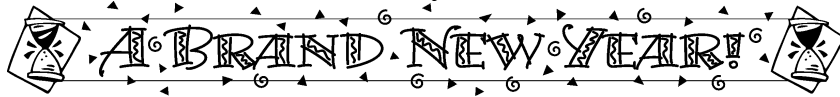


The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville
United Church of Christ
January 2012



Annual Meeting and Pot Luck Supper

The annual meeting of the Congregational Church of Somersville will be held Saturday, January 28. A pot luck supper will begin at 6 PM followed by the meeting at 7. ALL members and friends of the church are invited to attend. Reports from officers and boards will be reviewed; officers and new board members will be elected; and we'll hear and consider any other business that may come up. Remember, we are all ministers of this church and opinions and voices matter. Be sure to bring a dish to share and place settings.

Transportation can be arranged for those unable to get to the church on their own (or for those who don't drive in the dark); please contact the church office to make a request (call 860-749-7741 or email somcong@aol.com).



Officers and Board chairmen are to submit written reports to Ruth by Sunday, January 15.

As we have done for several years, a roll call will be taken at the start of the meeting; members should be prepared to respond with a verse of scripture. Anyone unable to attend the meeting is encouraged to return a verse of scripture to be read in his/her absence.

.....
I am unable to attend the meeting on the 28th. Please read this verse in my absence.

Member: _____
Return to R. Bruch, Cong'l Church Somersville, PO Box I, Somersville, CT 06072

From the Pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

Religious pluralism is a fact of life in the United States in the 21st Century. In addition experiencing people committed to a wide variety of Christian denominations and movements, we are all likely to interact with Jews, Muslims, people of no faith, Buddhists and many others. My own extended family is interfaith; I have no doubt that is true for many of you.

But did you know that religious pluralism was a fact of life for the early church, too? This is not a new thing! The earliest Christian evangelists dealt with people of widely differing beliefs and practices on a routine basis.

This January I invite you to join me in looking at a few aspects of our religiously diverse society and how we might find our authentically Christian voice in it. Over this three week study, we'll first look at the phenomenon of SBNRs – those who describe themselves as “spiritual but not religious.” It's one of the fastest growing faith groups in the United States and itself is a very diverse and diffuse movement. The second week we will take a respectful look at a few groups that live at the edges of historic Christianity, especially Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons). We'll learn more about them, seeing how they have grown from the historic Christian witness but have also modified it with other beliefs and practices. In our third week together we will look at the examples of Paul and other evangelists in the Acts of the Apostles in order to learn how we might faithfully and respectfully live in a diverse religious environment.



These sessions will take place on Tuesday, January 17, January 24, and January 31 from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. They promise to be interesting and enlightening times, so please come to learn more and offer your own wisdom and insight.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year,

Graham Van Keuren

Thanks to ..

.. all who volunteered to take on “service opportunities during December.
.. everyone who contributed to the success of the Holiday Ham Supper.
.. those who bought poinsettias in memory or in honor of loved ones. They were beautiful in our sanctuary.
.. all who gave so generously to our food drive at the December supper.
.. the Sunday school youth, Board of Christian Education and the helpers for their work on the annual pageant.
.. those who went caroling and brightened the season for some members and friends of the church.
.. all who helped decorate the sanctuary and Wood Chapel for the season.



Thanks from ..

Genny Farnham .. “To my Church family, thanks for all your prayers and best wishes, the many cards and phone calls during my recent surgery and convalescing in rehab. I give thanks every day for your love and caring. God bless each and every one.”

Reminders from the Moderator (submitted by Ray Foster)

Be sure to attend the church’s annual meeting on January 28. And, the Cabinet will meet on January 15 following worship. Any individual or Board having business to discuss at that meeting should notify Graham or me by Sunday, January 8.

The Communion Elements (submitted by Pat Pinney, deacon)

Once in a while, people have asked about what we do with the leftover elements from communion. Since the bread and grape juice have been consecrated, we do not put them out for consumption by the congregation after the service. Nor do we save them for the next month’s communion service. Instead, we return the elements to the earth. The grape juice is poured on the soil in the back of the church one of the deacons who served communion. The bread is put into a bag and put out on the ground to feed the birds, and eventually return to the earth.



Christian Education



Picture from the Pageant (shared by Sharon Miller)



Picture from the Pageant (shared by Sharon Miller)

Wednesday Bible Study

This group continues to meet Wednesday mornings in the social room from 9:30-11:15 AM. All are welcome to attend and take part.

