

*The Second Congregational Church
289 Main Street
P.O. Box 492
Douglas, Massachusetts 01516
www.2ndcongo.com*



Congregational Chatter

January 2012

Volume 40, Issue 1

A Note from our Pastor

Another New Year has come and it's the time when people make their resolutions, their plans for how this year will be different than last year. If you made a resolution I hope you do better than most. A poll I saw online a few days ago found that over a third of people who made new years resolutions had already broken them. They didn't even last one week! Very few resolutions last past a month. If you've made them in the past you've probably experienced this; I know I have. But even though we know we'll probably break them soon we still want to make resolutions year after year. Why?

A New Years Resolution is, essentially, a way of acknowledging the things that we wish were different about ourselves and our lives. Most of the time we prefer to ignore the things that we know, deep down, are wrong with our lives. But the new year brings renewed hope and we long for this to be the year that things change. So in small ways we admit to ourselves that we need to change, that our lives need to change. And we make resolutions holding on to just a little hope that this might be the year.

But there's a problem. These resolutions depend on us to happen. But we're the ones who got ourselves into the messes we're looking for a way out of. So how can we depend on ourselves to fix things? The truth is we can't. But there's good news.

In Revelation 21 God declares something amazing. He says the He is making everything new. This means that He is actually going to do what we can't; He is going to accomplish what we have failed to do year after year. He is going to fix everything that is broken and make everything right. This includes all of us. He is going to do away with all of our flaws and failures and make us like His Son.

This means that we can have real hope in our lives now, in spite of our flaws and failings. But we have to start by realizing that we can't fix ourselves. We have to admit that only God can make us right and only God can make our lives right. When we do this we'll find that God is already at work in us and in the world all around us. He already sent Jesus to live, die and over come death itself so that we could be made like him.

So this year let your resolution be to trust in the One who has the power to bring real change. Pray to Him for the things you wish were different and trust in Jesus to make you new.

Blessings,

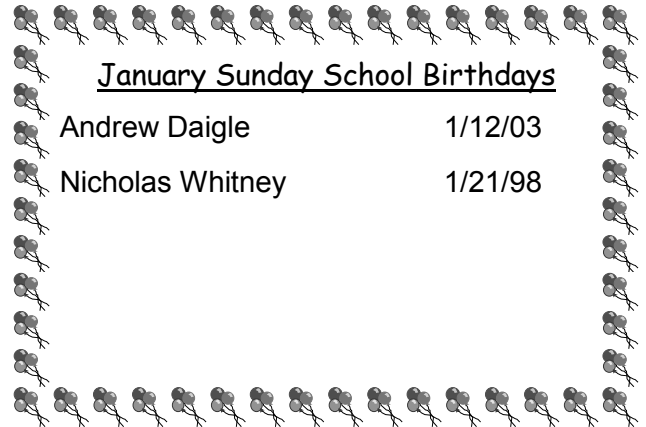
Pastor TJ

Prayer for January (from TODAY, The Family Altar, Jan./Feb., 2011)

Thank you, Lord, for giving us new life. Whether we have lived as Christians for many years or we are just beginning our life in you, help us grow closer to you each day. Amen.

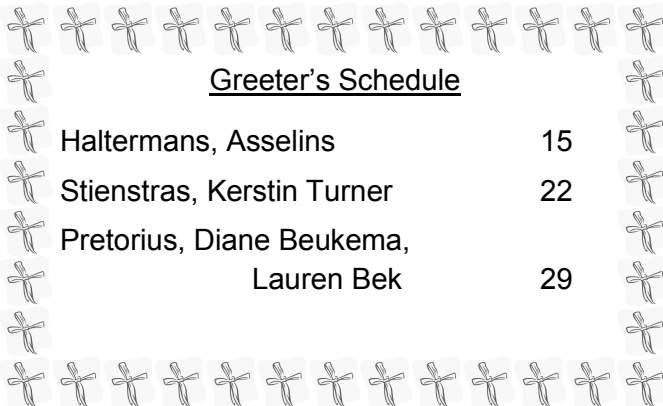
Important Dates and Events

- January 10 - 7:00 p.m. - Joint Board Meeting
- January 14 - 9:00 a.m. - Removing decorations
- January 21 - 9:00 am - Missions packing day
- January 21 - 9:00 am - Church Work / Cleaning day
- January 24 - 7:00 p.m. - Deacon's Bible study



January Sunday School Birthdays

Andrew Daigle	1/12/03
Nicholas Whitney	1/21/98



Greeter's Schedule

Haltermans, Asselins	15
Stienstras, Kerstin Turner	22
Pretorius, Diane Beukema, Lauren Bek	29



January Nursery Schedule

Jen Klenk, Melissa Asselin	1
Deborah Speckhard, Michelle Broderick	8
Michelle Broderick, Heather Carlson	15
Raylena Richard, volunteer needed	22
Kerstin Turner, volunteer needed	29

Daily Wisdom/Daily Quote (from heartlight.org)

“Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

— 1 Peter 1:13, NIV

“Many things I have tried to grasp, and have lost. That which I have placed in God's hands I still have.”

