



Epiphany

# The Tidings

A Publication of Tabernacle  
Congregational Church, UCC  
January 2007



## Worship Schedule January 2007

Dear Tabernacle Friends and Family,

Listening for the infant who changes everything  
- we enter our new year together.

Crackling fires, swishing skis, gurgling tubs or  
quiet star-lit nights, may be your inspiration to  
listen for God's voice.

Listening for God is a worthy occupation. In a  
culture of so many pre-occupations, listening for  
God is downright counter-cultural.

**SO DO IT - JUST DO IT!**

You may have your very own epiphany!

Happy New Year  
Rev. Laura



**January 7, 2007**

*Epiphany 1/Communion*

Sermon: **Paying Homage**

Scripture:

Isaiah 60: 1-6

Matthew 2: 1-12

**January 14, 2007**

*Epiphany 2/Martin Luther King Sunday*

Sermon: **Expect Miracles**

Scripture: Psalm 36:5-10

John 2:1-11

**January 21, 2007**

**ANNUAL MEETING**

Sermon: **What is the Good News  
to the Poor?**

Scripture: Psalm 19: 1-10

Luke 4: 14-21

**January 28, 2007**

**YOUTH SUNDAY**

**All Church Retreat  
February 24 at the Mass.  
Conference in Framingham.  
9:30am-2:30pm**

Sponsored by the Timothy Project. This retreat  
will include Breakfast, Workshops, Lunch and a  
day of Spiritual Retreat. Please, please, please  
plan to come. For more information you may  
speak to Rev. Laura.



**Important Meeting!**  
Faith Financial Group  
will meet on  
Sunday, January 7,  
from 8:30-9:30am  
to prepare for our  
Annual Meeting.

## A Tabernacle Christmas Journey

Our walk through Advent was the preparation for and anticipation of the celebration of the coming of the light into the world. And what a celebration it was!

Along the way were the mileposts of Advent bible study, the children's Christmas pageant, the Blue Christmas worship service, a Sunday morning worship service, a Sunday afternoon Family service and, finally and joyfully, the Christmas Eve worship service. How did we manage FOUR worship services in one 24-hour span, three of them in just ten hours?

I would like to know from long term members if such a thing has ever happened before. My sense of things is that this is another of many firsts for Tabernacle over the last three years and for that we must give credit to the vitality, creativity and divinely inspired leadership of our Pastor, Rev. Laura Biddle. Her spirit is contagious affecting all those who worked so hard to make it happen and the congregation as a whole who turned out in large numbers.

Advent became Advent-ure through the study of the nativity in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. We explored the mysteries and circumstances surrounding the visitations of the angel Gabriel to Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph. We wondered at Mary's journey from Nazareth to Elizabeth's home in Judea and we discussed the social, cultural, personal, religious, astrological and political considerations of Jesus' birth in a manger. Our bible studies with Rev. Laura are always stimulating, thought provoking, inspirational and humorous. I strongly recommend them to all.

But Advent's expectations of joy can evoke a different response in some people. For those who are grieving, depressed, lonely, unemployed, abused, spiritually lost or abandoned, the heightened expectations of the season can simply sharpen the contrast to their own situations and perhaps accentuate their suffering. Thankfully and blessedly, there is a Blue Christmas service at Tabernacle that is a healing service.

Dim lights, soft piano music, candle lighting, prayer, meditation, the singing of carols and a sermon of comfort can soften the hard edges of life if only for a short while. To be able to share our "blues" with other members in a group setting is a reminder that we are not alone in our suffering, that others are walking along with us sharing empathy and our love for each other. I swear by it as real therapy, real healing.

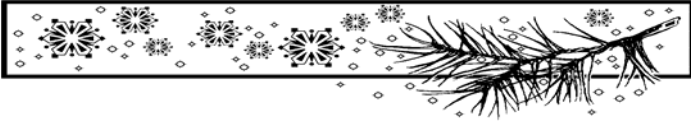
The children's Christmas pageant was one of the best I've seen. Our altar was graced by the visits of darling little angels, wise men, shepherds, a king and, of course, the king of kings. The songs and music of the church's youth were delightful and heart warming. Rev. Laura's puppeteering told the story of Christmas and amused and excited the children – children of all ages. No service would be complete without live music and this service featured an abundance led by Rev. Laura, the musicians in the church and members of the choir.

