

THE SPIRIT



A newsletter for the CCC/ME

April 2010

The Congregational Spirit

2010 Annual Meeting

Congregational Christian Council of Maine
Friday, April 23, & Saturday, April 24
Skowhegan Federated Church
Skowhegan, Maine

Maine Congregationalists:

You are hereby called to the 2010 Fellowship Meeting of the Congregational Christian Council of Maine to be held on Friday, April 23rd and Saturday, April 24th at the Skowhegan Federated Church, Skowhegan, Maine. Each member church is entitled to three voting delegates, which may be clergy or laity.

All others are encouraged to attend and will have voice but no vote. There is a Youth Meeting planned in conjunction with this meeting. Encourage your youth to attend as well.

Yours truly,
Rev. Dr. Arlin T. Larson
1st Congregational Church, Searsport
Scribe

Registration fee: \$15

Essential Information for our Spring Meeting

From The Federated Church in Skowhegan

Accommodations

As you make your plans, you are welcome to go to the Skowhegan Maine website and look at some of the many lodging options. The two closest motels in Skowhegan are:

The Towne Motel

Madison Ave
Skowhegan, Maine 04976
Tel-207-474-5151

They offer a price of \$63.00 a night for 1 bed (king) or
\$73.00 a night for 2 persons

Each room has cable and wireless internet.

The Belmont Motel

Madison Ave
Skowhegan, Maine 04976
Tel-1-800-235-6669 or 207-474-8315

They offer a price of \$65.00 for 1 bed or
\$75.00 for 2 beds

Meeting Details

The activities at the church will begin Friday Evening at 7:00 with a hymn sing followed by entertainment with Gary Crocker. He is a Maine Humorist and is very entertaining. You will enjoy him. There will be food available as you arrive. It will light finger foods with a beverage.

On Saturday we will have a breakfast at the church beginning at 8:00 followed by our meeting which will begin at 9:00.

Lunch will be served at noon in our Tewksbury building located behind the church. Following lunch we will have our worship service in the Sanctuary.

The youth will be meeting with us on Friday. We will go to Central Maine Family fun center and bowl from 9-11 following our Friday night entertainment.

On Saturday we have something planned for the youth in the morning but would like all our young people back early enough to be involved in our panel discussion. We are excited about having everyone here and hope that as you make plans you will put this date aside so we can see that weekend. God is doing great things in our churches and this is an opportunity for all of us to share and fellowship and spend time together. If you have further questions please feel free to contact the church at 207-474-2776. See you soon.

Congregational Christian Council of Maine
Annual Meeting
Skowhegan Federated Church, Skowhegan, Maine
April 2010

Call to Order:

Invocation:

Words of Welcome:

Acceptance of Minutes: Fall Meeting, North Deering, October 24, 2009

Roll Call: (Declare Quorum)

Reports:

- a.) Youth and Camping
- b.) Treasurer's Report
- c.) Ambassador's Reports
- d.) Moderator's Report

Locations of Next Meetings:

Fall 2010, South Paris, Spring 2011, East Orrington

Affirmation of CCC/ME Covenant:

Affirming God's Love
Sustained by God's power
Guided by God's Word

We covenant to be a fellowship of Christ's people in the world...healers, reconcilers, agents of peace...the Lord's free people, gathered in the Lord's name, bound in love one to another.
(Adapted from the covenant affirmed by the Maine Council in session May 7, 1988 and amended April 29, 1995)

Old Business:

New Business: Vote on the slate of officers and installation of officers

Guests: Rev. Dr. Betsey Mauro of the Center for Congregational Leadership
Leslie Heiser, Development Director, Bangor Theological Seminary
Others...

Prayers for Our Churches and People:

Adjourn:

Moderator's Report

Congregational Christian Council of Maine
Annual Spring Meeting 2010

Dear Friends,

To paraphrase Ecclesiastes “To everything there is a season including a time to serve on the executive committee and a time to let someone else serve.” Over the past six years I have enjoyed being so active on the council’s executive committee serving much of that time as moderator. It has been a privilege and a pleasure. Friendships and relationships have deepened simply by spending time together in this life-long pursuit of a relationship with one another as we attempt in our own unique and varied ways to model our lives and our churches after the life and ways of Jesus. So as the seasons turn, this spring I will conclude my role as moderator leaving that task to Mark Tanner, pastor of the Skowhegan Federated Church. It is a fitting time to do so as the spring meeting is being hosted by the Skowhegan church.