— Martin Luther

January 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:00am - Sunday School 10:00am - Morning Worship	2 7:00pm - AA Meeting	3 9:15-10:30am-Women's Study/Little Lambs 3:00-6:00pm - People's pantry	4 7:00pm - Choir rehearsal 8:00pm - Praise band rehearsal	5 6:30am - Men's prayer group	6 6-7:30pm - TGIF	7 9:00am - Removing decorations
8 9:00am - Sunday School 10:00am - Morning Worship	9 7:00pm - AA Meeting	10 9:15-10:30am-Women's Study/Little Lambs 3:00-6:00pm - People's pantry 7:00pm - Elder's/Deacon's meeting	11 7:00pm - Choir rehearsal 8:00pm - Praise band rehearsal	12 6:30am - Men's prayer group	13 6-7:30pm - TGIF	14 9:00am - Removing decorations
15 9:00am - Sunday School 10:00am - Morning Worship	16 7:00pm - AA Meeting	17 9:15-10:30am-Women's Study/Little Lambs 3:00-6:00pm - People's pantry	18 7:00pm - Choir rehearsal 8:00pm - Praise band rehearsal	19 6:30am - Men's prayer group	20 6-7:30pm - TGIF	21 9:00am - Church Work day 9:00am - Missions packing day
22 9:00am - Sunday School 10:00am - Morning Worship	23 7:00pm - AA Meeting	24 9:15-10:30am-Women's Study/Little Lambs 3:00-6:00pm - People's pantry 7:00pm - Deacon's Bible study	25 7:00pm - Choir rehearsal 8:00pm - Praise band rehearsal	26 6:30am - Men's prayer group	27 6-7:30pm - TGIF	28
29 10:00am - Morning Worship	30 7:00pm - AA Meeting	31 9:15-10:30am-Women's Study/Little Lambs 3:00-6:00pm - People's pantry				

Peoples Pantry

PANTRY NEWS

People's Pantry Hours: The pantry is now open Tuesdays from 3:00 - 5:00. The pantry is open to anyone living within the Blackstone Valley or its surrounding communities. If you know of someone who could use a hand during these hard economic times please tell them about the pantry. If you need more information please speak with Brenda Roy or call her at 508-476-1880.

Volunteers: The Pantry is looking for volunteers to help on Tuesdays. Volunteers are needed any time between 1:00 - 5:00 pm. If you would like to help and would like more information please speak with Brenda

Announcements

- We need to make sure that there are no peanuts or peanut butter in any food at the church because there are some people who are very allergic. We need to keep this a safe environment for all. In addition food / monetary donations are needed throughout the year. Please see Joyce Martinsen with any questions. Thank you for your cooperation.
- We are looking for volunteers to help staff the nursery during worship service on Sunday mornings. There are many slots open for the new year. We need two adult volunteers for each Sunday. All volunteers need to fill out a Cori form and return it to the church office with a copy of their picture I.D. The sign up sheet is on the nursery door. The speaker is working so all nursery volunteers will be able to listen to the worship service. Thank You.
- Jeanie is looking for old newspapers for a project for TGIF. Please leave them downstairs in the children's corner where she will collect them.

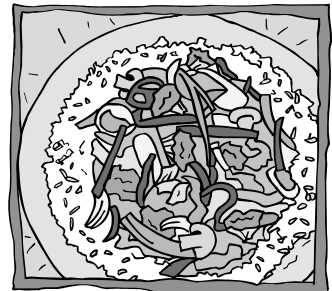


Healthy Hearts



Fried Rice

- 1 lb ground beef or turkey
- 1 green pepper - chopped fine
- 1 red pepper - chopped fine
- 1 small onion chopped fine
- 1 TB minced garlic (in jar is fine)
- Salt + pepper



GF wheat free Tamari sauce (or traditional soy sauce)
2 cups of cooked white rice

Scramble meat in large frying pan until meat is brown and cooked through. Take meat out and set aside in a separate bowl. Next, sauté peppers and onion in the meat drippings. Add a little olive oil if you need to. Next, add the minced garlic and salt and pepper to the onion and pepper mixture. Cook until soft. Next, add the meat and cooked rice to your pan and sprinkle your GF tamari or soy sauce over the top. Add as much or as little as you like. Stir and set on low until all the flavors come together. Serve with fresh pineapple. This is a quick and easy one pot meal. Happy New Year!

