

EPISTLE

January, 2018



Bradford Congregational Church – UCC
An Open & Affirming Congregation!
Bradford, VT (802) 222-4034

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see us on Facebook: **Bradford Congregational Church**

Message from Pastor Jeff:

So, it's here. Another year. What it will bring, none of us knows. There are some major events that may take place for our church.

Our Search Committee is working hard on the task of finding a "settled pastor" to bring before the congregation for confirmation. I know this has been a rather long search process, but I ask you to remember the forty years Moses and Israel had to endure just wandering around in the wilderness. Sometimes God's schedule does not align with our own.

Someone once said that it took Israel one day to get out of Egypt but it took forty years to get Egypt out of Israel. So it may have been for our church. Look at the dramatic and far reaching transformation you folks have won by taking the time to reflect on needed areas of congregational transformation. Through the leadership of those who came before me and your willingness to look at your style of communication, I have found people willing to engage in areas for disagreement without the feeling of being personally attacked or judged. That's huge and I hope you know how powerful this transformation is. A future awaits where the work of

Christ can be done within a community that respects its diversity while agreeing to unite for the cause of Christ. One can't ask for more than that!

Also know that whatever comes our way this year, God will guide us into the future. We are not alone. God will use whatever awaits us for God's good purposes. So I ask you to keep our church in your prayers. We align ourselves with God's will through prayer while also giving voice to our love and concern.

So 2018 portends great changes. May God find us faithful as He/She unfolds the future.

Faithfully,
Pastor Jeff



Community Supper

The December supper was held two days after Christmas, which meant a feast of ham, chili, meatloaf, all manner of veggies and salads and a swirl of holiday confections and cookies. The weather outside was cold yet calm after the Christmas day snowstorm and inside the vestry was warm with the laughter and friendship of breaking bread together.



Starting in January the suppers will be the 4th THURSDAY of each month.

We have made this change back to the original schedule of years ago in order for our own Pastor Jeff to join us! The sign for the supper will be placed out front several days ahead as a reminder to everyone.

The REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR Challenge for the Food Shelf



Every December day leading up to Christmas one non-perishable food item or sundry was put into the box, so that by Christmas there were 25 assorted cans, boxes and packages. Every family doing the challenge reported back how fun and meaningful it was for them.

More than a dozen fully packed boxes were filled by the congregation and dedicated on Christmas Eve. Joe and Lucia Button kindly carried all of them over to the Food Shelf right after Christmas. But most importantly, the people of our community who need these products will receive them.

Prayer requests may be emailed to
[our prayer group](#)



It is our privilege to pray for you and those you care about.

**We pray for each other,
without ceasing
and your prayer requests
are held in strict confidence.**



From the United Church of Christ



Visit the new [Vermont Conference UCC](#) website!

From it's opening message is this:

“As a denomination, the United Church of Christ is committed to working for a just world for all. There are many ways to be involved in this important work and our churches are active and engaged in their local communities as well as on state, national and

global levels. A few of those issues where our churches are active include: climate change, a moral economy, prison justice, equal rights for those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and sexual identities. Many of our congregations have a relationship with churches and people in many places around the world. Churches offer community suppers to support building relationships, they run food shelves and feeding programs and other projects to alleviate food insecurity. These are just few of the ways we seek justice because we follow Jesus the Christ.”



Lectionary Readings **JANUARY** (Year B)

The theme hymns are linked to video performances ... click on each if you desire listening to hymns as you read your scriptures



January 6 ... Epiphany

Isaiah 60: 1-6 (Awake! Open Your Eyes! Rejoice!)

Ephesians 3:1-12 (all the people share the same promises)

Matthew: 2: 1-12 (Magi from the East arrive)

Psalm 72: 1-7, 10-14

theme hymn: [We Three Kings of Orient Are](#)

January 7 ... Baptism of the Lord

Genesis 1:1-5 (God saw that the light was good)

Acts 19: 1-7 (baptism of repentance-only is incomplete)

Mark 1: 4-11 (“You are my beloved Son”)

Psalm 29

theme hymn: [Lord, When You Came to Jordan](#)

January 14

1 Samuel 3: 1-10 (God calls Samuel)

1 Corinthians 6: 12-20 (not all freedom is free)

John 1: 43-51 (Jesus finds Philip and Nathaniel)

Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18 (Lord ... you know me)

theme hymn: [Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah](#)

January 21

Jonah 3: 1-5, 10 (Jonah obeys, but Ninevah repents)

1 Corinthians 7:29-31 (rely solely on God)

Mark 1: 14-20 (turn around, see, believe)

Psalms 62:5-12 (my hope is from God alone)

theme hymn: [*Be Thou My Vision*](#)

January 28

Deuteronomy 18: 15-20 (God promises to raise up a prophet)

1 Corinthians 8:1-13 (agape builds up the community of faith)

Mark 1:21-28 (Jesus speaks with authority)

Psalms 111 (Great are the works of the Lord)

theme hymn: [*The God of Abraham Praise*](#)

February 4

Isaiah 40: 21-31 (Wait confidently on the Lord)

1 Corinthians 9:16-23 (Paul's freedom is in being bound to Christ)

Mark 1:29-39 (Jesus announces the purpose of his mission)

Psalms 147:1-11, 20c (Great is the Lord)

theme hymn: [*Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*](#)

February 11

2 Kings 5:1-14 (Naaman almost isn't healed)

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (Paul versus the "do as you please" culture)

Mark 1: 40-45 (The former leper doesn't remain silent)

Psalms 30 (Lord, you have healed me)

theme hymn: [*Lord Jesus, Think on Me*](#)

A note from our organist:

During January we enter Ordinary Time when we will have lots of varied music by German, Dutch, and French composers. Lent is not that far away!

Lisa Barfield (flute) and I hope to put together an organ and flute piece for Lent by David Bowie entitled "[Warszawa](#)." This very haunting piece is a great fit for Lent!

John Atwood

Ordinary Time:

The time immediately following Epiphany and Pentecost is anything but ordinary. The “ordinary” in this case is from the root word “ordinal” meaning counted.

Think of this period as making our faith count in the world as in our hearts.

Between now and Lent (this year beginning on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14th) we are encouraged to grow into a daily expression of our faith, to become a messenger of the Gospel in our words and actions.



Ordinary Time

- Liturgical Color
 - Green
 - Growth, hope, and life
- Occurs twice in the year
 - Between Christmas and Lent
 - Between summer and the fall
 - Pentecost-Feast of Christ the King
- Purpose
 - To recall the life of Jesus
 - Reminded that God is always there to help us live as Christians

