



# Good News

North Prospect Union UCC

Volume 27, Issue: February 2010

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Dear Friends,

The start of a new year is so often a time of promise and hope. But for the people of Haiti, 2010 has thus far brought sorrow and suffering. On January 12, a 7.0 earthquake devastated Haiti and its capital city of Port au Prince. Prior to the earthquake, 80% of people in Haiti were living in extreme poverty. Now even more are.

As I think about the love and compassion that are so palpable at North Prospect, I know we are all asking how to help. Giving money is one clear answer. Praying is another. But in the months and years ahead, as people rebuild lives that now lay shattered, there will be a need for many other kinds of assistance.

Right now, there is 'round the clock media coverage from Port au Prince, as

camera crews follow journalists around the city and try to assemble a narrative out of the shreds of data out there: the clogged runway at the airport, the paucity of medical supplies, stories of hope as people are saved and of sorrow as new bodies are discovered. We are also hearing further testament to the extraordinary spirits of the people of Haiti. In the midst of chaos, people remain peaceful and offer kindnesses to neighbors and strangers who are there to help.

But in time, the cameras will be packed up and the world's attention will shift to the next headline. That's how the media cycle works. But it's not how faith works. Churches have a unique role to play in times like this and it has to do with being an ongoing witness to the lives of others.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## *Ash Wednesday Service and Supper*

February 17, the first day of Lent, you are invited to an Ash Wednesday service, which will be followed by a light supper. Worship will begin at 5:30, supper will be around six. If you can bring either sandwiches or soup, please speak with Corey O'Brien or Jasmine Beach-Ferrara .



# Upcoming Events

February 10

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

**February**

**2 Tuesday**

Groundhog Day

**3 Wednesday**

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet for the Homeless)

**6 Saturday**

10:00 AM Craft Making

**7 Sunday**

9:30 Choir Rehearsal  
11:00 Worship - Rev. Rose  
Carvelli Coffee Group

**10 Wednesday**

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet for the Homeless)

**12 Friday**

Lincoln's Birthday

**13 Saturday**

10:00 AM Craft Making

**14 Sunday**

9:30 Choir Rehearsal  
Sandwiches for Outdoor Church  
11:00 Worship - Rev. Rose  
Beyerman/Bodwell/McKeown Coffee Group  
12:40 Tough Questions  
Valentine's Day

**15 Monday**

Newsletter Deadline  
President's Day

**17 Wednesday**

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet for the Homeless)  
5:30 PM Ash Wednesday Service and Supper  
Ash Wednesday

**18 Thursday**

7:00 PM Trustees  
7:30 PM Executive Council

**20 Saturday**

10:00 AM Craft Making  
*Pizza and Movie Night. Pizza at 6:00; Movie at 6:30*

**21 Sunday**

9:30 Choir Rehearsal  
11:00 Worship - Ms Beach-Ferrara  
Ramsay/Parsons/Weinstein/Kelley Coffee Group  
Lenten Series, 12:30

**22 Monday**

Washington's Birthday

**February**

**24 Wednesday**

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet for the Homeless)

**27 Saturday**

10:00 AM Craft Making

**28 Sunday**

9:30 Choir Rehearsal  
Diaconate 9:30  
11:00 Worship - Rev. Rose  
*Creativity Sunday*  
Addison Coffee Group  
Lenten Series, 12:30  
12:40 Tough Questions

**March**

**3 Wednesday**

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet for the Homeless)

**6 Saturday**

10:00 AM Craft Making

**7 Sunday**

9:30 Choir Rehearsal  
11:00 Worship - Rev. Rose  
Carvelli Coffee Group

**10 Wednesday**

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet for the Homeless)

**13 Saturday**

10:00 AM Craft Making

**14 Sunday**

9:30 Choir Rehearsal  
Sandwiches for Outdoor Church  
11:00 Worship - Rev. Rose  
Beyerman/Bodwell/McKeown Coffee Group  
Lenten Series, 12:30  
Daylight Savings--set ahead 1 hour

**15 Monday**

Newsletter Deadline

**17 Wednesday**

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet for the Homeless)  
St. Patrick's