I have been the pastor in South Paris for nine years and early on I made the decision that I wanted us to be more strongly connected to the Congregational Christian Council of Maine and the National Association of Congregational Churches. I hold great value for both the state and nation associations because I am certain God calls us to fellowship with the larger body. I also have worked to maintain good relations with the churches in my community through the Oxford Hills Area Association that brings together a broad array of denominations. As independent as any of you, I know as do you, that the life of the Spirit is a gift meant to be shared. Our fellowship is meant to look outward not inward.

One of the television pundits recently said that “*the concept of community is like a cancer*” implying (or actually saying outright) that we are in this life for ourselves with little or no concern or regard for others. Sadly this comment brought the room to its feet as the listeners offered supportive applause. How contrary to what Jesus is calling us to be like. So, while I will conclude my service as moderator I fully plan to maintain close ties with all of you in this faith community. In fact our church in South Paris is already preparing to host the fall meeting this October.

I wish you God’s blessings in each of your churches and thank you for the opportunity you have given me to serve the Congregational Christian Council.

Much grace,
Rev. Don Mayberry

Regional Reports

Western Region

Rev. Marilyn Glavin

Second Congregational Church in Biddeford had a Valentine's concert featuring Pam Carpenter and Potluck Dinner which was attended by many friends. Pam donated the proceeds to relief in Haiti through our National Association. They also are very excited to learn that they will be having NACCC missionary and friend, Charles Sagay, present with them for worship on May 9.. They have a new ministry of Prayer Shawls and have given out seven shawls so far to members and friends of the church. They had their fourth group with Heather Thompson from Beacon Hospice this spring. The topic was "Transitioning to Maturity." The Poetry Project which has been meeting for about a year has gotten involved in local poetry slams in Portland and now is planning a Taste of Maine fundraiser for the church featuring three well-known storytellers. Organist Margaret McEldowney, will be doing a concert later this year. **Sebago Center** pastor Cathy Plaisted reports that the Youth Group went to back to back concert events two weekends in February in Portland to hear Christian bands at the Civic Center. They also attended a Portland Pirates game. The church had a game day and spaghetti lunch in January to beat cabin fever. They have Sunrise Service on Easter on Douglass Hill, followed by a light breakfast. **First Congregational Church of East Baldwin** is abuzz with plans for the ecclesiastical council and anticipated ordination of their pastor, Natalie Blake. Both events are planned for May. In April they will have a "Noah's Ark in the Park" event where kids will be encouraged to bring their favorite stuffed animals, build a bed or a house for them along with their favorite magician, Mr. Magic. At the end of March a musical fundraiser was held featuring their own choir and other local musicians, notably friends from the **Community of Faith and Fellowship** in Newfield. Deacon Peter Stickney writes that although they had to deal with a broken furnace in the building they rent this winter, they were able to meet in a members home and were grateful for that. They continue with a vibrant prayer ministry which meets often in people's homes. Their supply pastor, Pat Jackman, is now also supplying for the **Hiram Community Church.** **Sebago Lake Congregational Church** had a potluck dinner following

worship on the day of their annual meeting in January. They were able to once again increase their mission budget. The church had a busy schedule for their Lenten activities, including a concert featuring Pam Carpenter, Pastor Art Rudman's daughter, who again used her talents as an offering to God for relief efforts in Haiti. Joint services were held with the **East Baldwin** church for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Easter Sunrise Service was held at the Sebago Lake boat landing followed by breakfast at the church.

North Deering Congregational Church reports that they were thrilled to host the Fall Fellowship meeting last October and to be with others in the Congregational Way. They continue in their many outreach programs in their building which allow God's presence to be seen and felt in people's lives. They had a "Lobster Event" in January where folks gathered, enjoyed two lobsters and fixings and shared the fellowship that can be found when people are together as God's family. They were pleased to send a substantial offering to Haiti through the NA Missionary society in immediate response to the disaster. News was received that the steeple at the **Congregational Church in Bridgton** has been paid off. We're sure Perley was very happy about that! **West Gorham Union Church** had a program running this Lenten season praying for 40 people in the next 40 days to begin a relationship with Jesus Christ. Pastor Gary Groves preached a five week sermon series titled "GOD WANTS TO USE YOU"

Central West Region **Rev. David Waltz**

Bingham Congregational Church- The congregation has truly discovered their Congregational roots and commitment since they have been without a pastor. Sunday worship continues each Sunday with a renewed enthusiasm and creativity. There have been hymn sings, and prayer meetings. It has been reported that on one Sunday, the men did one half of the worship service, and the women did the other half. Rev. David Walz and Rev. Nathan Richards have sent sermons to the deacons to be delivered during other Sunday services. It has been remarkable as this Christian community has pulled together in their dedication and commitment to continue the ministry of Christ. The search committee has been active and has since interviewed a couple of

candidates, however, pastoral leadership is fully realized and defined as looking to the Lord as a Savior, and not a hired hero.