There is not enough room in this newsletter to describe Christmas Eve at Tabernacle. A professional string quartet playing carols as the congregation gathers, candles lit in luminaries all around, red and white poinsettias everywhere, so many handshakes, hugs, kisses, smiles and wishes for merriment. The exultant lifting of voices in song by the light of candles in our hands, the joy, hope, peace, love and good will to all was palpable.

As the Christmas Eve service progressed, my thoughts turned for a moment to the situation of the world outside and how blessed we were to have this joyous moment in our lives, a moment filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. With all the barbarity and evil in this world, ours was a moment of utter civility. In our celebration of the coming of the light into the world, that light shined down upon us and filled us to overflowing with God's grace.

In the dark of an early Christmas morning, I began my five hour drive to visit family in upstate New York, a loving family with delightful little children. On the road, the sun rose in my rear view mirror reflecting the light of God's love. As I reflected on our Christmas journey together, I was thankful for my travelling companions.

Blessings to all. Donald Whitehead



## A note from Rev. Laura

Dear Friends in Christ,

I wanted to thank you for your ongoing and faithful support of my ministry here at Tabernacle. As we begin this new year, I am grateful for your trust. The foundation upon which we have built our relationship feels solid and hopeful.

In the spirit of direct communication and trust, I want to let you know about my upcoming medical procedure. On January 26, 2007, I am having foot surgery. My Podiatrist agrees with me, and other health professionals, that it is time to address the pain I experience daily.

My expectation is that I will need to rest for at least one week after the operation. This means I will miss worship on January 28 and February 4. My hope is to be back at the church on Monday Feb. 5 - with my foot elevated and in a cast. But, enthusiastic and energetic nonetheless.

Michael Kuras, a member of the congregation, has graciously purchased a small palm/computer so that I can communicate with you and write sermons during my recovery. Nancy Lutts is lending me a lounge chair which will allow me to elevate my feet while I write. If all goes according to plan, I will be racing Bill Abernethy in a wheelchair by the middle of February.

Like all of us who have ever dealt with health concerns, I trust in prayer; especially your prayers. And I believe in God's healing presence.

Thank you ahead of time, for your support.

**Rev. Laura**

## Tabernacle Day at Fenway Park!

A Trip to the  
Ball Game



Joel Richardson, is planning a day at Fenway! He will be organizing a fun day at an upcoming Red Sox Game. He is not sure what games will be available but he is hoping for a Sunday game. We would like to have at least 20 people express interest in going (with a maximum of 110) to get a group rate. If you would like to attend or if you have any questions, please contact Joel at 978-744-5291 or email at [JoelRichardson@verizon.net](mailto:JoelRichardson@verizon.net)

## 2007 Concert Series

Mark your calendars now for a Concert Series at Tabernacle, sponsored by the Sacred Arts Committee.



★ JOIN US ★  
2007 CONCERT  
SERIES

Concerts will be held on Sunday afternoons. The first will be on January 28 at 4:00pm featuring Patty Dillon and David Cabral.

February's concert will be held on February 25 and will feature Celtic Music and March's concert held on March 25 will feature Folk music. So mark your calendars now and stay tuned for more information.



## From The Christian Education Director

Greetings and Salutations in the New Year!

As the twelve days of Christmas fade, we enter the church season of Epiphany. This season marks the time when the three wise men arrived in Bethlehem to greet the new King, the Prince of Peace, wondrous counselor, the baby Jesus. With them they brought special gifts fit for the King of Kings, Frankincense, Myrrh and Gold. Frankincense was a holy oil from the time of Moses. The gift connects Jesus with the great prophets and kings of ancient Israel. In ancient Israel and before, myrrh is one of the great perfumes massaged onto bodies as the women prepared their dead for burial. The gift of Myrrh foretells the death of Jesus. And the gift of gold, a very precious metal used as currency, is correct for every king who comes into our lives. (See the song *We Three Kings of Orient Are* number 143 in the Red Hymnal and the Christmas Story in Matthew 1: 18 – 25)

