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FEBRUARY, 2016

EPISTLE

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

Our website:

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



Dear Church Family,

I have two exciting developments to announce. Please take the time to read on to the end.

First, the Pastoral Search Committee officially launched on January 10th. It was a joyful day, alive with the happy chaos of many little children and blessed with the wise words of Associate Conference Minister Pam Lucas.

The Search Committee met with Pam after worship to get organized and start their journey together. The Committee comprises Sue Eastman, Kathy Munson, Bridget Peters, Rob Taylor, Marcia Tomlinson and Charlotte Welch. The first meeting was full of enthusiasm and optimism.

Much of my time in the coming year will be spent assisting the Search Committee, beyond my regular duties of worship, pastoral care and work with the Diaconate and Church Council.

I will continue to help the congregation make progress in the interim focus areas. One of those areas is developing a congregational profile, which the Search Committee will be doing. Another is refining and fulfilling our sense of purpose and direction. To that end I hope to have another round of meetings with the committees and boards that are responsible for fulfilling parts of our Identity and Aspiration Statement so that we continue to grow in those directions.

Another interim focus area is helping the congregation develop the leadership it needs in order to fulfill its purpose and direction. Often that



means looking at the by-laws and committee structure, but what this congregation's leadership needs most is to become skilled at navigating the waters of controversy, conflict and change in a way that does not divide the congregation but rather strengthens it as a joyful, strong, united loving community. There will be challenges and difficult decisions and differences of opinion ahead—there always are! The church

leadership needs the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain the positive spirit the congregation is currently enjoying whatever the future may bring.

Who are the church leaders responsible for helping create this new culture of healthy communication and beloved community? Everyone! Every former, present and future board and committee member, every officer, and everyone who contributes in any way to the life of the church, including those who sit in the pews and visit during refreshments and those who live far away but continue to be in touch with the congregation: we each are responsible for making sure the way we participate contributes to the positive spirit.

So I am very excited to announce the development of a series of workshops and presentations on Healthy Communication and Beloved Community. As I said in my Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday sermon, a beloved community “is one that achieves peace by practicing the kind of unconditional love we see in Christ. Conflicts are inevitable, but according to King, in the Beloved Community conflicts end ‘with reconciliation of adversaries cooperating together in a spirit of friendship and goodwill.’ Our ‘Communications Guidelines to Strengthen Our Community’ say, ‘We seek to create and sustain a congregational life of inclusiveness, honesty and safety.... We are precious to one another and seek to build a beloved community in which our faith can grow.’ We promise to support one another ‘with gentleness and reverence.’ When controversy or conflict arise, we promise to ‘listen intently to understand, though not necessarily to agree

with, another person's point of view, knowing that diversity enriches our community of faith.'



The Diaconate and Board of Mission and Social Action, represented by Ginny Moore and Marcia Tomlinson, are organizing the series on Healthy Communication and Beloved Community with my help. It will begin with three workshops this spring designed to provide the foundational wisdom and skills we need. It will continue with more advanced, focused presentations in the fall.

We are very excited to announce that Nancy Permenter Brown, M.S.W. will be leading the first three workshops. Nancy and her husband, the Rev. Dr. William Cardwell Brown, have worked extensively as consultants with faith communities and other organizations and families experiencing conflict or change. Nancy has been conducting workshops on related topics over the past twenty years. She is based in Hopkinton, NH and comes highly recommended by UCC pastors and pastoral counselors. She has specialized training in mediation, conflict resolution and the *Healthy Congregations* Model. Nancy is a member of South Congregational Church, UCC in Concord, NH and has served on various boards and committees including Deacons, Music, Pastoral Relations, Stewardship, Trustees and the Church Council.

The three workshops will focus on:

1. "Prevention" of conflict;
2. "Intervention" when conflict arises;

3. “Moving Forward” beyond conflict.