Solon Congregational Church- Continues being active in ministry to the community. Every month this small congregation has put on fundraisers for themselves and for others. There has been concern in financial matters, yet, the faithful keep coming- rolling up their sleeves, and enjoying their worship, and fellowship, and ministry. Three years ago the two hundred year old belfry and steeple had to be taken down, due to the massive timbers rotting and becoming unsafe. The project cost was estimated well over \$80,000, but as the members reached nearly \$50,000 this winter, a local carpenter came forward and said it was enough. Rev. Richards reported that this summer the meetinghouse will be a center of activity as the Paul Revere bell will have a home against the elements, and, I might add, the beloved meetinghouse will stand on route 201- head and shoulders towards heaven!

A beloved member of this church community will be missed as Dale Redmond passed away recently. Dale was a treasurer for over ten years and a real "spark plug" in her enthusiasm and commitment. Dale received a new life from a liver transplant 25 years ago. At 53, she succumbed to liver failure, sending her love into the hearts of many.

Norridgewock Congregational Church- After forming a Search Committee and interviewing several candidates, the members unanimously extended the pastoral call to the Rev. Nathan Richards. Without a pastor this congregation also discovered a reawakening of commitment and determination as members "stepped up" to "do" the ministry. There is a renewed spirit and eagerness to move forward and grow. Rev. Richards is a "native son" and has resided in Norridgewock all his life. He and his wife, Kim, has raised their family there and have served many communities sharing their time, talents, and faith. The Richards family goes back several generations with a heritage of faith-full community service. In his over ten years of pastoral service to the Solon congregation and throughout this Kennebec River area, Nate was ordained in Solon last year. An overflow crowd from Bingham, Solon, Anson, Madison and Norridgewock, celebrated this historic and honored occasion. Nate and his family are widely respected and loved for their compassion and willingness to engage and work with congregations and celebrate the faith. God has indeed revealed His blessings through faith in Jesus.

North Anson Congregational Church- As many of our congregations go through another Maine winter, there is little time for hibernation. Within our church communities everything is “in full swing” and the days and weeks fly by. There is little chance of boredom to be felt by anyone unless it is self-inflicted! The rhythm and flow remains constant as the river flowing by our meetinghouse and parsonage. Various committees and groups enjoy fellowship and plan future events. A traditional Church Chowdah Suppa is coming soon with games and fellowship following just for the opportunity for people and families to enjoy a good meal and good time with each other. The Nursing Home ministry has been received gratefully as Alexander Walz tickles the piano, and deacon Frank and Pastor Dave weave stories, prayers and scriptures for a moment of shared inspiration and enthusiasm. Our Pilgrim Fellowship witnessed “faith in action” when a heart stopping accident occurred. The truck was totaled, and the teens were bruised, cut, and shaken. But all were treated and released. However our Youth minister, Glenn Conners, had to go through seven hours of surgery for a broken ankle. As one parent revealed, “there was an angel among them all, it could have been worse.” There was an outpouring of support, and perhaps, an even greater love for one another as the kids pulled together for each other, and for the Conners family. Glenn is still recovering but his spirit is far from down and out!

Pastors Nathan Richards, Mark Tanner and David Walz combined for an Ash Wednesday held at The First Congregational Church of Norridgewock. The pews were filled, the choirs combined, as all celebrated a Ash Wednesday service with the Imposition of Ashes and communion. Although not widely done among Protestant churches, many found the message very meaningful in an observance to the Lenten Season. A time that brings one to a greater understanding and commitment to what our Lord and Savior has done for us.

We will be enjoying the company of our Methodist brothers and sisters for a combined service on Maundy Thursday and then travelling to the Smithfield Baptist Church for a Good Friday observance. A Men’s Breakfast Fellowship began recently that met the Skowhegan Federated Church. Over twenty men not only came enjoying Christian fellowship but also a presentation done by Mike Marston who is a director of the Waterville Homeless Shelter. Pastors Tanner and Walz and all present felt there can be a real Somerset County awakening of good faithful men to do some great things for the Lord.

Although the communication has been slow or nonexistent among some churches, it is without a doubt that I can say with confidence, among our churches- miracles are still being witnessed and done- faithful people continue to engage themselves in what they believe- and the ministry of Christ lives on!