What are the gifts that we can bring to lay before the manger? The little drummer boy plays his drum, “the shepherd brings a lamb, the wise man does his part, yet what can I give him: give my heart.” by Christina Rossetti

This month of January the youth groups and children will be collecting jars of baby food and diapers for both Citizens for Adequate Housing and HAWC. Please place your gifts before the manger set up in the Bigelow Room. To start this collection off, the youth groups ( PF and JYF) will meet on Sunday, January 7 after church for a fun (and educational) Epiphany Star Party. We will wear crowns, hunt for stars and decorate treasure boxes. We will tell the story of Epiphany by burning incense and eating cake!

In Sunday school classes the Godly Play classes will look at Epiphany, the boy Jesus, and baptism. What a full month for them. I wonder what the boy Jesus felt when he was old enough to enter the Temple?

I wonder if any of the children will remember their own baptism day? I wonder how the water feels on your head?

The older grades will also be exploring the boy Jesus, Jesus in the wilderness, and baptism. They will be making Jesus dolls with Tracy Briery and singing songs of baptism, and playing games that focus on the topics of the temple.

On Saturday, January 20, the JYF will spend the night here at Tabernacle for a sleep over dedicated to hunger. We will discuss hunger issues, play games, bring in a speaker and hold a rock-a thon for hunger. The money collected will go towards the Souper Bowl of Caring collection taken on February 4 after church. To conclude the hunger study by the youth group the JYF will serve the Mission Dinner on Monday, January 22.

There will also be food donations collected for the Salem Mission in conjunction with the Souper Bowl. The Souper Bowl of Caring event is fast becoming the largest youth-led weekend of giving and serving across the nation. Each year our own participation grows. For more information go the [www.souperbowl.org](http://www.souperbowl.org).

Our final youth event of January will be on Sunday, January 28, when the high school kids organize and lead us in worship. To facilitate this event all high school age kids will receive emails and snail mails from Betsey about the date of worship service, the topic, and dates we will meet to organize the music, the words and the sermon. Parents please note that we would like to have the high school kids in church for the two Sundays preceding the 28<sup>th</sup>. We will try to meet then to coordinate the Youth Service.

Shalom,  
*Betsey Bennett*



## PF Calendar

**January 7:** 12:30–2:30  
Epiphany Star Party

**January 21:** 12:00-2:00

Cook dessert for JYF Mission Dinner

## JYF Calendar

**January 7:** 12:30–2:30 Epiphany Star Party

**January 20-21:** 6:00PM

Sleepover, Rock-a-Thon, church in the morning

**January 22:** 5:00PM

Serve dinner at the Salem Mission

## Senior High

**January 14 and 21:** 10:00AM

Church service and worship meeting

**January 28:** 9:00AM Youth Sunday Worship

## Godly Play Training

Saturday, January 27, 2007 in Marblehead at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Lafayette St.

Marblehead 9 AM – 3 PM

Cost is \$25.00, includes all materials and lunch (CE has funds to cover this)

Register with Betsey by **January 14**

## Teachers Needed



## Teachers Needed!

We are in need of teachers to volunteer in the Rotation classrooms, grades 4 – 8. If you think you might be interested please speak with Betsey. We would love to add at least two people to our roster, if not four.

## Christian Education Committee Meeting

Sunday, January 14, 2007 at 8:30 AM

## Teachers Meeting

Sunday, January 21, 2007 at 9 AM

## Nursery Coverage



## NURSERY WORKER

We have hired Brenda Murtaugh, a neighbor to Mary Jo Bennett. Brenda will start in the Nursery on January 7. Please introduce yourself and make her feel welcome. She will be in the nursery from 9:45 AM – 11:30 AM.

## *From an email forward:* **When a Pet Dies**

"Some of you may know that our 14 year old dog, Abbey, died last month (8/23). The day after she died, my 4 year old daughter Meredith was crying and talking about how much she missed Abbey. She asked if we could write a letter to God so that when Abbey got to heaven, God would recognize her. She dictated and I wrote:

"Dear God,  
Will you please take special care of our dog, Abbey? She died yesterday and is heaven. We miss her very much. We are happy that you let us have her as our dog even though she got sick. I hope that you will play with her. She likes to play with balls and swim before she got sick. I am sending some pictures of her so that when you see her in heaven you will know she is our special dog. But I really do miss her.