The series will focus especially on churches, but the skills it provides will be applicable in any organization or family setting. It will teach:

- greater understanding of conflict and how to reach a successful resolution;
- how to listen and speak effectively;
- where to find strength and guidance to hold people together even as they disagree;
- how to manage our anger and anxiety;
- how to have difficult conversations gracefully;
- how to arrive at reconciliation through forgiveness, healing and goodwill;
- how to learn and get better at processing controversies and conflicts and changes;
- and how to talk about what has happened, what the community or congregation has learned and how it has changed so that the public sees that it has moved beyond a troubled time into a new and better life together.

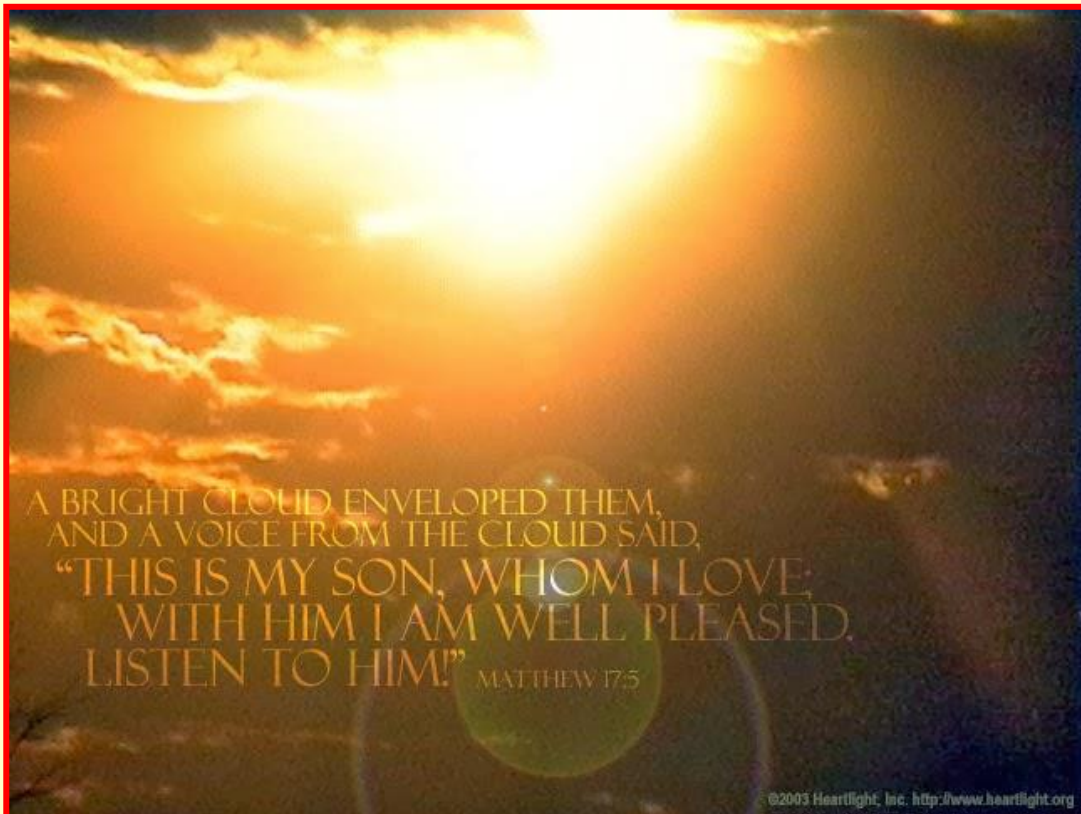
We are still in the planning stage at this writing. We think that the workshops will be held on three Saturdays from 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM with lunch provided, one a month in March, April and May. There will be a \$10.00 registration fee. The programs will be especially tailored to our congregation’s needs, but they will be open to the public and we expect everything in them to be useful to other churches and anyone in any community or family. We will be announcing firm, detailed information and opening the registration in early February. We are seeking financial support for the entire series.

Other pastors and the UCC Vermont Conference ministers have expressed excitement about this series and feel it is much needed. The need is likely to increase as churches, families, town governments and institutions deal with the stress of rapid change and an increasingly polarized society.

