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# The Tower *Chimes*

Union Church of Pocantico Hills  
555 Bedford Road  
Pocantico Hills, New York 10591

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**The Rev. Dr. F. Paul DeHoff, Pastor**

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Janet Graham, Editor

December 2011

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.....from the Pastor's desk

“Not yet” ---- says God.

*“Behold, the tabernacle of God is among mortals, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.”*

That hope is not a comforting dream for the pious to savor while the world goes to hell. It is the vision that summons us to action. The “not yet” of God means that the time of the Kingdom's triumph beckons us now to work in its light and prepare for its triumph. Why else would Jesus have taught us to pray: “Thy Kingdom come”?

You and I experience many “not yet” in our discipleship. Sometimes we have been disheartened by them. We are “not yet” the kind of person we dreamed of being; “not yet” the Christian we want to be; we have “not yet” the courage to be generous. The danger is that we allow the “not yet” to fade and be replaced with the voice of the Tempter that says “never”. Or, it may be that we hide behind the “not yet” because we are not willing to face the consequences of being a more faithful disciple, like St. Augustine who recounts a prayer of his youth: “Lord, give me chastity, but not yet.” It may be, “Lord give me generosity, but not yet”.

It is for God alone to say to us “not yet”. There are times when we hear the word “now”! Now is the time to start praying and worshiping with joy. Now is the time to do that job, you keep promising your conscience. Now is the time to look through the confusions and tragedies of our time and see Jesus, the King, so that when God pronounces the great and final “NOW” and “the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ” we shall be among the faithful servants who hear the words: “Enter into the joy of your Lord”. May that be a reality for you this Advent and Christmas!

Our trip to Morocco was very good! I am preparing a slide show which I will share with any who are interested. Thanks for your well-wishes and your warm reception upon our return.

Jack Blackburn will be addressing the congregation this Sunday, December 4. He follows Kathleen Murray and Thomas Staudter who have spoken to us about the importance of our financial support of the mission of Union Church.

Following Jack's presentation you will receive a letter and a Commitment Card for 2012. Please return it promptly. Follow up letters will arrive on two week intervals.

Each of us is asked to give "as we are able". What can be more fair? Please listen and hear the need. If the need is not well enough defined ask questions of Jack, Tom, Kathleen, or of me.

What will I give? THINK, please, and remember the commitment to give "as you are able". Giving as you always have may or may not meet the test of "as you are able" – THINK!

Contrary to all appearances Union Church is not financially supported by some "anonymous, mysterious Other" in such a way so as to relieve you or me of that privilege and pleasure. Union Church does stand in an exceptional, but not guaranteed, position so as to enable your gift to do exceptional work here, offering worship in a setting of unusual serenity and beauty, friendship and fellowship with an unusual variety of people, service to those in need stretching from Appalachia to Westchester's several humanitarian organizations, to Princeton Theological Seminary, to victims of natural disaster around the world. This is a call to generosity – will it be met with your NOW; or your, "not yet" O Lord?

### COMING EVENTS

#### December

18 – Children's Christmas Program  
immediately following the 11 a.m.  
service.

Carol Sing – 3 p.m.

24 – Christmas Eve Services: 3:30 p.m.,  
7:30 p.m. and 11 p.m.

25 – Christmas Day - **One service only**  
at 11 a.m.

#### January, 2012

01 – New Year's Day – **One service only**  
At 11 a.m.

22 – Annual Congregational Meeting  
and Luncheon at 12:15 p.m.

### Hope and Faith and a Little Charm Bracelet

by Gail Gazes

*"Faith is to believe that which you do not yet see; and the reward of this faith is to see that which you believe."*

Saint Augustine of Hippo

When I bought my little charm bracelet to benefit cancer research, I thought of the words on the charms as little more than cliché words. It wasn't until I got cancer that those same words jumped out at me and became very important and started to take on a whole new meaning for me. **HOPE** to see another year. **TRUST** in God for whatever lay ahead. **LOVE** the Lord—I was not alone and would never be alone. **BELIEVE** in miracles. My faith sustained me through that troubled year. My Faith sustains me still. I don't know what the future brings; no one does. "No one is promised tomorrow", but I have Faith that whatever challenges I face, I will not have to face them alone.