Love,  
Meredith Claire

PS: Mommy wrote the words after Mer told them to her"

We put that in an envelope with 2 pictures of Abbey, and addressed it to God/Heaven. We put our return address on it. Then Mer stuck some stamps on the front (because, as she said, it may take lots of stamps to get a letter all the way to heaven) and that afternoon I let her drop it into the letter box at the post office.

*Cont. on page 6*

For a few days, she would ask if God had gotten the letter yet. I told her that I thought He had. Yesterday, for Labor Day, we took the kids to Austin to a natural history museum. When we got back, there was a package wrapped in gold paper on our front porch. Curious, I went to look at it. It had a gold star card on the front and said "To: Mer" in an unfamiliar hand.

Meredith took it in and opened it. Inside was a book by Mr. Rogers, *When a Pet Dies*. Taped to the inside front cover was the letter we had written to God, in its opened envelope (which was marked Return to Sender: Insufficient address). On the opposite page, one of the pictures of Abbey was taped under the words "For Meredith." We turned to the back cover, and there was the other picture of Abbey, and this handwritten note on pink paper:

"Dear Mer,  
I know that you will be happy to know that Abbey arrived safely and soundly in Heaven! Having the pictures you sent to me was such a big help. I recognized Abbey right away. You know, Meredith, she isn't sick anymore. Her spirit is here with me—just like she stays in your heart— young and running and playing. Abbey loved being your dog, you know. Since we don't need our bodies in heaven, I don't have any pockets!-- so I can't keep your beautiful letter. I am sending it to you with the pictures so that you will have this book to keep and remember Abbey. One of my angels is taking care of this for me. I hope the little book helps. Thank you for the beautiful letter. Thank your mother for sending it. What a wonderful mother you have! I picked her especially for you. I send my blessings every day and remember that I love you very much. By the way, I am in heaven and wherever there is love. Love, God, and the special angel who wrote this after God told her the words."

As a parent and a pet lover, this is one of the kindest things that I've ever experienced. I have no way to know who sent it, but there is some very kind soul working in the dead letter office. Just wanted to share this act of compassion .

## Prayer Shawl Ministry

Prayer Shawls were recently given to:  
**Grahame Smith and Richard Bentley**  
**Peter Davis**  
**Lois Glenn**  
**Amy Everitt's nephew~Alex**



## Touching Prayer Shawl Stories

Dear Rev. Biddle,  
Thanks to you and those in your congregation who support and participate in your Prayer Shawl Knitting Program. My good friend, Martha Bagby, sent one of these gifts to me and my recently deceased partner of 33 years, Grahame Smith. Unfortunately, Grahame was not alive when the gift arrived, but I love to feel its special comfort of peace. God Bless you and your Congregation.  
Richard Bentley

*A donation was received by Richard Bentley to help support this special ministry.*

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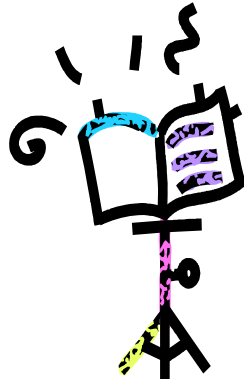
Stella received her prayer shawl many months ago when she was first diagnosed with cancer. The shawl accompanied her to the doctor; to chemotherapy and radiation; kept her warm when she napped; went to the nursing home and eventually comforted her at the Kaplan Hospice Center. Stella passed away a few weeks ago with her beloved prayer shawl at her side.

The comfort these shawls give is unmeasured. Please help us by knitting at least one. Talk to Jane Dionne for directions and yarn.



## Music Notes

Thanks to all who performed during the Offertory in December. There are openings to fill for January and February 2007. The sign up sheet is in the Bigelow Room on the sign up wall. And thanks to all of our choir members who add their talents to the worship services each week.