Let's go Hiking (submitted by Pat Scully)

Younger folks of the congregation (grades 6-12) are asked to touch base with either Pat or Dan Scully regarding a potential hiking excursion. If you are interested in joining a group of your peers for some outdoor exercise and worship please let us know! Details will be developed if enough interest is expressed.



Opportunities in December

	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Fellowship Hosts</u>
01/01	D. Pendleton		S. Cohen	T & E Hancock
01/08	J. Lange	D. Pendleton	A Lachance	R & A Carey
01/15	A Lachance D Dunn	G Liberty J. Lange	A. Andrews	B. Moran U. Orduz
01/22	D. Pendleton	A Lachance D. Dunn	P. Pinney	E & L Sharpless
01/29	M. Nadeau E. Baker	D. Pendleton	E. Hancock	

As you can see, there are some openings to serve as greeters, ushers and a fellowship host this month. Please sign up in the social room.

Financial Statements (submitted by Dan Dunn)

This month I will prepare and distribute financial giving statements to members and friends acknowledging receipt of their total giving amount received in 2011. If you don't get a statement or have a discrepancy, please speak with me.

Report of the Treasurer (submitted by Sydney Cohen)

The heart is the happiest when it beats for others.

The greatest love you can have for your friends is to give your life for them.
John 15:13.

	November 2011	Monthly Budget	YTD	Annual Budget
Pledges	\$7,741.00	\$ 6,737.50	\$74,033.50	\$ 80,850.00
Income	\$15,535.84	\$ 9,404.56	\$117,917.86	\$ 112,855.00
Expenses	\$10,506.13	\$10,494.41	\$119,020.41	\$ 125,933.00

Collections for November

Fundraiser dinner- Turkey dinner- Net 2,103.00 YTD- 21,436.69

Flow through Items- Income

Monthly Mission Giving
Heifer International- 36.86- YTD 824.00
UNICEF—223.75- YTD-364.75
KIVA- 559.00
Capital Campaign 2011- 50.00- YTD
Total 11,835.00

Parking Lot- 93.00- YTD- 6474.72

Flow through Items- Expense

Capital Campaign- 735.00- Repair work on the front doors of the church
Missions Flow through- 504.00
Sunday school Heifer Collection- 320.00

Pledges were higher than budgeted, bringing the church closer to our budget goal. Our YTD income has surpassed our annual budget in part, due to some generous donations. Mission collections have also been disbursed, as well as the collection from the Sunday School Breakfast for Heifer International. Capital Campaign work projects continue on the church as the repairs on the church doors were completed.



Missions Outreach

2nd Mile Missions (submitted by Art Lachance)

"Female Soldiers, Forgotten Heroes"

is a project to help provide transitional housing for female veterans.

**FEMALE SOLDIERS.
FORGOTTEN HEROES.**



Unlocking the Possibilities

It may be foremost in our minds to remember those who have been lost, but we can never forget the faith, strength and courage of those men and women who were fortunate enough to return home, as well as those who continue to be away from their families in countries with foreign cultures and severe climates, especially during the holidays. Whether they are in harm's way or not, they are protecting the

foundations of our way of life and freedom.

To date, over 200,000 female soldiers have served in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. As do male soldiers, many return home with the invisible scars of combat; Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, memories of the things they have experienced in combat, a hesitance to accept the security of life with their own family, broken marriages, the inability to deal with the day-to-day responsibilities of civilian life, and many other effects of what they have been through. Believe it or not, a number of these Veterans become homeless, including some who have a child. Because of the Middle East conflicts, this has become a major issue only recently. There are many facilities to help homeless male Veterans but only a handful of facilities are designed specifically for the needs of female Veterans. These are Veterans who just need some time to recover from the experiences they have been through so they can return to productive lives.

Partnering to meet the Need...

Homes for the Brave, in Bridgeport, runs a Transitional Housing Program for male Veterans. Kick for Nick has partnered with them to help create and establish a new Home exclusively for female Veterans. This 'residence' will be the first of its kind in Connecticut. It will house up to 15 women who are homeless and are honorably and/or generally discharged from the military,

and are fully recommended by the VA. It is designed to accommodate up to 5 women with a child under 2 years of age, and 3 beds are fully handicap accessible. Although it will be in Connecticut, the home will be available to female Veterans from the Greater New England region. The facility will provide counseling, health care, case-management and skills-training, and it will focus the appropriate attention on their gender-specific needs.