Respectfully submitted, David Walz

**Eastern Region
The Rev. Bob Carlson**

As we prepare for the Annual Meeting in Skowhegan we have much to be thankful for as local churches and as a Council. The winter has been kind to Mainers and hard on the Mid-Atlantic States. So as we approach our spring meeting we should have happy hearts.

We in the intervening months since our fall meeting were able to celebrate with the Rockland Congregational Church as they installed their new pastor, the Reverend Seth Jones... and with the Carmel Union Congregational Church as they installed their new pastor, Barbara Chodkowski. Also, we celebrated with the Veazie Congregational Church the ordination and installation of their pastor, the Rev. David Fox.

We are keeping in our prayers Ruth Guerette, Pastor of the Kenduskeag Union Church and the Rev. Patricia Moore... both who have experienced health issues during these past months.

EOCC Associate Pastor, Andrew Geaghan will be receiving his Master of Arts degree from Bangor Theological Seminary in May. We congratulate him on his tremendous accomplishment.

Also, we congratulate the Reverend Lynn Bradley, pastor of the First Congregational Church of Millinocket, who is receiving her Doctor of Ministry degree from Bangor Theological Seminary in May.

There will be a service of installation at 3:30pm on May 2, 2010 for the Rev. Doug Drown as pastor of the Saunders Memorial Congregational Church and the North Sedgwick Baptist Church.

Also I want to thank the wonderful folk at the Carmel Union Congregational Church for their tremendous energy, work and ministry as well as their friendship and support for me personally during my 9 months interim pastorate with them.

Finally, I want to thank the CCCME and the Churches of this region for its support and giving me the privilege of serving as your Ambassador for the Eastern Region. I agreed to come out of retirement to fill in for the Rev. Patricia Moore and the time has come to turn the reigns over to new leadership. One of the things I am most passionate about is that we need to make way for new ideas, new energy, new leadership... and we have the makings for that in our member churches. I look forward to the CCCME doing great things in the Kingdom.

Blessings and Peace,
The Rev. Bob Carlson

Washington County Region Rev. Francois Akoa-Mongo

Lubec Congregational Christian Church

The Lubec congregation had a wonderful Christmas Dinner for family and friends and in mid-winter enjoyed a Valentine Pot-luck. For the Lenten season we have a topical Bible Study on Wednesday evenings. Pastor Ed has started a bible study at a Machias boarding home on Wednesday pm. The Holy Spirit has been blessing our every step as we call out for His counsel.

East Machias-First Congregational Church

Our small group celebrated the Christmas season with Pastor's Open House on Christmas Eve and special music by daughter Jennifer Randall, vocalist. The winter season has brought the passing of Dorothy Gaddis, an active and longtime member of the congregation. A celebration of life was held on Saturday, February 20th, with our chimes ringing from the steeple, the county festival choir singing forth, and many testimonials to a long and faithful life.

The First Congregational Church of Machiasport

Our church is small in number but strong and full in Spirit. We enjoy meeting ever Sunday and

worshipping the Lord who reveals himself to each one of the congregation each day.

We have four new faces worshipping with us these days. They are very active. And we are blessed to have them. God willing, they will become full members of the church.

We continue having free public supper each month. The money comes from donations of church members. We enjoy doing this. The ladies spend the whole day cooking these meals. A group of singers from the University, Ukulele programs their singing sessions with the church. Each Sunday from 2:00 to 3:00 pm, the church conducts and worship service at Davis Estate Nursing Home in Machias. Some members of the church attend the two services. James Appleman, our Pianist plays music other there too. In preparation to the Easter, the pastor has been preaching on the seven words of the Cross.

God loves you so do the congregation of Machiasport.

The Marshfield Congregational Church

This beautiful church continues a strong fellowship every Sunday at 8am. In addition to Sunday services our pastor, John Sprague, and our music director, Elsie Larson, are active in our local Veteran's Home. They bring music or Bible study every week. In addition, both, plus others from our congregation, have spent special occasions at a local assisted living home as well.

Submitted by, Alexandra A. Campbell-Mickelinc

Items of Interest from our Association Churches

American Guild of Organists meeting at First Congregational Church of Searsport

Hello, AGO friends!

Please make plans to attend the next meeting of your Bangor chapter on Sunday, March 7, 3:00-5:00 at the First Congregational Church of Searsport. Carlton Russell, Julia Morris-Myers, Brian MacFarland, Kay Eames and Jane Schroeder will present some of our favorite, accessible works for organ. To give some focus to the program we have chosen practical, in-print works by recent or living composers, suitable for a Sunday morning. There will be an opportunity to peruse the music and we will provide you with a list of the works, as well.

