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EPISTLE

April, 2016

Bradford Congregational Church – UCC
Bradford, VT (802) 222-4034

Our website:
<http://bradforducc.org>
bradfordvtucc@gmail.com



Dear Church Family,

We have many young children in our congregation right now. It is a joy to see how the toddlers love to learn new skills and practice using them. Once they discover what legs can do they test them out every chance they get, through the pews and down the aisles and up the stairs and all over the place!

We see the same thing in teens who have just gotten their license. I remember how eager I was to run errands—always hoping my mother would have forgotten to pick something up at the store so I could take the car the few hundred yards to get it!

This doesn't end in childhood. I worked in the woods with draft horses in my early 30s and learned many skills that I woke up eager every day to practice and improve. I still get a thrill whenever I have the chance to use one of the knots I learned.

So in the coming months, I hope you will understand what it means when you hear me say:

“Hooray! We have a disagreement!”

“Hooray! We have hurt feelings!”

“Hooray! We've got ourselves a conflict!”

It does not mean that I am really glad for disharmony or pain. You know me better than that by now, I hope.

I am just so eager to practice using the new skills we are learning together that can transform disagreements, hurt feelings and conflicts into a stronger, closer, more beloved community through a process of healthy communication!

I can't wait to try out these new legs and see where they can take us, I can't wait for the next opportunity to take this new vehicle out for a spin, I can't wait for us to collaborate on figuring out just the right knot to hold us together as a loving community through each new challenge!

Toddlers are awkward, always falling and getting up and falling again, and nobody is a perfect driver the first year behind the wheel. We can expect ourselves to fumble with the new tools we are learning to use. We won't always use them perfectly, they won't always make us feel good. It takes practice, practice, practice—ten thousand hours of practice to become a master, they say.

We need to be patient with toddlers, pick them up when they fall, encourage them and help them try again to gain mastery. We will need to do that with each other as we explore these new ways of being together.

The good news is that every time we use the skills, we will be learning and improving, and our congregation will be getting stronger and more resilient, and our relationships will be getting closer and deeper. Every time we go through disagreement or hurt feelings in a healthy way that protects us from getting deeply wounded we will be healing the wounds of the past, or at least creating the conditions of safety and loving community that are necessary for healing to happen.

What exactly are we learning? I hope you will come to the workshops that we are offering this Spring and Fall to find out! To see what and when the next workshop will be, go to <http://bradforducc.org/calendar-page/healthy-communication-and-beloved-community-events/>

If you do not attend any of the workshops, though, you will be seeing the skills and tools in action in meetings and one on one conversations. You will learn them on the job as we practice them. You will see how good they

can make us feel about one another and ourselves and our congregation. You will understand my eagerness when you experience the huge benefits that come through using these skills in our congregation, families, friendships, work places and communities.

Thanks to the workshops and our practice, among other things we are learning:

- to detect potential hurt or conflict when it is still in seed form, before it sprouts and grows into full fledged trouble;
- to address hurt or disagreement in that early stage when it can be most easily resolved, and do so in a direct, caring, healthy way;
- how to have difficult conversations gracefully;
- how to manage anger and anxiety when hurt feelings or disagreement or conflict arise;
- how to speak and listen respectfully and carefully;
- six different approaches to conflict resolution and when to use each style;
- how forgiveness and reconciliation work, and what we need to do to reach them.



Many of these insights, tools and skills have been developed over the past few decades. Most of us did not and could not have learned them when we were children. We cannot expect to know them or practice them without learning about them now.

What we are learning about healthy communication cannot change the fact that we have been wounded in the past. It can change the future, though. It can help us forgive, heal and reconcile, and move forward together. We can teach and model these skills so that our children will have a much better future and live in a better world because of them.



We can also hand on this beloved church to future generations in even better shape than we received it. This is one of the most important legacies that we can leave. It is as important as replacing a rotting sill or including a bequest in our will. These healthy communication skills will strengthen the church's foundation so that it can continue to stand through the inevitable changes and challenges that every congregation will face in the years ahead. These practices will help build a

beloved and loving community that can attract the people and financial support the congregation needs to keep being the living body of Christ here.

So far the workshop and the committee meetings where we have tried out our new skills have been sources of joy to many of us, to our surprise. Disagreement? Hurt feelings? Conflict? They are inevitable in any community, and no one wants them, except now for us they are opportunities for practice, and for more joy that we can look forward to in the time ahead.

This is the Easter season of new life. I am so honored and moved to get to spend it with you as new life bursts forth in this congregation. Thank you!

