

GCF-News. . .

Goffstown Christian Fellowship

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"Where families meet and friendships form."

February 2012

Love God, love others, and as we go, make disciples.

Repurposed and Renewed Men's Ministry

After some thought and several conversations during the Christmas Tree Sales, Bill Johnson was moved by the Holy Spirit to get together the men of the church as a group for a couple of reasons. First, Bill found that the men genuinely like to spend some time together but it became apparent that the men need an excuse to do so...so there is no better excuse than to take care of our church building so we as a body can effectively minister to the needs of others. Second, the men could develop relationships with each other have time to learn something new about each other as they worked together caring for the church buildings!

To get the ball rolling Bill scheduled a Saturday morning planning and brainstorming meeting at church which developed a list of what needed to be done at the church and parsonage. The men developed the list together and prioritize the items weighing what was most important to begin with. A "to-do" list for collecting information and pricing for the projects were completed and distributed to the men. Action items were assigned to collect the information for each project. The jobs and projects are being scheduled to get the work started and checked off the list.

Bill said "Another benefit of joining together for this...as a ministry to the body and its members...is that as we do our work at church we might become aware of people either in our own body or in the community who might need a hand...and we could as a group help them out."

The result of the first meeting was the naming of this repurposed men's ministry the "Hammering Hittites" has become the motto for the men who have renewed their interest in the maintenance of



our historical church. The Hittites were known for their aggressive military ability. They served as generals in King David's army. So as they began their first workday on Saturday, January 28 the Hammering Hittites removed the old refrigerator from the basement, reprogramed thermostats, replaced burnt out lights, and patched holes in walls. Their biggest accomplishment was starting on cleaning out the maintenance room and making a real workbench to work on.

Thanks not only to all who came and participated in putting together the list, but many thanks to all who came and began the process. It's not meant to be exhaustive list just it's a place to start. The process has begun, the list is being checked off, we have started... we'll gitt'r done!

Any man wishing to join the "Hammering Hittites" can contact Bill through the Men's Ministry's new e-mail address at men@gcf-nh.org.

Pastor's Corner

Rev. Robb Dix



THE SHEPHERD'S HEART

I have preached a few times lately on loving one another and felt I should write something on that. Then I remembered this story and found this rendition and this is better than anything I could write. He who has ears to hear...

Juan Carlos Ortiz sat comfortable in his chair while the congregation finished the final stanza of a song. He had labored in pray for many hours on what to say to the congregation. The title of his message was rather simple, Love One Another, but he thought that the message was very important given the spiritual life of the congregation.

When the band played the final note of the song, Pastor Ortiz stood up to walk to the pulpit but as he stood, God spoke.

"Juan." "Yes, Lord."

"How many sermons have your preached on theme of loving one another?"

"I don't know Lord, maybe a dozen or more."

"And how many times have your exhorted the congregation in other sermons to love one another."

"I don't know Lord, maybe a dozen or more also."

Have they done any good?

The conversation with God ended the moment Pastor Ortiz positioned himself behind the pulpit. The Lord's words were ringing in his ears. He thought to himself, "I have preached dozens of sermons on love and what good have they done. This congregation still spends more time looking after their own interests more than others. They barely know one another. They are not friends with each other. They barely talk to one another after the church service." Juan Carlos stood silent in the pulpit. His congregation waited for him to begin his sermon. Pastor Ortiz began his sermon, "Love one another." He then went and sat down.

People looked at one another thinking that they had missed something. They were accustomed to sermon of nearly an hour not 3 seconds. The congregation did not know what to do. After what seemed like an eternity, Juan Carlos walked back to the pulpit. The people repositioned themselves in their pews assuming that he would now deliver his message. Juan Carlos again said, "Love one another," and then he again sat down. Heads really began to turn. Some began to murmur. No one knew what to do. Pastor Ortiz again waited and then he again walked to the pulpit. He waited for the congregation to become settled and then as before the only words he delivered were three, "Love one another" before he returned to his chair behind the pulpit.

Now a general stirring moved through the congregation. People began talking to one another, everyone asking the other if they knew what their pastor meant. Finally, an elder stood up and spoke. He said, "I think that I understand what Pastor Ortiz means. He wants me to love you."

