her a letter and signed it 'Your Valentine', words still used on cards today.

We'll never know the true identity of Valentine but this much is for sure ... February has been the month to celebrate love for a long time, dating clear back to the Middle Ages when it was thought that birds chose their mates on February 14. . In fact, Valentine's Day ranks second only to Christmas in number of greeting cards sent.

The symbol of Valentine's Day is Cupid. In Roman mythology Cupid is the son of Venus, goddess of love. Cupid is often said to be a mischievous boy who goes around wounding both gods and humans with his arrows, causing them to fall in love.

HAPPY VALENTINE' S DAY