Bridgeport. Renovations will start immediately. This is a \$1.2 million project. We expect to welcome our first residents in October 2011.

It is our goal to make this home an exceptional example of a quality program with maximum community caring and involvement in helping our female Veteran heroes.



Food-Share

Food-share's distribution of perishable food happens every other week in the parking lot of Somers

Congregational Church from 1:15-1:45 (note time change!).

Distribution dates this month are January 4 & 18. Individuals or families needing food are welcome to come; there are no qualifications. Volunteers willing to assist the distribution efforts should be at the parking lot by 1 PM. Speak with Dave Pinney if you have questions.

Invitation from Men's Group

Ice Hockey Fun for the Whole Family!

The men's group invites you to join them for a hockey game between the American Hockey League's Springfield Falcons and Manchester (NH) Monarchs on Sunday, February 5th. We will meet at church at 2 p.m. and carpool together to the MassMutual Center for our 3 p.m. game. It will be fun for everyone; the Falcons are planning character appearances with the kids so you might want to bring a camera. Tickets are \$15/person with a \$50 family cap. Subsidized admission is available for those who need it; please speak with Graham privately should you need a reduced entrance cost. We want everyone to come!



Please return the form below with your cash or check made out to the church by **January 15th** so that our group can get the best seats available. It'll be a time of great fellowship; women and children are encouraged to join the guys in their life for this fun event.

Name: _____
Number of People in Your Party: _____
Total Cost (\$15/person, \$50/family of four or more): _____
Would You Be Available to Drive? (circle one): yes/no

Ladies Aide Society



New Programs for 2012

Pastor Graham has suggested some new programs for the Ladies Aide for 2012 ... all women of the church are welcome to attend. Please note that

coordinators and hostesses are needed; please respond to Ruth in the office (860-749-7741 or email somcong@aol.com) if you are willing to volunteer.

Jan. 10 – 1 PM – assemble care packages for mothers with children. Graham will coordinate; Mavis will hostess.

Feb. 14 – noon – Valentine luncheon supplied by Men's group (hopefully). There will be a celebration of ministry and affirmation of new ministry. Graham will coordinate.

March 13 – 1 PM – Tim Keeney to speak about probate issues OR have a defib demonstration (still to be scheduled); need volunteers to coordinate and hostess

April 10 – 1 PM – assemble health kits
Linda L. to coordinate; Ruth B to hostess

May 8 – noon – pizza luncheon; assemble & deliver May baskets
Need volunteer to coordinate; Linda L. will hostess

June 12 – noon – picnic at Ardie Carey's; Ardie will coordinate & hostess

Sept. 11 – noon – lunch out at Golden Corral or another restaurant
Need volunteer to coordinate

Oct. 12 – 6 PM (Friday) – Church wide chili taste test/cook off with a Cornucopia and Advent wreath-making (products to be taken home, given away or sold)

Need volunteers to coordinate and hostess

Nov. 16 – 1 PM (Friday) – Bake sale preparation

Need volunteers to coordinate and hostess

Dec. 11 – noon – Pot luck luncheon and carol sing

Officers coordinate

This schedule obviously does not include Blacksmith Shoppe clean up days or open dates, nor does it include the senior luncheon or actual date of bake sale or holiday treasures. A booklet will be prepared and distributed once obligatory dates/positions are filled.



Knitting Group

Prayer Shawl Ministry (submitted by Lois Sharpless)

The prayer shawl knitters will gather at the home of Lois Sharpless on Thursday, January 26 from 7-9 PM. Anyone, with or without knitting experience, is welcome. Yarn and instruction are available to newbies. Won't you come and take part in this rewarding ministry? Over forty shawls have been knit and distributed since this ministry began.

Fundraising Suppers (submitted by Ruth Bruch)

January Supper and Bake Sale

Our first fundraising supper in 2012 will be held on January 14 as we serve roast pork with mashed potatoes, gravy, tossed salad, apple sauce, winter squash, homemade breads, beverage and apple pie a la mode. A sign up sheet for help/donations is posted in the social room. Any way you can assist would be greatly appreciated. Supper proceeds help defray the general operating expenses of our budget. We will also run a bake sale this month and proceeds from that will go to missions.