(Pointing to someone in the pew behind him) "But how can I love you, when I do not know you." With that, he introduced himself and began to meet the people behind him. Others got up from their pews and introduced themselves to people they had seen but not met. Phone numbers were exchanged. Dinner invitations extended. Arrangements were made for financial assistance. Before the service ended, someone raised enough money for bus tickets a family could return to their village. Another man arranged employment for a man out of work and someone offered an apartment a homeless family. With just three simple words he delivered his most powerful sermon. 1

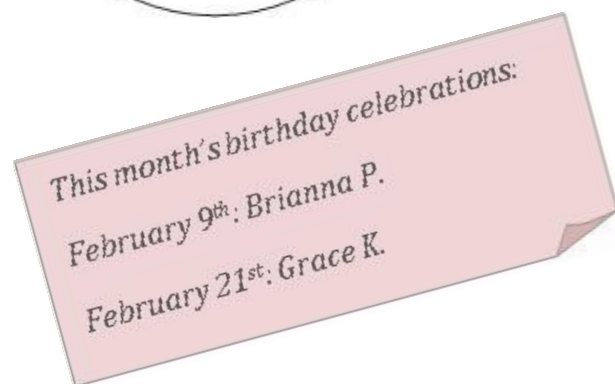
1 Juan Carlos Ortiz, from a lecture delivered at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Mentor, OH, November, 1981.

News from In HIS Steps Learning Center

Mrs. Valerie Guerette, director valerie@ihslc.org

Mrs. Donna Puffer, teacher

603-497-4432 – www.gcf-nh.org



"Thank you, thank you, let's all sing.
Thank you, God for everything!"

On most mornings, this is the song you'll hear as we begin our day together at IHS. We try to instill an "attitude of gratitude" with the children, and always begin our prayer time by thanking God for the many blessings He so graciously bestows upon us. On a recent morning, we wrote down the things that each of the children said they were thankful for: friends, family, people, food, snow, roller coasters, monster trucks, school, dinos, God, pirates, turtles, Baby Jesus, lady bugs, butterflies, fire trucks, fire fighters, fish, sleds, and police officers.

As adults, we can really learn from their example. Try to take a moment, or two, each day to thank God for all the "little" things He has blessed you with....I encourage you to start by thanking Him for your wonderful children!

*"And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love."
1 Corinthians 13:12-13*

This month, we'll focus our activities on the theme "All You Need is Love," and really look at the ways God shows His love, how he asks us to show love to others, and discover how much He really loves the little children!

Our featured letters for February will be R, S, and T.

**Registration for the 2012-2013 school year has begun! Please contact us for more information about joining our school family!
603.497.4432**



Be sure your kids have the hottest February vacation ever right here at In HIS Steps! Each day, your children will be part of fun Bible learning they can see, hear, touch, and even taste! As kids learn about Jesus' love, they'll also enjoy hands-on Bible adventures and daily video visits from Chadder Chipmunk, create Bible point crafts, participate in team-building games, learn cool Bible songs, and prepare and eat some tasty treats! Your young islanders will even choose a daily challenge before heading home—an exciting way to live out what they've learned!

This program is for children ages 5 to 10 years. We'll meet Monday through Thursday from 8:30 to noon each day, and extended hours will be available for families as well.

**Registration forms and additional information is available by contacting the school office. Space is limited, so please get in touch with us soon!
Mahalo!**

Announcements

In the event of bad weather, there will be Sunday service. With Pastor Robb living in the parsonage there will be no cancellations. If we experience bad weather, everyone is cautioned to **be SAFE** first and foremost if coming!

Catch us on Cable Access GTV/Ch16 during the week (check the weekly time schedule at <http://goffstowntv.com/>):

Monday 5:00 pm

Thursday 8:00 noon

Tuesday 10:00 pm

Friday 9:00 pm

Wednesday 4:00 pm

Saturday 4:00 pm

Sunday 2:00 pm

Bible Studies and Small Groups

Walking Deeper With Jesus



“Wednesdays ” are designed to help us gain a deeper knowledge of who God is and to understand the depth of His character through the bible. So we can grow in our faith and be more equipped to share God’s Word with others. Come as you are and join us for a potluck supper at 6pm or come for the bible study at 6:45 pm.