If I were a pastor looking for a church to serve, I would be drawn to one that had been a leader of discussion on how to be a healthy, resilient community in these times. I would be excited to see such leadership especially in a church that has had its share of troubles with hurtful conflict in the past.

Every pastor and parishioner wants to be part of a congregation that is characterized by qualities like kindness, consideration, compassion, patience, courage and forgiveness. Pastors are eager to serve congregations that are intentional about beloved community.

Thank you for all you have already done during this interim time to foster those qualities in this church. Everything we will learn in this series will



come down to how we treat one another one moment and one interaction at a time. Every act and word of kindness makes us stronger and makes us shine more brightly like a lighted window into the world.

February 7th will be Transfiguration Sunday, the glorious culmination of Epiphany, when three of the disciples witnessed Jesus revealed as a being of light. The Epiphany season is all about seeing the manifestation of God's light in Christ and in the world and in ourselves. We have so much light to celebrate this Transfiguration Sunday shining within and from us. You can see it on every page of our website, <http://bradforducc.org/>.

We will carry all that light into the wilderness of Lent as a lamp to guide our feet in dark places. Lent can feel like a long journey toward Easter, yet



every step of the way through it can be a blessing if, like Christ, we are learning in our own wilderness to be ever more dependent on the Holy Spirit to guide and empower us. That is just what the Search Committee needs, and just what we all need as we face challenges in our lives and this world. Let us enter Lent celebrating the opportunities it brings for increasing faithfulness, love and light.

See <http://bradforducc.org/calendar-page/> for the schedule of Lent and Easter. We will also be adding regularly to the news and resources pages of the website and posting past sermons and descriptions of upcoming services weekly.

Thank you for all you are doing and all you are. It is an honor to be serving with you.

Peace, joy and love,
Tom

Leading Into Lent: from the Music Team

Paying close attention to the lectionary, Rev. Kinder's focus, and liturgical tradition our organist and choir are a team working together to enhance our corporate worship experience.

Music for February begins with Transfiguration Sunday (Feb. 7) in which the brilliance of Christ is expressed in the music. The prelude will feature a work by J. S. Bach that seems to be climbing toward the brilliant sunburst at the end that is an outer worldly experience unlike anything written elsewhere in organ literature. The anthem will be an arrangement of [Cesar Franck's "Panis Angelicus"](#) in keeping with Communion. The season of Lent will showcase several North German composers whose music matches the Lenten mood. The first week of Lent (Feb. 14) will feature "[Fantasy in g Minor](#)" [BWV 562 of J. S. Bach](#) which initiates the penitential mood of the season, The choir music will also emphasize the penitential mood, yet with assurance for the future.

Prayer requests may be directed to
martinastever@yahoo.com



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

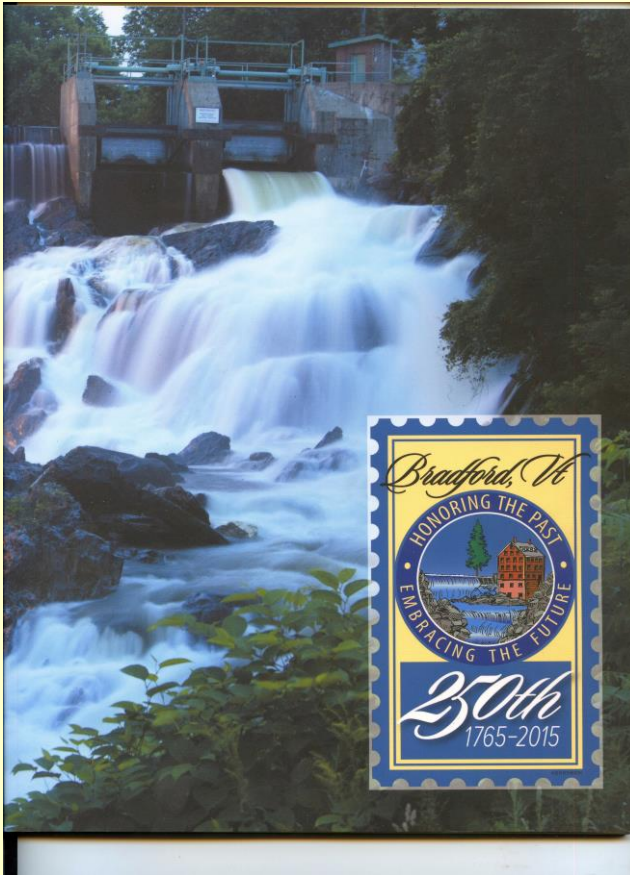
We pray for each other, *without ceasing* and your prayer requests are held in strict confidence.