Easter blessings,
Tom



Prayer requests may be directed to martinastever@yahoo.com

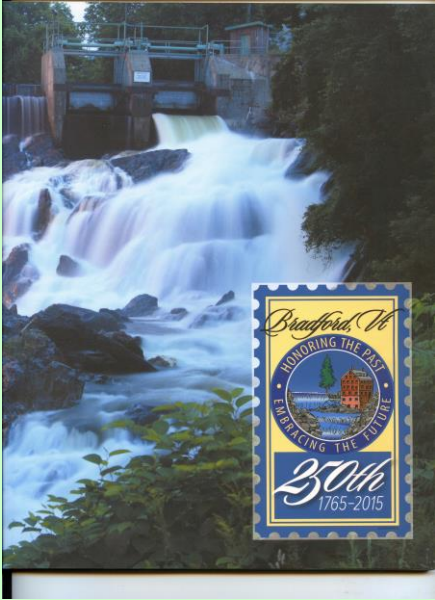
It is our privilege to pray for you and those you care about.

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

Would you like the person(s) for whom we are praying to receive a note saying we are lifting up those prayers?

Please let us know their address and we will mail it.

We keep any names, concerns, and personal information in strict confidence.



From the Historian

In the next few Epistles, I will put in the three articles submitted to the 250 Committee for their book, “*Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future.*” When they asked me to do this, I knew they would edit and probably shorten them. However, I want our parishioners to see the complete articles.

The Annual Wild Game Supper 60 years – 1956-2015

This supper started as a regular, although unique, church supper to raise money for a sidewalk to the church. It became what one well known author, Calvin Trillin in 1978 called, “The Super Bowl of Church Suppers.” It was originally put on by the men of the church under the direction of the Board of Trustees and was headed by Clifford and Helen McLam. In 1956 approximately 75 people attended to enjoy venison, coon, and rabbit. By 1965 we were serving venison, moose, bear, coon, rabbit, beaver, wild boar, elk, and caribou., and were serving 100 guests.

The Supper started changing in 1966 when Eris Eastman was asked to serve as co-chair with the McLams. We began an advertising campaign outside the local area – 200 diners were served, and women and young people worked on the supper. An annual date for the supper was set for the Saturday before Thanksgiving.

In 1967 we started mailing flyers with menus being sent to all former guests and to New England newspapers and other media. It was written about in the “Boston Herald Traveler.”

In 1970 we started keeping track of the different states and foreign countries from which our guests came. They were from 10 states. This number grew to

at least 45 states and 22 countries as of 1996 when this information was no longer kept.



The supper was covered by more and more media. Our scrapbooks show newspaper articles from all 50 states and one from a Chinese newspaper. Several radio and

TV programs have featured the supper after sending videographers and anchors to cover it. Cliff McLam, Helen McLam, Nancy Perry and Eris Eastman have journeyed to Boston and been interviewed in studio.

In 1971 the supper was named “One of the Top 20 Travel Events for November 1971” by the Discover America Travel Organization, Washington, D.C. This really started our national recognition. 1971 was the first year we used colored toothpicks and a color code index to help our diners identify the meat on their plates. We used outside grills for the first time in 1972.

Because of the ever-increasing popularity of this event, in 1974 we began having advance reservations – we served over 1000 and returned 400 reservation requests! In 1974 we started cooking our vegetables at Oxbow High School and shuttled them as needed to the church. Our first “Fact Sheets/History” were printed to be sent with Press Releases and Flyers/Menus to the media. We began in 1975 giving scholarships to five interested area students for the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Camps.

Our attendance kept increasing until in 1976, we served 1300 paying guests (100 over our limit) and returned 1500 reservation requests! On the night of Game Supper, the population in Bradford was doubled! It was decided to eliminate advertising and allowing videos of the supper until the number of returned requests was down to a reasonable number. In 1976 we started making our rolls and gingerbread at Oxbow High School. The co-founders, Helen and Cliff McLam retired after this supper.

In 1977 Gary and Marcia Tomlinson began their 10-year stint as co-chairs with Eris. A limit of 1200 guests was set. This year we published our first cookbook which was a huge success.

In 1980 we allowed TV coverage again and decided to limit our guests to 1,000 – a number that still exists. In 1981 we tried to keep track of the man hours worked by our volunteers. It was a total of 1500 by approximately 200 people. In 1982 we made a profit of over \$10,000 for the first time. This amount became our goal and we decided not to raise our prices as long as we could make \$10,000 in profit.

A change was made at this time. In the future an individual meat chairman would work under the responsibility of the cooking co-chair.

In 1987 Margaret Carlan and Rob Tomlinson became co-chairs with Eris. Some of our workers began wearing Game Supper aprons, which soon were



request ed by our guests. In 1989, by popular demand , we publish ed an updated History /Cookb ook. In

1990 we purchased and gave each volunteer and guest a Bicentennial pin to wear in 1991 to celebrate Vermont becoming the 14th State in 1791.

