



The Meetinghouse Crier
January 2011
Pastor: Rev. Peter J Haddad
Franklin Congregational Church
(founded 1718)

Whose church is this?

When speaking to my friends, I might say something like, "My church is... (fill in the blank) ".

We might say to one another, "Our church likes to... (fill in the blank) ".

So the question arises, is it my church, or your church, or our church, or God's church?

Like everything else in Christianity, it is a paradox; because the church is in fact *all of the above*. It is mine, it is ours, but ultimately it is God's. Therefore, we must ask, in what direction should the church be moving? The direction in which *I* think it should be moving? The direction in which *you* think it should be moving? Should it be moving at all? Should it be moving *backward* toward a day which we might remember with fondness; a heyday so to speak? Or should it be moving *forward*, into places where it has never been before, which places may not immediately be recognized? Let's think about the idea of movement for a moment...

In my personal life, I try to follow God, *not presuming where He will take me* (how do you suppose I got to Franklin in the first place!?). What do you experience as you follow God? Do you follow, presuming movement and change? Or Do you find that He likes to keep you just *as* you are and just *where* you are; content as it were, with the status quo? Here's some bad news for any that may think that way... there is no status quo with God.

We are always moving; and the movement will be forward, or backward; for nothing ever really stands still. Contentment with the status quo of our Christian character is actually negative growth. Contentment with our personal holiness is actually negative growth. Contentment with the level to which we are "transformed by the renewing of our minds"(Romans12:2) is actually negative growth. Contentment with the degree to which we are "conformed to the image of His Son"(Romans8:29) is actually negative growth.

Our goal is to press forward, always eager to change. The apostle Paul expressed it this way,

"Brothers, I do not count myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, as many as are mature, let us think this way; and if in anything you think otherwise, even this God will reveal to you" (Phil3:13-15).

The above does not apply to the individual saint of God only, but also to the Body of Christ; to the church... and it is God's church after all. That being the case, we never, ever *really* know what change will look like, but *change is ordained of God*, even in the church. Look around. Look at your kids. Look in the mirror, and think about it. All new life is change... all growth is change... even refreshment is change.... All else is stagnation and decline.

Pastor



Sleighrides anyone?

If, we ever get enough snow (and if anyone is interested) Sandy Staebner of Blue Slope Farm has offered to do group sleigh rides for us! We can call them @ (860) 377-3740, or e-mail to museum@blueslope.com. In the absence of snow, we can also do invigorating wagon rides out into the woods to see nature's winter activities.

For more information www.blueslope.com

Contributors Wanted:

If any members have any materials they would like considered for entry into the *Meetinghouse Crier*, our newsletter, then please submit them to Pastor Peter at...
pastorpeter@FranklinChurchCT.com

"Till Now..." From CH Spurgeon...

What do you think about the Christ?

[Matthew 22:42](#)

The great test of your soul's health is, *What do you think about Christ?* Is He the best of friends—"distinguished among ten thousand"—your all in all? When Christ is held in such esteem, all the faculties of the spiritual man are energized. I can gauge your piety by this standard: Does Christ take a high or low position with you? If you have thought little of Christ, if you have been content to live without His presence, if you have cared only slightly for His honor, if you have neglected His laws, then I know that your soul is sick—God grant that it may not be a sickness leading to death!

But if the first thought of your spirit has been, *How can I honor Jesus?*—if the daily desire of your soul has been, "O that I knew where I might find him!"² I tell you that you may face a thousand infirmities, and even hardly know whether you are a child of God at all, and yet I am persuaded beyond a doubt that you are safe, since Jesus is great in your esteem.

I'm not concerned about your rags—what do you think of *His* royal apparel? I'm not concerned about your wounds, though they bleed profusely—what do you think of *His* wounds? Are they like glittering rubies in your esteem? I think none the less of you, though you lie like Lazarus on the refuse pile, and the dogs lick you—I do not judge you by your poverty: What do you think of the King in His beauty? Does He sit enthroned in your heart? Would you set Him higher if you could? Would you be willing to die if you could add another trumpet to the melody that proclaims His praise? Then it is well with you. Whatever you may think of yourself, if Christ is great to you, you will be with Him in the end.

*Though all the world my choice deride,
Yet Jesus shall my portion be;
For I am pleased with none beside,
The fairest of the fair is He.*

¹Song of Solomon 5:10 ²Job 23:3