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.

Part I – "The Old Church Building and its many uses"

The "Old Church" Building and Its Many Uses

1793-95

The church building was constructed by Joseph Clark and Edward Clark. This meeting house was to be fifty feet by forty feet, twenty feet high inside, with a porch at either end, one low, the other high, with belfry, steeple and spire, with a good

weathercock upon it. This building was to be well finished, well glazed, well underpinned with hard-stone, with good hard door stones. It was built with the side toward the road as was common at that time. The pews were square, the gallery extending around on three sides, the pulpit elevated with what was called a sounding board over it. For twenty years there was no means of warming it in cold weather, although it was used throughout the year.

This town church was built on the Upper Plain north of the Andrew Peters place. The high porch at one end of this building was for the convenience of those coming in horse-drawn vehicles and the low porch at the other end for those coming on foot.

1835-36

Two acres of land on Main St. was purchased from George W. Prichard for \$200. The Congregationalists purchased the Town Church building, which they had been using for \$275. This building was dismantled and re-assembled on their Main St. site with twelve feet added to its length. It was dedicated in January, 1837. There was lighting as well as heat in the building.

1866-1872

Plans were made to move the building to the rear of the lot to make room for a new church building.

May 11, 1875

The building was sold to the ladies of the church for \$200.

May 1, 1876

The keys to the new building were handed to the Building Committee. The cost, including the site and furnishings, was about \$15,000.

1876

The building ceased holding worship services. The ladies formed the Village Hall Assoc. with stockholders. Over the years this building was used for public gatherings, i.e. Lyceum, Chautauqua's, home talent shows, Minstrel shows, other entertainments, B.A. graduations, basketball games, dances, etc. until the new Bradford Academy addition (classrooms, auditorium, and gym) was built in 1936.

Spring of 1889

The Ladies Society of the Congregational Church, who owned the former church building, formed a stock company and raised first \$1,000 and then a second \$1,000 for necessary repairs of the old building. The building was raised, and an eight-foot high basement was placed beneath it; a broad flight of steps were added at the front of the building; a wood furnace was installed; two dressing rooms were made; the interior was refurbished; and addition containing a stage was built on to the rear of the building. The president of the Village Hall corporation for many years was Mrs. John C. Stearns.

1889

A vestibule was added by the Village Hall Association.

1921

The building was sold by the Village Hall Assoc. It became a motion picture house operated by George Jenkins. The small window for ventilation for the film operator was cut in the façade.

1921-1950

This building remained a movie theater ending with the Colonial Theatre.

1950

The building was sold to the IOOF Champion Lodge #17 (Independent Order of Odd Fellows) who put their symbol over the front door. In later years it was rented to the Women's Fellowship of the U.C.C. Congregational Church for its annual rummage sale.

May 21, 1970

The UCC Congregational Church bought back this building from the IOOF for \$6,000. It was bought to make more Sunday School classrooms in the basement. The auditorium was rented to the Jaycees for a summer repertory theater. It was also used as a meeting place for area youths to socialize and play games. It was the “Belly of the Whale” under the supervision of the Pastor.