**18 Thursday**

7:00 PM Trustees  
7:30 PM Executive Council

**20 Saturday**

10:00 AM Craft Making  
*Pizza and Movie Night. Pizza at 6:00; Movie at 6:30*

August 10

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September 10

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March 10

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July 10

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October 10

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November 10

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December 10

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January 11

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## *Where's the Vision?*

A blog entry by Dudley C. Rose for MLK Day



I preached on Habakkuk 2:1ff this morning, where God tells the prophet to write the vision plain and large so that a runner can see it. Since Martin Luther King Jr., we have had very few people who were able to speak passionately and succinctly about God's message of justice and compassion. I'm afraid the liberal church has gotten so defensive about speaking of God that our rhetoric has lost its theological and moral bite and sounds only political. At the same time some on the right have learned the Habakkuk strategy all too well. They have become very good at putting their vision out there in plain, easy to read, moral and theological terminology that hides their fear-mongering and hate

behind a veneer of respectability. They are making a mockery of God's visions and dreams as they promulgate nightmares. It would be great if we had more prophets speaking the rather straightforward message of the Sermon on the Mount. Instead we've gotten so fussy parsing power that we can't even preach give away one of your coats if you have two without qualifying who shouldn't be asked to do it, and who shouldn't get one. Sometimes I think we on the left have made the church irrelevant and therefore flounder at providing a convincing moral mandate. I've heard a lot of people say that King's "I have a dream" speech has become trivialized by people who use it to feel good but do little. Maybe so, but I sure wish we had someone offering God's vision the way King did.

## *Tough Questions Study Group ~ February 14 and February 28*

More than a dozen people gathered after worship on January 24th to hear their tough questions answered by the ministers. The questions, anonymously gathered, prompted more questions and lively discussion. Often what appeared to be a straight-forward query had complex, multi-layered answers. It was a fun and stimulating forty minutes, and everyone agreed we needed more time, so there will be opportunities to "stump the ministers" on the second and fourth Sundays of February after we have had a bite to eat and greeted our friends at coffee hour. Dudley and Corey are open to answering questions that may occur to you during the week, or during the sermon even, but submitting them before the meeting will give the ministers a chance to do any necessary research and provide a more complete answer. Look for the box during coffee hour, or email or phone in your tough questions!

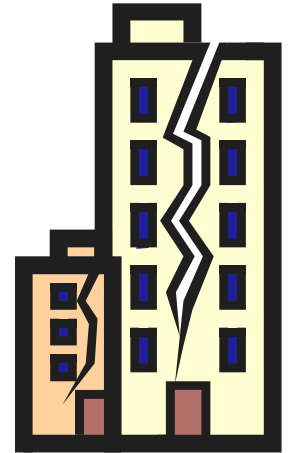


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We are part of a tradition that was quick to respond to this tragedy. The day after the earthquake, the United Church of Christ launched an emergency appeal for Haiti. Congregations are being asked to assemble emergency hygiene kits and to raise funds for the people of Haiti. “In the midst of broken rubble and broken bodies, we offer you this prayer of intercession, asking that you hear and hold all that we tender — this our prayer for the people of the Republic of Haiti,” begins a prayer that the UCC has shared with local congregations.

I recently spent a morning volunteering at the Haiti Relief Center, which people in the area can use to try to reach friends and families in Haiti. There, I joined a group of eight friends from my home church and played with kids as their parents made calls and assisted with counseling those who needed some extra support. Volunteering like this is one way to help.

But there are many other ways, including special collections, fundraisers, advocacy for debt relief for Haiti (a nation that has been saddled with a heavy debt burden since its independence), and ongoing prayers. As was the case with Hurricane Katrina, the months and years to come will bring new needs, including relocation, rebuilding, and basic living supplies. We are called to respond, now and in the future.



I join you in prayers for our brothers and sisters in Haiti and in thanks for what you have already done to help them.