Special thanks to all of our Christmas Eve service performers, and to the wonderful musician in the string quartet: Kurt Piemonte, Alan Hawryluk, Mary Fabiszewski and Jud Takata. Special thanks to our Christmas Eve musicians, Collette Benoit, David Cabral, Alex Grover, Will Maier, Valerie Peterson, Bob Strom, Jen Strom, Bridget Sullivan, Becky Young and Alice Wathne.

And special thanks to Raeleen George for her beautiful Preludes, Postludes and all the music in between.

**As always, the choir welcomes new members through out the year. You do not need to read music, just bring a willingness to sing and join in the fun and fellowship of music and song. Rehearsals are on Thursday at 7:30pm.**

The Adult Choir gathers at 9:00am each Sunday to rehearse before the worship service. Best wishes to all for a Joyous New Year!  
Patty Dillon

## Memorial Fund

A gift in memory of **Bill Olsson** was given by Chuck Parthum; in memory of **Simone Burke** by Peter and Roberta Pool.

The Memorial Fund is funding the on-going project in the Deacon's/Bride's room which will make the room more

friendly to mothers and children who feel the need to leave the sanctuary.



## With Warm Thanks

Thank you to everyone who donated and purchased pops towards my braille printer. I'm getting closer to my goal of \$4,300.00, because of caring people like you. Thank you Kayla Bentas



## Lindsey Peterson Runs Her First Boston Marathon with the MS team.

Lindsey will be running the Marathon in honor of her Uncle Dennis who has suffered from MS for the past 12 years. If you would like to contribute to the MS team you may do so by sending your donation to her in Somerville at 141 Morrison Avenue Somerville, MA 02144 All checks should be made payable to the National MS Society.or by linking onto her website at: [www.msnewengland.org](http://www.msnewengland.org). Or checks may be given to any member of the Peterson Family as well, they should be made out to: The National MS Society.

## Belated Birth Announcements

Congratulations to **Patty and Jim Dillon** on the birth of their grandchildren:

**\*Emma Katherine Dillon**, born 12/07/06 to Jamie (Jim's son) and Lisa Dillon.

**\*Anna Raquel Dillon** born 12/21/06 to Kristen (Jim's daughter) and Julian Morelli.

**\*Zephaniah David Wildasin Marean** was born on 8/29/06 weighing in at 6 pounds 7 ounces. Zeph's father is **Rev. Eric Marean** of the Georgetown Congregational Church and his mother is our own **Sara Patek Marean** who served us for four years as student minister and for one season as our Christian Education Director. Congratulations can be sent to the Revs Marean and Zeph at 56 Cole Rd in Chester NH 03036-4302.

## Did You Know?



Continuing with Rob Maiers' Sermon that was preached during this past summer. His sermon was on The 1629 Covenant which is frequently used during our services Kay Piemonte

....And this is what many of them including the protagonists Mark and Phebe Honeywood encountered: "Phebe stared around her curiously, noting some rough earth dugouts roofed with bark, and tiny log huts beneath the trees, and thought with a thrill that these must be Indian dwellings. 'I wonder how far it is to town?' she said to Mark. But Mr. Higginson overheard her, and to her mortification stopped and turned looking down at her. 'This is the town, mistress—' he said; his burning eyes showed reproof and a faint amusement. 'This the highway—' He pointed down the path, 'and these our houses—' His long thin hand pointed to the bark dugouts. "Oh to be sure, sir—' she stammered, turning scarlet. The minister nodded and continued to walk. Phebe followed silently, striving against dismay. On her father's land these dwellings would not have been thought fit to house the swine."

They really needed to bind themselves together to even survive in those conditions. Imagine, we complain about a little hot weather!

The founders of Salem who were founders of our church and founders of our country, made an arduous journey, 65-70 days at sea in relatively small sailing vessels with very cramped living spaces, in order to have the opportunity to walk in the ways God revealed to them. They were Puritans and some were Separatists. The Separatists wanted to be entirely free of the ways of the Church of England while the Puritans thought that some of the practices of the Church of England could be purified without a total break.

With this basic history in mind, I had started to wonder where the Salem Covenant came from. Who wrote it? Who adopted it? In preparing to tell this story I did some reading, and would you believe that our history is closely tied to the people of Scrooby, England? Well, the radical movement of Puritans and Separatists dates to about 1580 in England and was centered at Cambridge University where many future ministers studied.