Later it was rented to various groups for the same purpose (repertory theater) including a group from New York City’s Off-Broadway. Two ladies of this group started and managed it for many years as the “Old Church Theater” which it is today.

Eris M. Eastman
Historian, UCC
Clerk *Emerita*

Material from:

Rev. Silas McKeen’s “History of Bradford”

Bernard W. Crafts’ Notes

Louise Hutchinson’s “A Brief History of the Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Bradford, Vermont and of the Stained Glass Windows 1793-1993”

Eris M. Eastman’s Ephemera Collection

Cont. next month Eris, Historian



Hi all,
Just wanted to send along this photo of our first completed bulletin board!
Marcia and I assembled it yesterday afternoon, and I took a few more
portrait photos this morning, and hope to keep adding the "stragglers" over
the coming months. Got lots of good feedback during coffee hour!

Thanks everyone,
Bridget



Our Wonderful and Growing and Happy Sunday School

A huge thank you to Valley Floors for the rug donation and to North County Quilt Shop for the fabric donation! Our children love to learn and have fun in their new reading nook!!

We are also looking forward to our annual **Italian fundraising dinner** in February--stay tuned for more details on that!

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

Lectionary Readings into Lent (year C)

Feb 7 - Transfiguration Sunday

Exodus 34:29-35
Luke 9:28-36 (37-43)
2 Corinthians 3:12 – 4:2
Psalm 99

Feb 14 – 1st Sunday of Lent

Deut 26:1-11
Romans 10:8b-13
Luke 4:1-13
Psalm 91:1-2,9-16

Feb 21 – 2nd Sunday of Lent

Genesis 15:1-12,17-18
Phil 3:17-4:1
Luke 13:31-35
Psalm 27

Feb 28 – 3rd Sunday of Lent

Isaiah 55:1-9
1 Cor 10:1-13
Luke 13:1-9
Psalm 63:1-8

Mar 6 – 4th Sunday of Lent

Joshua 5:9-12
2 Cor 5:16-21
Luke 15:1-3,11b-32
Psalm 32

Mar 13 – 5th Sunday of Lent

Isaiah 43:16-21
Phil 3:4b-14
John 12:1-8
Psalm 126

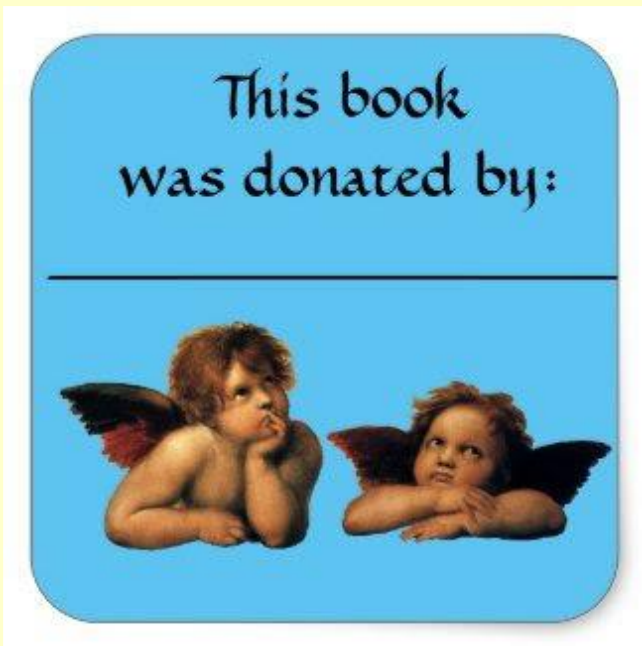
Mar 20 – 6th Sunday of Lent Palm Sunday

Luke 19:28-40
Isaiah 50:4-9a
Phil 2:5-11
Luke 22:14 – 23:56

Board of Missions and Social Action

We hope you were able to come to our Sunday morning worship service on January 31, when the Board of Missions and Social Action spoke about the Syrian Refugee Crisis. We shared current information gained from hearing guest speakers, attending an Upper Valley support group, and meeting a refugee living in our region. This crisis has touched all of our hearts so our group would like to talk about possible responses from our church. We will be looking for your feedback and praying for guidance! You can find out more about the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program at <http://refugees.org/field-office/vermont/>