Reservations are now being accepted if you'd like to attend the dinner; sittings are at 5 and 6:15 or take outs can be ordered. Cost is \$11 for adults and \$5 for children ages 5-10.

Remember, at our November 20 Cabinet meeting support of these suppers was promised so a burden would not be cast upon the Bruch's and Wood's.



As of this writing, we are still in need of:

lettuce (22 heads)	grape tomatoes (6 pints)	peppers (10)
\$30 for potatoes	homemade breads (12 loaves)	croutons (2 lb)
d-caf coffee (NOT Kirkland – 1 lge or 2 sm)	pork gravy mix (4 lge. bags)	
homemade apple pies (15)		whole milk (2 gal)
vanilla ice cream (3 gal)	applesauce (from 1 bushel)	
bake for bake sale	dishwashers	wait on tables (3)

Subcommittee

The subcommittee (Ruth Bruch, Ardie Carey, Linda Longueuil, Lois Sharpless and Pastor Graham) met this past month and had a good discussion that will be followed up with a concern that Graham will bring before the Board of Deacons. Eleven dinners will be held in 2012; the group felt proceeds from all 11 dinners should go to the church budget and proceeds from bake sales held at the suppers would go to missions (instead of the December supper proceeds). The option of dropping the August versus December supper was discussed; volunteer helpers are hard to come by in August vs. low public attendance in December.

This & That

- ***Fellowship hosts*** are needed for 2012. Anyone willing to provide a light snack following worship on any given Sunday is encouraged to sign up in the social room
- ***Meeting minutes*** are to be filed with the office. Copies will also be posted on the bulletin board on the south wall of the social room.

World Christianity has a new address, a new look and many names

Global Christian Forum examines ‘profound realignment’

October 17, 2011 Global Christian Forum Communications Secretary
Kim Cain

MANADO, Indonesia

“The story of Christianity as a worldwide faith is being written before our eyes,” declared Dana Robert of Boston University’s School of Theology as she addressed a group of world church leaders at the Global Christian Forum (GCF) here on the fundamental realignment of Christian faith around the globe.

“Christianity has undergone one of the greatest demographic and cultural shifts in its 2000 year history,” Robert said.

The gathering has brought together leaders from all major church traditions, all theological perspectives and major world communions including the World Communion of Reformed Churches [*of which the United Church of Christ is a part*], the Anglican Communion, the World Council of Churches, the World Evangelical Alliance, the Pentecostal World Fellowship and representatives of the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for promotion of Christian Unity.

In a statistical analysis of the changing demographics and practices of global Christianity, Peter Crossing of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, told the GCF that a century ago 66 percent of the world’s Christians lived in Europe, but today it accounts for only 26 percent of the world’s Christian population.

He said the “Global North (defined as Europe and North America) contained over 80 percent of all Christians in 1910 falling to under 40 percent by 2010.” In 1910 less than 2 percent of all Christians lived in Africa but by 2010 this had skyrocketed to 20 percent of world Christianity by 2010.

Crossing, who is a researcher for the Atlas of Global Christianity, said that while the overall percentage of persons around the world who are Christians had remained fairly constant over the last one hundred years there has been “dramatic change in the center of gravity of global Christianity.”

A century ago the statistical “center of gravity” for Christianity was near Madrid, but “in 2010 the statistical center had shifted to somewhere just south of Timbuktu in Mali. This 100-year shift is the most dramatic in Christian history,” Crossing said.

One thing has not changed: where the financial resources reside. “Finances are still firmly in the (global) North. Sixty percent of Christians live in the South, but they have only 17 percent of Christian income,” Crossing said.

He also noted that a century ago Christianity was largely a Western phenomenon, “including strong European Roman Catholic presence in Latin America, where few church leaders were Latin Americans.” Today the new expressions of Global Christianity are coming from

Africa and Asia.

Crossing said the change was most dramatically illustrated by in the “mother-tongues” used in worship and the number of denominations: today Mandarin Chinese is the fifth most prevalent language used by Christians to worship God — 100 years ago China hardly registered. The top four languages spoken by Christians today are Spanish, Portuguese, English and French.

Globally, there are some 41,000 Christian denominations, reflecting “the fragmentation” of the global church, Crossing said.

Within these profound changes, Crossing said, there have also been major developments in existing churches: revivalism, indigenous churches and renewal churches had flourished in every continent but, again, especially in the South.