Mid-Week Youth Meeting is taking a break for the next 16 weeks the youth leader will be in class.

Thursday Night - Women’s Prayer Group at 7 pm in the church. For more information on these groups call the office at 497-5625 or women@gcf-nh.org .

Does your prayer life need a lift? Try a daily devotion on-line:

Our Daily Bread – <http://odb.org/>

My Utmost for His Highest – <http://utmost.org/>

God Calling - <http://www.twolisteners.org/God%20Calling%20TOC.htm>



Children’s Church for children 4-12 years old after praise and worship during Sunday service for more information contact 497-4432 or childrenschurch@gcf-nh.org .

Two by Two Nursery for babies and toddlers 0 to 4 years old after praise and worship during Sunday service for more information contact 497-4432 or nursery@gcf-nh.org .

Goffstown Christian Fellowship

Leadership Team

Rev. Robert Dix

Donna Puffer, Treasurer

Claude d’Anjou

Sandra Chabot, Church Secretary/Clerk

The Team meets on the second and fourth Monday of the month.

Newsletter Editor: Sandra Chabot, gcfdsl@myfairpoint.net

What are you giving up for Lent?

If you haven't figured it out yet, Lent is not a second chance at your New Year's resolutions that you may have already given up. The word "Lent" is believed to come from the German word *lenct* meaning "spring" or "fast".

On Wednesday, February 22 the Lenten season for 2012 will begin with the observation of Ash Wednesday. Both Eastern and Western Orthodox churches around the world set aside this season for a special time of prayer and fasting. Over the years this tradition has been most closely associated with our Catholic brothers and sisters but many Protestant denominations also observe this time of spiritual renewal and refreshing of our relationship with Our Father God.

Lent is one of the oldest recorded observations of the Christian church going back to an early church father Irenaus of Lyons who wrote in c.130-c.200 about this preparation time before Easter. At this time the Lenten fast lasted only three or four days not the 40 we currently observe. The longer time came about in 325 at the Council of Nicea where the 40-day Lenten season of fasting was discussed. A fast of 40 days is associated most closely with Jesus right before he began His ministry but it is also associated with the fasts of Moses and Elijah in the Old Testament. Also with the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years. Therefore the number 40 holds a deep biblical significance. These are the reasons our forefathers in the faith decided on using the 40 days to prepare for Easter. From Ash Wednesday to Easter there are 46 days, but Sunday is the Sabbath, associated with Jesus resurrection and was considered a feast day. Therefore it is not included in this time of fasting preparation.

In the beginning the fast associated with Lent began with fasting all day with only one small meal at suppertime. Throughout the years the seriousness and strictness of the season has diminished from the one meal a day to no observation of the season at all. Many of the Christian churches each year try to call the believers back to consider this time of prayer and fasting, preparing their minds and hearts for Easter. Lent is also a time to reconsider our relationship with God. Has our time with Him slipped away to the point of being non-existent? When was the last time we sat in His presence and thought about the suffering of Jesus or acknowledged His substitutionary death for our sins? As Lent nears these are things to consider.

In recent years many ministers have called the believers back to a time of prayer and fasting for the blessing of revival to begin. As we work our way through the month of February consider this time honored tradition what you might do to prepare your heart by giving up some worldly desire or activity through the discipline of self-sacrifice -- fasting. Lent continues to symbolize the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ a period of time to deny ourselves of certain foods, drinks and activities which serve as a reminder of the sorrow and joy of the Death and Resurrection of a truly loving and compassionate Jesus Christ.

Fasting is not meant to be a cruel punishment but a deliberate denial to help us draw humbly closer to the one who loves us so much He died for us. So, what will you give up for Lent this year? Giving up a measly offering might gain us a whole new life and relationship with Christ.

Is there *Common Ground* within the Christian Churches?

The Nicene Creed is the most widely accepted statement of faith for the Christian believers. It is the 'Common Ground' for East Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, Calvinists, and many other Christian groups committed to the doctrines it teaches. The Nicene Creed:

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son].
With the Father and the Son
he is worshipped and glorified.

He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic [*meaning the church universal*] and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. AMEN.