The church in Scrooby welcomed some of those ministers who questioned the practices of the Church of England. In particular they questioned the hierarchic authority of the Church and believed that individuals had a direct relationship to God outside of the word as delivered by the Church of England.

One of the basic tenets of this new thinking about the relationship of the individual to God and to a church community was the concept of the covenant. Each church was to adopt a covenant or agreement among the members stating their mutual understanding of how they would relate to each other, to the church and to God.

So here we are at Tabernacle Congregational Church in Salem, Massachusetts in August 2006 and we are looking back to events that took place very near this site in 1629. It's summer and many of us have or will take vacation trips. When we plan a trip we have to decide what to take and sometimes there isn't room for everything we'd like to bring. Now just imagine planning to move two or three hundred people from England to Naumkeag in 1629!. You'd need ships and crew, food, supplies, what a shopping list! According to Salem historian James Duncan Phillips, the cargo included "ten thousand bricks, coal, iron, steel, and lead were 'to be cast in to ballast of the ships.' A very good outfit of clothes and equipment for one hundred men, evidently to be soldiers, was supplied, from shoes to 'waist coats of green cotton, bound about with red tape.' Arms for one hundred men were also supplied, including musket, swords, bandoliers, etc., eight pieces of heavy ordinance, and the necessary powder and shot. Vast supplies of provisions were also bought. The drinkables began with forty-five tuns of beer, and rather the smallest item was the six tuns of water." It was going to be a long trip to a new land after all. Phillips also mentions a memorandum written before February 23, 1629 that lists some other important items not to be forgotten, "To provide to send for New England: (1) Ministers, (2) Patent under Seal, (3) A Seal, (4) Men skilful in making of pitch, of salt, (5) Vine-planters, (6) an enumeration of seeds, fruit stones, plant roots and supplies of all sorts." So, how many of us put "Ministers" at the top of our "must take" lists?

They brought 2 ministers to Salem in 1629 and soon the Covenant was written and the church founded. Here is Sidney Perley's account from his *History of Salem*.

Stay tuned next month for the last installment.



## January Memorial Flowers

January 7: In loving memory of **Mary C. Parthum** by Charles Parthum and Family.

January 14: In loving

memory of **Our Parents, Thomas V.; Alreda C. and Katherine DeLoffi and William G. Young** by Tom & Audrey DeLoffi.

January 21: **In celebration of my wonderful family** by Barbara Bowman.

January 28: In loving memory of **Helen T. Bourget** by the Carter Family.



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## Steeple Lighting

The church steeple is lighted for the month of **January in loving memory Mr. & Mrs. William B. Munroe; Mr. & Mrs. Arthur W. Dorman and Kenneth L. Dorman** by Marion Dorman, Judith Moulton & Priscilla Kirby.

## Steeple Lighting Dates Available

I have the following months available June through August of 2007, and October and November 2007 and several months for 2008. If you are interested in lighting the church steeple in memory of; in celebration of or to honor someone please contact Liz Nelson in the church office.



## This Month's Birthdays

### January Birthdays

The following members and friends are celebrating birthdays this month:

4	Joe Bennett
7	Holbrook Phelan
8	Andrew Lutts
8	Abigail Clark
8	Natalie Binder
14	Jean-Paul Dionne
14	Evelyn Borish-Wayson
16	Julia McInnes
21	Jack MacLean
25	Jonathan Chesbro
26	Cindy Burnham
27	Carlton "Brud" Lutts
31	John Dionne



## From Our Financial Secretary

2007 Weekly Offering Envelopes are now available. Please pick up your envelopes located in the Bigelow Room on Sunday

mornings. Thank you, John Phelan, Financial Secretary

## TWA

The TWA will be meeting in the Bigelow Room on **Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>**. This month we'll be talking with Rev. Laura about Memorial Services and end-of-life plans. Hostess will be Judy McInnes. As always, new members are welcome.

## Pennies for Blankets

It's not just pennies. We will accept any coins or dollars. Please help us to meet our goal of 200 blankets this year. See any member of TWA with your donations.