Another presenter, Sang-Bok David Kim of the World Evangelical Alliance, told the GCF that the huge changes in the church internationally means “Christianity is no longer a ‘white man’s religion. Christians are now everywhere.”

Looking at comparative numbers Kim said Christianity is the world’s largest faith grouping with 32.9 percent of the global population followed by Islam at 22.9 percent. “Muslims are increasing faster than Christians, not because of more conversions, but due rather to their higher birth rate (1.9 percent, Christians 1.2 percent),” he said.

Although the Global North has declined in percentage of the population identifying as Christian, evangelical, Pentecostal and charismatic communities continue to grow there, as well as in Africa, Latin America and Asia, Kim said.

He noted one of the most “astonishing success stories” has been the work of evangelical missions post-World War II and the subsequent growth of indigenous evangelical movements globally. “Evangelicals numbered 82 million in 1960 and they have reached 546 million in 2010,” he said.

Robert said these changes raise critical questions for all churches. “Contemporary Christians are focusing on mission for multiple purposes,” she said, “both to recover tradition and to recover from tradition.

“Conversations about mission and witness have become an urgent agenda for mainline Christians... as they struggle to reframe their identity in a global marketplace. At the same time, adherents of new ministries often see their witness as a recovery of primitive Christianity that challenges the older denominations.”

Robert opined that “today’s urgent need for Christian unity does not look like the 1950s and 1960s, when self-satisfied Protestant leaders pushed for organic unity at the expense of diversity of witness. The growth that characterizes world Christianity today means that unity will be taken seriously only where mission is taken seriously,” she said.

That mission however is varied. Kim noted that “re-evangelization” is the prime task of many churches such as in the Russian Orthodox, which was “concentrating more on evangelization of the 80 percent nominal Orthodox Christians” rather than concerns of proselytism of the 1990s.

And Crossing said statistics showed there was over 1.136 billion hours of evangelism across the globe per year but “it was mostly directed at other Christians!”



About our Members and Friends

Birthdays

Happy birthday wishes this month go to Mae Chillson, Miriam Cohen, Erin Tishon, Judy Peck, Deb Robidoux

Congregational Church of Somersville

Vision Statement

We will be a faith-based church welcoming diversity, empowering the individual, growing in faith and doing God's work in the global community in unity and love.

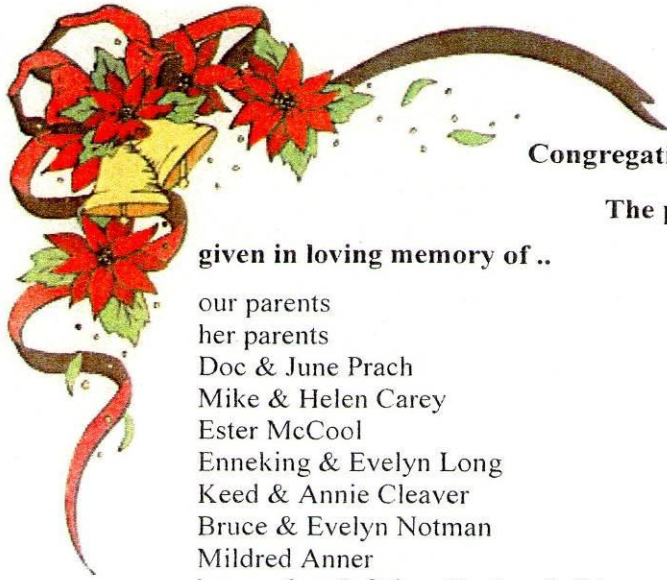
Behavioral Covenant

- We will follow a process that includes unconditional listening and time to collect thought, enabling all individuals to comfortably express their opinions.
- Our actions and demeanor will support and empower all participants
- All opinions will be welcomed, reflectively considered and respected.
- Opinions will be expressed with humility, self-control, gentleness, and kindness.
- We will look for common ground as we search for consensus, and we will respect that consensus.
- We will affirm by our works and actions our common goal to serve God.

the Rev. Graham Van Keuren, Pastor
 Ray Foster, Moderator
 Sydney Cohen, Treasurer
 Ruth Bruch, Church Administrator/Clerk
 Jason Stefanik, Organist/Choir Director