In 1992 Connie (Dunlap) Chipman became co-chair with Eris. She served until her death. We stopped serving coon in 1992 because of rabies in the state. In 1993 we started serving a “surprise” meat dish each year – preferably containing a new variety of wild game. This has still continued. We started making our Pheasant with Rice at the Methodist Church kitchen until we moved this detail to Oxbow High School.

In 1996 Penny (Perryman) Randall became co-chair with Connie Chipman as Eris retired in 1995. We were still serving 1000 plus diners, but it was decided to resume sending out Press Releases, as our unfilled requests were at a reasonable number. 1997 was the first year since 1974 that we served less than 1000 guests. In 1999 Connie Chipman, co-chair, passed away, and our Pastor Rev. Harvey Bartlett ably took over with help from others.

In 2000 Gary Miller became co-chair with Penny. In 2006 Shawna Wheeler



and James Perry were co-chairs. In 2007 David McLam became co-chair with Shawna. In 2008 a decision was made to limit the number of guests to 800. In 2010 Julie (Perry) Porter joined David as co-chair. They decided to try to get the number of guests back up to 1000.

Samples of unusual wild game served are deep-fried alligator, antelope terrine, roast buffalo/bison, emu sausage, moufflon ram, and red deer sauerbraten. The average amount of food it takes to serve 1000 guests plus 100-150 workers: 2900-3000 lbs. of field dressed wild game (3-4 wild boar, 100 domestic rabbits, 1-2 bear, 10-12 beaver, 24 pheasant, 1 small or ½ large buffalo, 10 deer, 100 lbs. moose, 100 lbs. any other wild game, 1200 lbs. vegetables,

1150-1200 pieces of gingerbread, 2500 dinner rolls, 30 quarts heavy whipping cream, approximately 17,000 colored toothpicks, plus beverages of cider, milk, coffee and tea. The unsuccessful meats we tried were catalina goat, goose with rice, pigeon pie, and woodchuck.

The Game Supper is unusual inasmuch as it is not a part of our by-laws and constitution nor are the co-chairs elected.

We also have Bazaar items for sale as well as history./cookbooks, aprons, T-shirts, caps, and homemade fudge (a very popular item).

In 2015, hopefully, the church will hold its 60th “Super Bowl of Church Suppers.” The “surprise” will be a surprise, and the price will be \$30.00 for adults and \$15.00 for children under 10.

Eris M. Eastman, co-chair 1966-1995
Chair *Emerita*, 1995-present

Materials from: Eris M. Eastman’s “History of the Wild Game Supper at the Congregational Church (UCC) Bradford, Vermont – 1956-2013”

Postscript: As you know now, the 60th did go on and was very successful.

Eris, Historian

Musically Speaking ... from the Music Team



The Palm Sunday Choir Festival was once again a joy in song. This 6th service in the Lenten Series traveled the week of Palm Sunday, through the Passion and into Easter.

The pews were filled to overflowing to hear the 10 anthems, our organist John Atwood's Prelude-Interlude-Postlude, and the Combined Chorus. The 200+ in attendance sang out in glorious 4-part harmony five full bodied hymns which also followed the Passion story, ending with the traditional All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name.

Choirs and individuals participating were: Grace UMC Children's Choir and Adult Choir, Topsham United Presbyterian Church, a women's trio, Tabor Valley Singers, a duet, Jeremiah Ingalls Society, West Newbury Church Choir, and the East Corinth Church Choir.



Our church's Hospitality Committee was gracious and generous in providing a bountiful reception following the service.

In March John traveled to Maine to work on an organ with David Moore of North Pomphret.

Here's a photo of John at that Bangor organ. He wrote, "It is an interesting organ because it is a combination of an organ case built in 1854 united with an organ of 1861. We rebuilt a duplicate and intact organ of 1854 which is in Salem, New York, so we know how much change happened in just seven

years. Note the gold leaf in the pipe facade."

Exciting Musical News for Bradford Congregational

On Saturday, April 30th at 7:30 pm the North Country Chorus is returning to our sanctuary for its Spring Concert. NCC will be joined by the St. Johnsbury Academy Hilltones. The featured pieces will be Franz Schubert's **Mass in G** and **Requiem for the Living** by Dan Forrest. Choruses, soloists and orchestra will be under the direction of Alan Rowe. The photo here is when some of the Chorus toured in Venice.



The other performances will be Friday 29 April, 7:30 pm, at First Congregational Church, Littleton and Sunday 1 May, 2 pm, at North Congregational Church, St. Johnsbury. Tickets are available in advance from [Catamount Arts](#): adults \$10, students \$5. Admission at the door: adults \$12, \$5 students

I've heard there's some interest in getting together to quilt.

It would be during warmer weather (not needing to heat the Vestry).