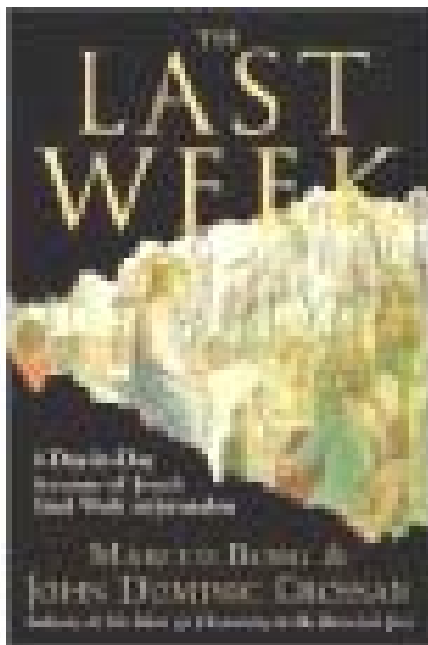
In Peace,  
Jasmine



## *Winter Closing Announcements*

If you're wondering whether worship will be cancelled due to winter weather, just tune turn the radio to WBZ 1030AM or the TV to WBZ Channels 4 and TV38 (channel 14 on some cables).

## *Lenten Book Group ~ March 14 and March 28*



*The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem* will be the subject of a study group next month. Written by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan, this book has been described as being at once enlightening and challenging to those readers looking for an interpretation of the events of Holy week which includes recent Bible scholarship, while remaining respectful of those readers who want to read the Bible literally. Either way, we will move into the final week of Lent with a fresh look at the familiar scriptures. If you're ordering the book from Amazon.com, remember to go by way of the NPU website, so the church benefits from your purchase.

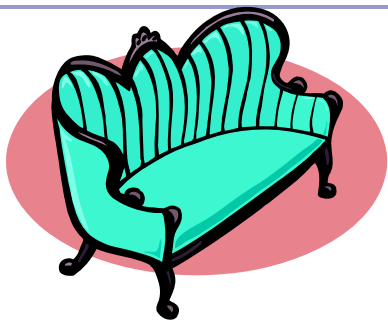
## *Movie & Pizza Night ~ February 20*

*Accidental Hero*, also listed as *Hero*, is a great movie with Geena Davis and Dustin Hoffman. Pizza at 6:00; movie at 6:30.



# \$1990.70

amount earned by the October fair, the final check being \$130 for jams and jellies.



## *Household Goods Recycling of Massachusetts*

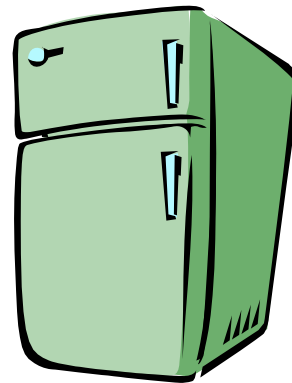


What a great way to help folks in need and the environment at the same time!

In 1990, Ira and Barbara Smith offered their garage as a drop-off point for friends and neighbors to bring furniture and household items to establish a home for a refugee from El Salvador who had arrived in the US with nothing. There was such a generous outpouring that the Smiths found themselves with goods left over. From that ad hoc beginning grew the independent, not-for-profit Household Goods Recycling of Massachusetts. It moved from the garage to a church basement to its present facility in Acton and now its 200 volunteers work with more several hundred social service agencies to help over 4,000 families a year to rebuild their homes and start their lives over. They help people in more than forty communities, including the more affluent towns; people who need assistance rebuilding their lives due to fires, floods, or domestic violence, vets down on their luck, recent immigrants, and folks coming out of shelters and halfway houses.

In the past five years alone HGRM has saved over 92,000 large items and 43,000 boxes of smaller items from landfills, and they have helped 14,000 households in 123 towns in three states.

How often have we ourselves put a perfectly good item at the curb (and maybe even paid for its removal) because we couldn't find anyone who needed it? HGRM will send a truck for your sofa, mattress and box springs (twin, full and queen), kitchen and dining room tables, chairs, dressers, linens and rugs, even televisions and large appliances. Anything and everything necessary to set up a household except food and clothes is welcome. All items must be in good condition and appliances must work. The rule of thumb is, would you give this to a friend or neighbor? The website, [www.hgrm.org](http://www.hgrm.org), has more suggestions and specific things that are not accepted. Or call 978-635-1763.



David Krebs's family has set up a blog to keep folks updated. You may sign the guestbook, and send your greetings to David without even looking for a stamp. And if you enter your email and check the right box, you'll get the weekly updates on Dave's progress. Check it out at <http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/davidkrebsphd>.



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