January 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 New Year's Day	2	3 Evergreen worship 11 AA 6:15-8:30 Deacons 7 PM	4 Bible Study 9:30-11:15 Food-share 1:15 at Somers Cong'l Choir 7 PM	5	6	7
8 Communion De-green church Cabinet agenda requests in	9	10 Ladies Aide 1 AA 6:15-8:30 Finance 7 PM	11 Bible Study 9:30-11:15 Choir 7 PM	12	13 Supper Prep 9 AM Missions 1 PM	14 Roast Pork Supper 5 & 6:15 PM
15 Cabinet meeting Written annual reports due Hockey rsvp due	16	17 AA 6:15-8:30 Evening adult study 7-8:30 PM	18 Bible Study 9:30-11:15 Food-share 1:15 at Somers Cong'l Choir 7 PM	19	20	21
22	23	24 Blair worship 10:30 AA 6:15-8:30 Evening adult study 7-8:30 PM	25 Bible Study 9:30-11:15 Choir 7 PM	26 Prayer Shawl Ministry at Lois' 7-9 PM	27	28 Pot Luck Supper 6 Annual Meeting 7
29 February Spire deadline Installation??	30	31 AA 6:15-8:30 Evening adult study 7-8:30 PM	Congregational Church of Somersville 22 Maple St., PO Box I, Somersville, CT 06072 860-749-7741 860-749-5132 (fax) somcong@aol.com (email) www.somersvilleucc.org (web site) Worship 10 AM Office Hours: Tues. - Fri. 8:15-11:15			



Christmas, 2011

Congregational Church of Somersville, UCC

The plants in the sanctuary are ..

given in loving memory of ..

our parents
her parents
Doc & June Prach
Mike & Helen Carey
Ester McCool
Enneking & Evelyn Long
Keed & Annie Cleaver
Bruce & Evelyn Notman
Mildred Anner
her mother & father, Evelyn & Warren Simpson
her mother & father-in-law, Dorothy & David Cohen
her sister, Merle Simpson
her sister-in-law, Caroline
her parents, Stanley & Phyllis Livall
Raymond & Maud Hastings
Ned & Genevra Collins
Philippe Favre
Ethlyn Campbell
my parents, Eleanor & Homer Dunn
my brothers & sister
Willie Forbrick
Bill Forbrick
my husband, Clarence "Bo" Farnham
our beloved father, Donald Graham
Donald Graham
his father, Sidney Hancock
her parents, George & Ellen Hammond
her parents, Elsie & William Hoffman
his father, Ores Karbonic
Lillian Lefebvre, my aunt
Mr. & Mrs. Leo Preston Dionne (foster parents)
Donald Longueuil
Ginny Longueuil
Our dads, Ray Fortuna & Ted Miller
my father, William E. Moran
my father, Mario Orduz
Ralph & Kevin Eastwood
Ted & Alan Morin
Ben & Helen Pendleton
Gertrude & J. Francis Wood
Gladys & Cecil Whitaker
Steven Sanville
Ellsworth Wood

given in honor of ..

Ruth Bruch
Cecille Aubin
Veterans
Conrad Stebbins
our moms, Edith Fortuna & Bette Miller

given by ..

Everett & Martha Baker
the Bruch family
Rich & Ardie Carey
Rich & Ardie Carey
Angela Ceppetelli
the Cleaver family
the Cleaver family
the Cleaver family
the Cleaver family
the Cohen family
the Cohen family
the Cohen family
Jack & Mavis Collins & family
Jack & Mavis Collins & family
Jack & Mavis Collins & family
Jack & Mavis Collins & family
Jack & Mavis Collins & family
Jack & Mavis Collins & family
Daniel Dunn
Daniel Dunn
Chuck & Laura Elwood
Chuck & Laura Elwood
Genny Farnham
Frank & Kathie Gonzales
the Graham family & the Rosshirt family
Tom & Elaine Hancock
Tom & Elaine Hancock
Don & Johanna Karbonic
Don & Johanna Karbonic
Art Lachance
Art Lachance
his family
her family
Sharon & Doug Miller
Bill Moran
Ulysses Orduz
Donna Pendleton
Donna Pendleton
Richard & Donna Pendleton
Nick & Carlese Wood
Nick & Carlese Wood
Yvonne Wood
Yvonne Wood

given by ..

anonymous
Angela Ceppetelli
Don & Johanna Karbonic
Linda Longueuil
Sharon & Doug Miller

Hidden Pictures for the Young at Heart - Ice Fishing