Any questions or suggestions, call Lucia Button at 222-4586



Sunday school News

March was a very busy month. The season of Lent holds many stories, activities and learning opportunities for the children.

We learned about the legend of the prayer pretzel, introduced by monks and symbolizing the folded arms of praying children. We read the story of the Last Supper and made a poster illustrating the foods that we would want to be remembered by. We also talked about and made a list of Needs versus Wants.



On Palm Sunday, our very own Caleb Peters read about Jesus's ride into Jerusalem and the peoples' shouts of Hosanna! The children participated in the service by handing out palms to the congregation.

Caleb also created a wonderful Lego model depicting the story as well, which was on display in the vestry. We made palms and donkeys and had our own parade downstairs.



Easter was a beautiful day of celebrating. The children were in their “Sunday Best” and the sanctuary was full wonderful music. Downstairs, we created our own empty tomb and sang songs.



Thank you all for your continuing support for the children. Your conversations with them and interest in their projects really help them feel great about their church!

Lectionary Readings April (year C)

Apr 2 – 2nd Sunday of Easter

Acts 5:27-32

Rev 1:4-8

John 20:19-31

Ps 118:14-29

Apr 9 – 3rd Sunday of Easter

Acts 9:1-6

Rev 5:11-14

John 21:1-19

Ps 30

Apr 16 – 4th Sunday of Easter

Acts 9:36-43

Rev 7:9-17

John 10:22-30

Psalm 23

Apr 23 – 5th Sunday of Easter

Acts 11:1-18

Rev 21:1-6

John 13:31-35

Psalm 148

May 1 – 6th Sunday of Easter

Acts 16:9-15

Rev 21:10, 22-22:5

John 14:23-29

Psalm 67

InterChurch Council

The Interchurch Council met at the GUMC for its March meeting. Its guest speaker was Anne Birch of the Pregnancy Center of the Upper Valley. There will be opening a home in Claremont called Grace House for pregnant women or those with a very young child to experience peace and learn how to incorporate it into their lives. They would stay in the house up to two years or when their child reaches 13 months old. These young women, most of whom have never known a peaceful family life, will learn coping skills through relationship building classes. In 2009 the Pregnancy Center began to notice an increase in the number of young pregnant women coming from fractured family backgrounds and realized that breaking that cycle of negativity was what they needed to focus on next.

Each young woman who comes to the Pregnancy Center is paired with a mentor family which patterns positive and peaceful family interaction and support. This is a non-denominational Christian based program but no young woman is expected to become a Christian. Volunteer opportunities will include client advocates/peer counseling, hospitality team, and the center's boutique.

The Inter Church Council voted to give 10% of its donations from the Lenten Series for the Healthy Communications workshops. Several members of the Council are attending the workshops.

Covenant Hills will not be open for campers this year but WILL be open, if there is enough interest, for a day-long church picnic event on May 5 or another summer date. It would be a Saturday, with boating, campfire, bring your own food. The group would have access to the buildings, bathrooms etc. If anyone is interested let Rob Elder know.

The Food Shelf is getting great use and donations. In addition to stocking the Bradford shelf, which is open to residents of Fairlee, Bradford and Corinth five days a week, produce and bread from Hannaford's is dispersed from Bradford to: the Senior Center, to Newbury, to West Newbury, and to West Topsham.

Marcia Tomlinson, for ICC delegate Storme Odell

To submit articles and photos for this online newsletter send to m3site@charter.net

This Bradford Congregational Church **Epistle** is posted on the first of every month, informing us of what is coming as well as celebrating what we just did. It's our version of Honey-Do and Honey-Did!

Experience us on [our Facebook page](#) ("Bradford Congregational Church") to receive real-time status updates and to set event reminders, to like us and leave a comment, and to share us out into your Facebook community.

And don't forget to bookmark [our website](#) in order to see both exciting current and planned events, worship experiences, educational opportunities, musical offerings, and sermons.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
Annual reports due

From the Clerk

The date for our church's Annual Meeting has been set for Thursday, May 19th at 7:00pm. All reports from Boards, Committees, and Officers for the Annual Report are due to the clerk by April 15th. E-mail to barbaraj33@gmail.com or mail to: Barbara Joslyn, P.O. Box 465, Bradford, VT 05033. Thank you. ~Barbara Joslyn



It's always a **DELICIOUS** time at our monthly *free* Community Supper; here are scenes from our March gathering, including Mary Sanborn's famous baked beans!



Mark your calendars!



**Every 4th
Wednesday**

**Next time it will be
April 27th, 6pm**

See you then!!!!

Will YOU be our delegate?!



2016 VT Conference Annual Meeting April 29-30 at the Lake Morey Inn

Annual Meeting Web Page is [HERE](#).

Information page is [HERE](#).

Registration page is [HERE](#).

Another example
of what our
Sunday School
creates!