Greeters Needed

We need your smile! We are looking for a few greeters each week for Sunday morning to smile and hand out bulletins. For visitors this will be the first impression they have of 2nd Congo and it is incredibly important! It's only a few extra minutes on Sunday mornings. Interested? Talk to Kerstin Turner (774-285-0670) or kerstinmturner@gmail.com.

FERTILIZER FOR FAITH

January 3, 2012

Scripture Reading: Luke 13:1-9

“Leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. “

Luke 13:8

The Bible’s original languages sometimes carry important nuances that get lost in translation. Today’s Bible reading is a case in point. In Luke 13:8, the steward of a vineyard prevents an unfruitful fig tree from being destroyed by telling the owner to “leave it alone for one more year.”

The Greek word translated as “leave it alone” is important in the New Testament. It is also often translated as “forgive.”

The tree that did not produce figs for three years was not cut down right away, despite the master’s orders—why? Because someone interceded for the fruitless tree. He said to the master, “Forgive.”

Does that sound familiar? It’s a summary of the entire gospel. Our sin renders us unfruitful and fully deserving of punishment. But in Jesus Christ we see how God’s mercy triumphs over judgment (see James 2:13).

In another place in Luke’s gospel, Jesus teaches that we “forgive everyone who sins against us” (Luke 11:4). Do you see how Jesus puts the words of the steward into action?

That’s the grace of the gospel, offered freely to all. But notice that the fig tree would have to bear fruit eventually, or it would be cut down. Our Master says similarly to us, “Unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for graciously interceding for us. Use us to tell others about your love so that they too can experience the lifesaving power of your forgiveness. In your name we pray. Amen.

Peter Hoytema

© 1939 - 2011 reFrame Media / Back to God Ministries International

TGIF

T.G.I.F.

Thank God
It's Friday



T.G.I.F. is held every Friday night from 6:00 - 7:30 pm (except during school vacations). This program is for kids from ages 5 - 12 and includes games, crafts, prizes, Bible time and snacks. It is free and open to the public. Hope to see you there.

If you have any questions please contact Jeanie Haggstrom. In addition, we are looking for volunteers to help out during TGIF this year, please contact Jeanie if you are able to donate some time to helping out.



The schedule for the month of January is as follows:

Jan 13th - movie night

Jan 20th - mystery night

Jan 27th - snow party

The Treasury of David

By C.H. Spurgeon

A new year! What will it bring to each of us? Like Pastor Bill said last Sunday, one thing is sure we all will have changed. So being of an age when my three score years and ten are close upon me, thoughts turned to the books that I would wish to have with me in a more narrow space than I presently occupy. The ones God has used to change my thinking and my life. This for me is not a difficult choice. Next to my Bible I will chose The Treasury of David by CH. Spurgeon.

The Psalms to me are an ever expanding place where God has walked with his people through all generations. On the high mountain peaks where one catches a view of the glory and majesty of God's sovereign power, authority and wisdom as reflected in Psalm 104:1-2 which says: "Bless the Lord o my soul! O Lord you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty. Covering yourself with light as with a garment. Stretching out the heavens like a tent." In the low dark valleys of suffering, of inner pressures, and of danger, Psalm 23:4 says, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for you are with me." and Psalm 91:3 reads, "Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler." Along the everyday seemingly mundane paths where we are most likely to be tripped up Psalm 37:23-24 reminds us "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delights in his way. Though he falls he shall not be utterly cast down. For the Lord upholds him with his hand."

Spurgeon brought his vast knowledge of scripture together with his personal knowledge of God's love and grace to give the church an enduring gift in these volumes. He gives context and comment in a warm and lively manner that says much about this man's experiential faith. His understanding of the nature of man and of history made him a man of his time. Living in the kingdom of God, he saw his world through the lens of scripture.

The author of our ladies bible study this year, Kathleen Neilson, says of the Psalms, "The Psalms are cries from the kingdom. Even though subsequent generations have learned that God's promised kingdom is larger and greater than the nation of Israel with Jerusalem and it's temple at the center, these cries still ring with universal and eternal truth. They celebrate a King like David and Solomon- only much greater. And they point out the path of obedience and blessing for all the subjects of that King [as well as the contrasting path of disobedience and destruction.] The Psalms are the songs and prayers of a people called to live in that community of faith."