### LAMPSTAND

"...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

**PREACHING SCHEDULE  
FOR DECEMBER**

- Dec. 04 – “*An Advent Invitation to the Lords of This World*” – Isaiah 44:24-45:6 (5-6)
- Dec. 11 – “*The Sound of The Profit*” – Ezekiel 2:1-10 (4-5)
- Dec. 18 – “*Christ in Our Future*” – John 14:15-24 (18)
- Dec. 24 – “*A Christmas Story for Children of All Ages*” – “Big Bang and Little Bang”
- Dec. 25 – “*When God Says ‘Not Yet’*” – Hebrews 2:5-9 (8-9)
- Jan. 01 – “*The Lord of the Unknown*” – Matthew 2:1-12

**COMMITMENT CARDS 2011**

The Commitment cards for 2012 will be mailed to our members and friends during the next week. Our theme remains “*We give as we are able. We give because we care.*” It is your contributions that support our mission; it is our members and friends who are the soul of Union Church.

We ask that you return your card as soon as possible or no later than **December 18**. If you do not currently receive a commitment card and would like us to send one, please call the church office at **631.2069**. Thank you for your continued support.

**CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES**

Contribution envelopes for 2012 will be available beginning on **Sunday, December 11**.

If you are currently not receiving envelopes and would like us to provide them, please call the church office at 631.2069 or place your name on the list provided in the parish Hall.

**CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA**

Christmas Poinsettia forms can be found in your church program as well as in the church office. The deadline for submission of the

forms is **December 11**, allowing us time to complete our list of dedications for this holiday season.

These plants, provided by H. Carlson Florist, are a beautiful addition to our sanctuary as we celebrate the birth of our savior. And, you may transport that beauty to your own home following the 11 p.m. service on Christmas Eve by taking your plant(s) home with you.

All checks should be made payable to Union Church. The price for each plant is **\$14.00**.

**CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR KIDS**

Children’s Gift Request Forms from the Grandparents Coalition of Westchester are now available in the Parish Hall.

This has been a very successful program that is much appreciated by the three agencies that distribute the gifts. We have had the opportunity to meet some of the grandparents who volunteer to help the workers pick up our contributions, and they have expressed how very grateful they are for our help and generosity. We will need to have your gifts under our tree and ready for pick up by **December 11**.

**Important:** The packages are sent to two or three different agencies, so the Gift Request forms must be attached to the outside of the gift so they can be read easily for delivery purposes

**FLOWER CALENDAR**

The 2012 Flower Calendar has arrived and is on display in the Parish Hall. If there is a specific date(s) that you would like to reserve, please sign up soon to insure that your date is saved.

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT  
STUDY GROUP**

Our Wednesday Night Study Group will not be meeting on December 21 or 28.

Our group consists of about 12-15 people, and our discussions are often lively and interesting. We meet at 7 p.m. in the church library, and we welcome anyone who would like to join us.

### DINNER CLUB

December is such a busy month for the club with so much going on. The Fellowship Hall is so festive now that the beautiful Christmas tree is adorned with the many ornaments that members of the congregation have donated over the years. Many thanks to Rosalyn DeHoff, Beth Coffman and Gail Gazes for helping us decorate the tree.

The next day found most of us downstairs creating the beautiful wreaths that we sell to members and friends of the church. Thank you to so many of you who worked so hard to make this possible while having such fun. We are still taking orders, so please treat yourselves to one to beautify your home or perhaps to purchase as a lovely gift for a friend.

**Saturday, December 10** is our **Annual Christmas Dinner and Gift Exchange**. The dinner takes place in the library where a warm fire greets everyone as they enter the magically transformed room offering great food, warm relations and riotous fun as we each take turns choosing a gift, reading aloud the accompanying poem which teases us to guess what's inside.

Newer members of the congregation are invited, as our guests, to come and share this evening with us in the spirit of Christian fellowship. If you wish to join us, **please call Victoria Mattoon as soon as possible (914-232-8389)**. We wish you and your loved one's a very blessed Christmas and joyous New Year.

Victoria & Matt Mattoon, co-presidents

### NATALIE IN CHURCH

Sweet, strong colors overwhelm you  
In Union Church; Chagall's prophets  
Glow from their windows, torch your very  
Heart with their visions.

Your soul and mine sing alleluias  
To the Sunday sun...halos bond us  
Each to each, in ecclesiastic fun.

Contributed by Jay Albrecht

### NEWS FROM THE PEWS

- Continued prayers are requested for Glenna Epperson-Smith's mother, who is very ill and hospitalized.
- Congratulations to Kathy Pike, daughter of Mary Johnson, who completed the recent New York City Marathon. Proud mom, Mary, and her friend, Joyce Skiko, cheered and waved Kathy on while they stood in bright sunshine near the Willis Avenue Bridge.
- Many thanks to all who participated in the decoration of our beautiful Parish Hall Christmas Tree. We also thank the Grahams (Jr. and Sr.) who searched for the perfect tree and set it up.

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Articles for the **JANUARY** Tower Chimes  
are due no later than **December 18**.

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