



St. Paul's Church of Palmer
Universalist-Unitarian
Box 307, 1060 Central Street
Palmer, MA 01069-0307

March 2010

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NEWSLETTER

CHURCH CALENDAR

Services are at 10 AM
Fellowship Hall

March 7 Off Visiting! **NO SERVICE AT ST PAUL'S!** Field trip to Springfield
March 14 Open
March 21 Craig Nowak, Student Minister
March 28 - Palm Sunday - Rev. Jon Rehmus

***** Coffee Hour immediately following the Sunday Service in Fellowship Hall. *****

Dear Friends,

I did something this February that I've never done before. I watched the Super Bowl. Now, I'm not a football fan. I've never played the game, and honestly, I don't even know how it is played. I'm not sure what compelled me to watch the game this year other than Kevin and I had some friends over for a "Super Bowl party" (which is really one of our excuses to get Chinese takeout).

Still, I found myself fascinated with the performance of the New Orleans Saints, who were behind early on in the game but who ultimately won. What most impressed me was the teamwork they exhibited in the face of a formidable opponent. To win, the Saints needed to know something of their opponent. Knowing their opponent allowed the Saints to develop a clear goal or vision, figure out what they needed do to in order to move towards fulfilling that goal, and then execute their plan with athletic elegance and grace.

Each of us belong some form of team(s) in our life. Our team(s) often face daunting challenges and fearsome opponents. As the New Orleans Saints demonstrated at the Super Bowl, knowing your opponent, having a vision or goal and an understanding of what needs to be done to move in the direction of one's goal is essential, as is finding the courage and will to move forward even when the odds seemed stacked against you. All of this requires good teamwork.

St. Paul's is a team. It could not exist otherwise. As a church our opponent(s) are not star athletes like Peyton Manning of the Colts or even star preachers from other churches. For a church with a long history like St. Paul's, the strongest opponent(s) are the most subtle. Three opponents in particular are especially sly. The first

is complacency. The comfort of complacency is very alluring for it encourages meekness of vision and goals requiring little in the way of teamwork to achieve. The second is self-doubt. Self doubt convinces a team it can't do something *because....* Self doubt often grows into a collective "poverty mentality" which leads to material and spiritual frugality at the expense of the greater good. When a team adopts the belief that "we can't", it usually becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Lastly, inertia comes in and paralyzes the team. With complacency having tempered ambitious goals, and self doubt having convinced the team that nothing more is possible or desirable, inertia robs a team of its will to break the cycle.

Friends, as a team, awareness of, and a game plan to defeat, these opponents is essential not only for St. Paul's to grow, but to survive. I encourage you all to reflect on my thoughts presented here and start a conversation about them with your teammates. Be sure to listen, to truly listen to one another as well. With spring right around the corner I can think of no better time to welcome such a conversation and the potential for new ideas to burst forth to enliven our hearts and minds.

Peace and blessings,
Craig

Coffee Hour

We would like to say a big THANK YOU to Verna Besaw for preparing goodies for coffee hour week after week. Coffee hour is the time when we get to touch base with and care about each other and Verna makes that time "sweeter" for all of us.

Anniversaries and Birthdays

March 2	Verna Besaw	March 22	Bonny Rathbone
8	Paul Balog	29	Jackson Balog
12	Dan Windoloski		
14	Diane Faulkner	March 16 –	Karen Papineau and James Keydel anniversary
15	William Faulkner		

Food Share

Winter is still not over! Many folks are struggling to make ends meet. Please feel free to place your non-perishable items in the Food Share box, located near the coat closet in Fellowship Hall. Palmer Food Share at 39 Walnut St. is open on Tuesday and Friday from 10 am to 11:30 am. Those in need must register prior to receiving food, and then are eligible to receive food every 3 months. You can even mail monetary donations to Food Share, 39 Walnut Street, Palmer 01069.

Church Greeters

Gordon and Irene Christiansen and Verna Besaw have graciously offered to be greeters on Sundays. If you would like to also greet, you can call the church office at 283-8185.

Community Meals

The Community Meals are held on the 4th Saturday of each month. If you would like to help out you can give Barbara Stone a call at 413-283-5257. If you would like to donate a food item or make a monetary contribution, you can also let Barbara know. The March meal will be held on **Saturday, March 27**, beginning at 5:00 pm.

FYI

Rick Dundale – You have done a fabulous job in keeping our sidewalks clear this winter. You are so appreciated. Thank you.

Daylight Saving time begins on March 14. Remember to turn your clocks ahead!
St. Patrick's Day - March 17.



March 20 -- Spring has arrived ! Hip Hip HURRAY !!!!!

Board of Trustees Meeting is March 16.

Mary Grzebien, mother of our friend John, passed away on February 15. Our prayers and thoughts go out to John and his family during this difficult time. John Grzebien has been attending St. Paul's for many years and is also a friend to many of us.

UNIVERSALIST CONVOCATION 2010

May 14-16, 2010

First Universalist Society of Rochester, NY

Keynote: The Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed, "Dragged Kicking and Screaming to Heaven"

For more information please go to nmuc.org/Convo

Start thinking about the spring and summer tag sales—especially when you are cleaning out your attics or basements. You can let Gordon Christiansen know what you've got!



EASTER FLOWERS

Easter is April 4 this year. If you are interested in putting some lovely flowers on the altar, you can let Barbara Stone know.

From one of our parishioners: **In Haiti, There is Anguish**
To the tune of St. Christopher
("Beneath the Cross of Jesus")

In Haiti, there is anguish that seems too much to bear;
A land so used to sorrow now knows even more despair.
From city streets, the cries of grief rise up to hills above;
In all the sorrow, pain and death, where are you, God of love?

A woman sifts through rubble, a man has lost his home,
A hungry, orphaned toddler sobs, for she is now alone.
Where are you, Lord, when thousands die—the rich, the poorest poor?
Were you the very first to cry for all that is no more?

O god, you love your children, you hear each lifted prayer!
May all who suffer in that land know you are present there.
In moments of compassion shown, in simple acts of grace,
May those in pain find healing balm, and know your love's embrace.

Where are you in the anguish? Lord, may we hear anew
That anywhere your world cries out, you're there—and suffering, too.
And may we see, in others' pain, the cross we're called to bear;
Send out your church in Jesus' name to pray, to serve, to share.

* * * *

Mother to daughter upon entering church: "Do you know why we have to be quiet in church?"
Daughter: "Yes, because everyone is sleeping!"

Little Susie, a 6 year old, complained "Mommy, I've got a stomachache". "That's because your stomach is empty," mom replied. "You would feel better if you had something in it."
That afternoon the minister visited and, in conversation, remarked he had been suffering all day with a severe headache.
Susie perked up. "That's because it's empty," she said. "You'd feel better if you had something in it."

Snowflakes are just Angel Kisses