The Treasury of David is available from C.B.D. It is a three volume set, copied in its original wording. It may seem a daunting task to struggle through, but compare it to a treasure map; one that you knew for sure would find you much gold which would be all yours that you could spend and use. No one could take it from you, and better still, you would start finding this gold right away- not at the end of a long journey but even at the very beginning. And the very best thing is that there is no end to this journey, because it is a kingdom journey.... A Kingdom without end. It seems fitting to me our prayer as a church for the new year would be Paul's prayer in Colossians 1: 9b- 12 "and to ask that we may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding that we may walk worthy of the Lord ,fully pleasing him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

Post Script: The Treasury of David is also available to read on line at WWW.spurgeon.org/treasury/pref.html. There is also an abridged version called "Daily Treasure" But as our infamous power failures have recently shown us..... A valued book in hand is worth a million on line.

Yours in Christ,

Marge Wallis

If anyone has a book they have read that they would like to share, we encourage and ask you to send a brief review to the church. We will try to include one such review (approved by Pastor Bill) each month in the newsletter.

Missions

Second Congregational Church is again sending a team to serve our impoverished brothers and sisters in the Dominican Republic. Please help. We are looking for donations of both medicine and gently used clothing. Medicines that would be helpful: Ibuprofen and acetaminophen (infants, children, adult), vitamins (infant, children, adults, and prenatal), Benadryl (children and adult), hydrocortisone/antibacterial cream or ointment, loratidine (Claritin or Alavert), pepcid/Tums. To avoid problems with customs, please make sure the expiration dates are Sept 2012 or later. Thank you so much. Collection box is in the back of the sanctuary.

Missions News

Don and Suzy Warren
Serving with Equipping Ministries International
Fall 2011

Our hearts are broken by the much neglected, shy Batwa people (Pygmees) who live deep in the forest of DR Congo. When first introduced, Don immediately saw their plight and met with the local chiefs asking, "How can we help?" With no church, school, or medical facility in this area, 3,000 people are estimated to live in forested small villages of 40-60 people. Understanding their desires and needs, Equipping Ministries is helping clear land, prepare lumber, and begin construction for a new church plant, school, and medical facility. Working hard with Equipping Ministries, the Pygmees are volunteering most of the labor at the site they chose, deep in this triple canopy rainforest.



Don, Suzy and 17-year-old daughter Braman were all able to join in this project. When Braman returned home she was asked, "What do you think it meant to the Batwa people to see you as a family all come?" She grinned and wisely replied, "They knew for *sure* that we loved them!"

EMI has located a Batwa Pastor, teacher, and several others that will work with their own people to make a difference presently and for future generations. Upoki, a graduate of African Bible U. in Kampala is our ministry partner and translator to the Batwa people. A tree nursery is being established to ensure that the forest dwelling Batwa children will continue to have a forest to dwell in for generations to come.

Helping them see what they have, *not* what they don't have. EMI is helping them through your continued support. This brings Hope, where there has been only despair, to these that are certainly some of the "least of the brethren." Here the trees are very BIG and the Batwa are very small. We felt like giants, yet as we worked side-by-side, we saw the largeness of their hearts. They weren't asking for a hand-out, but a hand-up. **This happens because of YOU!**

-
- Three years ago Equipping Ministries began partnering with a Christian elementary school in Bunia, DR Congo which was started 15 years ago with 40 students, now enrolling over 600. EMI continues to be impressed with the commitment of the staff, some of whom have been together for all 15 years, even during the Ituri Crisis that had many people fleeing the area because of violence and terrorism. These children are being taught and equipped to make a difference for the future.
 - After hiking six hills of the Blue Mountains around the Boga area in DR Congo, a site was selected by Equipping Ministries in conjunction with Bishop Williams of the Anglican Church of Congo for the newest FM radio station that has the potential to reach out to six different language groups, which includes the often overlooked Batwa people, crossing the valley where the Semliki River runs into Lake Albert and across to the Rwenzori Mountains.



Organized in 1834

*The Second Congregational Church
289 Main Street
P.O. Box 492
Douglas, Massachusetts 01516*

*Pastor William Broderick
Associate Pastor T.J. Turner*

January 2012

Congregational Chatter



To:

Note:

Items for the church bulletin should be in to the office by Wednesday.

All items for the February Parish Visitor are due by January 23rd. Items may be dropped off at the office or emailed to 2ndcongregationalchurch@verizon.net. We encourage your articles, thoughts, book reviews, etc.

Please visit our website at www.2ndcongo.com