There will also be time for cookies and conversation and we're hoping to get a group together for dinners at Anglers' restaurant afterwards (Dutch treat). There's no need to RSVP for the meeting, but if you'd like to go to dinner please let Julia know by Friday, March 5, so we can make a reservation: 667-9529 or jmorrismyers@myfairpoint.net.

The First Congregational Church of Searsport is embedded in the buildings of (but not a part of) the Penobscot Marine Museum. We're not meeting in the church itself, but in the parish building. Off Main St. [Route 1] in the middle of downtown Searsport, take Knox Brothers Avenue, just south of the main Museum building – a mostly brick building with a mostly white Museum sign in front -- and between and parallel to Mt. Ephraim Road and Church Street. This is a right turn for those going south on US 1, and a left for those traveling north.

You'll see the church spire as you turn onto Knox Brothers Avenue, and then the white parish building, with a large parking lot, on your right. The Allen Room (with its Rodgers organ!), where we're meeting, is on the ground floor and accessible by the rear door off the parking lot.

We hope this will be both a fun and helpful afternoon and we look forward to seeing many of you there. In the event of a major snowstorm the meeting will be moved to Sunday, March 21, same time and place.

Sincerely,
Julia Morris-Myers
Sub-Dean, Bangor AGO

Consecration Sunday an Effective Stewardship Model

Many churches search each year for an effective, faithful, and humble stewardship campaign – one that will lead the congregation toward a sustainable operating budget and most importantly to a sustained spiritual growth. Two of our sister churches, Dixfield Congregational Church and East Orrington Congregational Church, have found a model that has worked for them and would love to share it with you. Please contact either of these churches for more information on this Consecration Sunday model. Both Pastor Carl Schreiber and Pastor John Gensel would love to share their experiences with you.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE IMPERIAL CULT

Belfast Senior College Spring Semester

Arlin T. Larson, Instructor

A new understanding of early Christianity is emerging in which it is seen as an ideological competitor with the cult of the Roman emperor. Christianity did not emerge as a military, economic, or political rival to the Roman Empire, but it did confront it head-on and eventually conquer it in the realm of belief and allegiance. The two competed as paths to peace in the world. Rome had as its slogan "peace through victory," while early Christianity proclaimed a more quietistic path of justice and righteousness. These competing paths would later be characterized by St. Augustine as the "City of Man" versus the "City of God."

Concern for civilizations as objects of belief and allegiance has arisen in recent years as the Western democracies have been assailed by a radical Islam that questions their right to exist. Examining nascent Christianity in the Roman Empire sheds some light on these issues.

Maine Christian Musicians Guild

A new statewide ecumenical collective of musicians has recently been created. The Maine Christian Musician's Guild, started by Tom Polley from Sangerville, Maine, has members of many denominations and many musical styles. Over the Christmas season the MCMG collaborated for a tour of three Christmas concerts in connection with Operation Christmas Child. On their website, www.mainemusiciansguild.com, MCMG is described in the following way, "*The MCMG is composed of believers from numerous area denominations that have made the decision that the best way to minister using their talents is to do so without the expectation of gain or recognition. In this, we work under the unity of Jesus Christ to build up, encourage, and disciple those who feel called to tell the message of Christ using music. Understanding that we carry a heavy responsibility, we seek to be an example through our lives, allowing Jesus to live through us in our thoughts and actions. We seek the power of the Holy Spirit to keep us focused on what is true and right: the increasing of the kingdom of God, and a genuine love for the least of these*" One of the many goals of the MCMG is to connect churches looking for worship leaders for special events or on-going basis with musicians who will be able to faithfully fill those roles. Guild members range from pianists to jazz flute and saxophone, from solo acoustic worship leaders to full praise bands. If you are looking for support in your music ministries, the MCMG may be a good place to start. They may be found at mainemusiciansguild.com or by contacting Tom at tomp@ccmainehighlands.org.

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?

If you have an event or resource you would like to share with your sister churches in the next edition of The Spirit, please send them along to the East Orrington Congregation Church. You may email your submissions to pastorssecretary@eoccmaine.com or send them to East Orrington Congregational Church 38 Johnson Mill Rd. Orrington, ME 04474. Please state clearly that your article is for the fall edition of The Spirit. Make sure submissions are received by August 30, 2010 to be included in the fall edition.