Isn't it wonderful to see our Sunday School so full of children? It is truly an answer to so many of our prayers. The energy of so many young parents has breathed new life into our program. Have you noticed the cozy rug and colorful pillows? After their lesson children often snuggle down and enjoy reading a book. The only problem is that many of the books we have are dated or moldy, so the Board of Missions and Social Action is sponsoring a very local mission. Here's how it works:



Be a Book Angel!

The BMSA will buy a large selection of books earmarked for our Sunday School children. You can "purchase" a book for a donation of \$5.00, \$10.00 or \$15.00, and your name will be written on an angel book plate and placed into a basket for the children to enjoy. The reason we ask church members to be a "Book Angel" and donate funds for a book is to create a short term revolving fund so we can build a nice collection of books for our children. Many of the titles might serve as a theme for a Sunday School lesson as well!

Donations can be sent to Ginny Moore, PO Box 604, Bradford, VT 05033. Or you may personally select a book during coffee hour, down in the vestry beginning on Sunday, February 14.

InterChurch Council

The Interchurch Council met at the GUMC for their January meeting. In December the ICC was informed the Food Shelf was receiving another \$15,000 credit at the Vermont Foodbank given by the Dextra Baldwin McGonagle Foundation, Inc. whose president lives in our area. This is the same foundation that gave us \$20,000 last year, a real Godsend! A few days before learning of this donation, the ICC had placed signs at the Food Shelf advising clients that as of Jan 1st we would have to go back to one visit/month because we had used up the previous donation. Now our clients are able to visit twice a month during what might still be the hardest part of winter. The ICC will look into the best way to use this generous donation.

The 7 pm Lenten Services are set for the following:

Feb 14	1 st Sunday of Lent	at Bradford Congregational	Rev. Harvey Bartlett, speaker
Feb 21	2 nd Sunday of Lent	at East Corinth Congr'l	Marcia Tomlinson, speaker
Feb 28	3 rd Sunday of Lent	at Grace UMC	Rev. Mal Kircher, speaker
Mar 6	4 th Sunday of Lent	at Piermont Congr'l	Fr. Daniel Locanga, speaker
Mar 13	5 th Sunday of Lent	at OLPH	Rev. Jordan Shaw, speaker
Mar 20	Palm Sunday	at Bradford Congregational	Annual Choir Festival

This year's theme is the prophetic scripture and its fulfillment in the Easter Story and/or the miracles that directly relate to the Passion. All donations go to the work of the Inter Church Council.

*Coat Project: Between 400-450 coats donated. The ICC inherited this project from Carol Bellew of Bunker Hill Press of Piermont. 70 of the coats went to Operation Santa Claus. The remainder were given to the Second Hand store near The Haven in Wilder.

*Christmas Dinner: the transfer from the Moores to BethAnne Tillotson and Kim Merrill went well, with about 180 served and 15 takeouts.

*Tools for the Congo: Father Daniel is still collecting medical supplies for the cargo container. January was 'tool month' Most needed are garden tools.

*Visitation: there was discussion of assembling an Inter Church Council visitation group. ICC will look into the people that might like to be visited w/suggestions of things they like to do..(go for a ride, play cards etc)

*Upcoming Events: auction and St. Patrick's Day Corned Beef supper @OLPH

*Salvation Army: was not a banner year

*Covenant Hills in Cabot: trying for a 4 church Retreat...this place sleeps 48 people.

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 combination of Honey-Do and Honey-Did!

And see us on <https://www.facebook.com/> at **Bradford Congregational Church** for status updates and to set event reminders, to like us and leave a comment, and to share us out into the community.



It's always a **DELICIOUS** time at our monthly free Community Supper

Every 4th Wednesday

Next time it will be Feb. 24th, 6pm

See you then!!!!