

Andover Congregational Church News

By Judy Evans

Andover Congregational Church

I trust a good time was had by all who attended our pot-luck supper and Talent Night on Sunday, March 19. It certainly was a full evening, with a lot of talent from the area. It was nice to have folks from surrounding towns in attendance.

We are planning to have a pot-luck supper followed by some kind of program on a somewhat regular basis. Watch for details.

Also, thanks to all of you who supported our flea market and bake sale. Our annual plant sale will be held in the Grange Hall right before Mother's Day.

We will continue our monthly food sales on the third Sunday of each month. Please call me if you would like to place a special order. Stop by around 10:30 AM at the Grange Hall to purchase fresh baked goods. Proceeds go to the Grange Hall Restoration Fund.

Easter Week

Maundy Thursday service will begin at 7 PM. The church will be open from noon to 3 PM on Good Friday for prayer and reflection. Easter Sunrise Service will be held on the hill at the Graves Farm starting at 6 AM followed by breakfast in the Grange Hall. Easter morning worship starts at 9:30 AM with



Talent Night - Front: Mariah Lansdown-Howard. Middle (l-r): Brandon King, Sam Wesley, Amber Lansdown, Andrea Lansdown-Powers. Back (l-r): David Powers, Bruce Thompson.

Photo: Bob Bussey

childcare available. You may come a little early before the service and join in the traditional decorating of the cross with flowers if you wish. Come and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

You are always welcome at "the church beside the road in East Andover." Come as you are and worship with us at 9:30 AM on Sundays. Sunday School and childcare are at the same time.

For information on outreach programs for pre-teens, teens, and adults, please call Pastor John at 735-6150.

Andover Congregational Church Considers Its Future In UCC

By Paul Currier, Moderator and John Wagner, Pastor

What does it mean to be a community Christian church in today's world? At Andover Congregational (the church on the hill in East Andover) we are asking ourselves that question. We are building a vision for our mission and role as a church, as we evaluate our denominational affiliation with the United Church of Christ (UCC).

As you may have read, on the front page of the March 7 *Manchester Union Leader*, Andover Congregational Church recently hosted a regional meeting of the newly formed Faithful and Welcoming Churches organization within the UCC. The basic purpose of this new organization is to return the denomination to following Jesus, while continuing to welcome all people.

In the UCC, the national and state leaderships have aggressively promoted some current hot-button social issues - including same-sex marriage - with inadequate search for understanding, Christian guidance, and consensus among all member churches. Many churches, including Andover Congregational, feel that this one-sided focus on issues has compromised the reason that we exist as a Christian church: to be a community of Jesus' disciples, living our lives together, loving and helping others as we get to know God better.

The *Manchester Union Leader* article focused on the UCC endorsement

and promotion of same-sex marriage and the tension that this has caused in some member churches, resulting in some leaving the denomination. But this is not the only issue at Andover Congregational. The Rev. Dr. Bob Thompson, president of Faithful and Welcoming Churches, and the main speaker at the recent meeting in Andover, says the core beliefs are that Jesus Christ really is Lord and Savior, and the Bible is the authoritative word of God. Dr. Thompson said "We believe that a large majority of UCC members share these core beliefs, and we will try to connect them to each other."

As Christians, our Andover congregation believes that God has a good plan for His church here in Andover, and a mission for Andover Congregational that involves serving as a community church for the people in Andover and vicinity.

On Monday, March 13 the Executive Board of the Andover Congregational voted to become a member of Faithful and Welcoming Churches, as long as we remain part of the United Church of Christ. We desire to receive all people with the welcome of Christ, but to do so in a way that is faithful to Jesus and consistent with the Word of God (the Bible).

To learn more about Andover Congregational Church, call Pastor John Wagner at 735-5160 or moderator Paul Currier at 735-5280, or just stop by on Sunday at 9:30. For more information on Faithful and Welcoming Churches, visit their Web site at FaithfulAndWelcoming.org.



Laurie Ferguson (r), executive director of New Hampshire Made, and Wyldlife coordinator Cathy Ellis (l), both of Andover, are working together to help raise funds for Andover kids to go to camp this summer.

WYLDLIFE

A week at camp can be a life-changing experience for kids, and Andover resident Cathy Ellis is helping make that possible. As part of Andover's new Wyldlife program, Cathy is renting a bus to take 40 middle school students to the Young Life Camp on Lake Champion in Glen Sprey, New York, August 5 to 9.

To help cover the cost of the bus and scholarship money for anyone who needs it, volunteers are selling New Hampshire Made coupon books that contain 85 discount offers from New Hampshire product producers and service providers. Each \$20 book provides more than \$1,000 in savings. The proceeds are split between Wyldlife and New Hampshire Made, the non-profit organization that created the books.

Every coupon provides a minimum 25% discount at restaurants, lodging establishments, retail stores, museums, and tours as well as a host of New Hampshire-made products including home accessories and furnishings, specialty food items, gift baskets, personal care items, and even gourmet treats for your pet.

Half the coupons are redeemable on a Web site which means these books

can be used as great gift items for anybody, no matter where they live.

The New Hampshire Made coupon books are valid through December 31 and are available for purchase at:

- Andover Pizza Chef
- New Horizons Salon
- Bowie's Market

You can also contact Cathy Ellis directly at 735-5025 or Laurie Ferguson, executive director of New Hampshire Made, at 735-6420.

The Wyldlife program started in Andover last fall. Every month, a club meeting open to any middle-school-aged child is held at the Grange Hall in East Andover. At these meetings, kids are encouraged to care about one another, to stand up for kids who are being mistreated, and to show acts of kindness.

"Andover has been blessed with a great group of middle school kids and we want to help them shine and be all that God intends for them to be," says Cathy.

To learn more about the Young Life organization that has camps around the country, visit YoungLife.org. To learn more about the New Hampshire Made organization, visit NHmade.com.

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