

EPISTLE

September, 2016



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

[our website - click here!](#)
[our Facebook page](#)

Dear Church Family,

This month we will be hearing some of Jesus' most important teachings on discipleship and the life of faith. They remind us that following Christ is not just an extra-curricular activity, like a club or a sport. Following Christ's way is all consuming, it requires that we love God with ALL our heart and ALL our mind and ALL our soul and ALL our strength. It asks that we learn how to break down ALL barriers so that we love ALL our neighbors as our very own self.



All that “all” sounds daunting. It brings to mind the adage that 12 Step Groups offer: “It’s easy—all you have to change is everything!” Being Christ’s disciple is not easy, but it is simple—even childlike. It is a simple change of heart that changes everything. The problem is that as psychologist Carl Jung said, the simplest things are often the hardest to do, particularly the ones Christ taught.

Here is the good news: Jesus not only called us, he shared the wisdom we need and led us to the Holy Spirit that would guide and empower us every step of the way. He also taught us not to judge, and to forgive unconditionally and infinitely, so when we fall short of our all we do not have to stay down, we can get right back up and try again. Our part is to be open and willing for the Spirit to transform us and enable us to do the miracles Christ calls us to perform. We will be hearing how to do that in September's lectionary readings.



This month we will also be beginning an action packed and hugely important season of growth for our congregation. We hope to grow in mission and numbers and vitality, as well as to grow into a glorious age of this historic congregation's life under a new settled pastor. Those are wonderful and attainable aspirations. What is even more important, though, is that we grow in faithfulness and discipleship. We will hear ourselves called this fall, both as individuals and as a church, to give more of our all to the way of Christ.

We have four initiatives that our leadership will be moving forward, and you will be invited to participate in one or more gatherings focusing on each. Here are the four:

- The Pastoral Search
- Education about issues of sexual orientation and gender identity in the church and society
- Education continuing in our Healthy Communication and Beloved Community workshop series
- A study of how congregations can flourish, reading the book *Real Good Church*

You will be hearing more about these initiatives elsewhere, but here are some dates to make sure you get on your calendar. (You are asked to attend only one of the three Search Committee gatherings.)



**Prayer requests may be directed to
[our Prayer Group](#)**

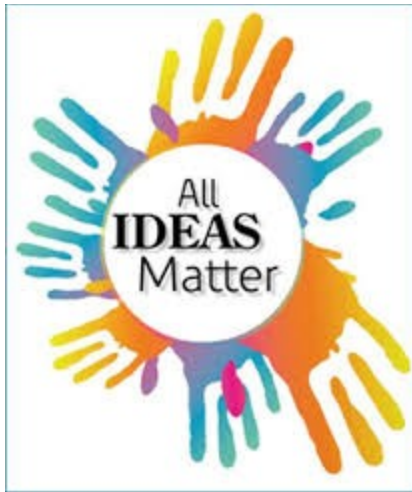
*Would you like the person(s) for whom we are praying to
receive a note saying we
are lifting up those
prayers?*

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



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

We hope you have noticed that there's a **suggestion box** on the vestry table. It's specific purpose is for members to note what they would like to learn in the upcoming educational series about issues relating to sexual orientation and gender identity.



- ✓ Want terms explained?
- ✓ Want to know what discrimination is still occurring?
- ✓ Want accurate facts and figures?
- ✓ Is there a problem right here in River City?
- ✓ What kind of help can we offer as individuals, as a church?

We have just voted to be educated, to throw open the doors of our minds and hearts to what is happening around us. Let's take advantage of this opportunity! We want to gather your ideas for the next several weeks and then pull together a panel that can answer them in October.

Diaconate ad hoc ONA Committee

Volunteers Wanted

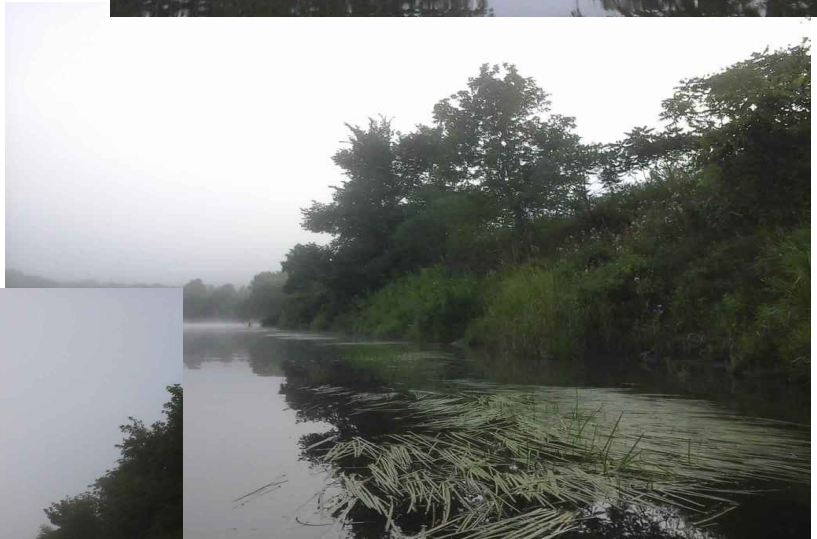


Rest Area...Sept 30 - Oct 2nd
Shifts 8:00am - 11:00am ; 11:00am
- 2:00pm ; 2:00 - closing(5:30-6:00)

We need: cookies, bars, donuts,
sweet bread...apples...any fruit...
The food must be wrapped in saran
wrap or a zip lock bag....1 ITEM per
bag...please only 1 cookie per bag or
half a slice of bread per bag.

If you can think of anything else that would sell, that would be great. We just cannot have what they sell in the machines.

Thanks, Janice Larabee



scenes from the August 7th
2nd Annual
KAYAK SUNDAY!





It was a dawn BYOB (bring your own breakfast) that began at the Bradford boat launch at 6 am with Holly in the lead and Marcia paddling the rear, no pun intended! The thick fog at first engulfed us until it began to lift, revealing a spectacular sunrise. After a brief stop at Piermont Rock we ventured on to the delightful beach further ahead where we set in to eat our



breakfasts, marvel at the calm and beauty, swim, and then return just as leisurely to the launch ... right on time for morning worship!

Your intrepid guides were Holly Young and Marcia Tomlinson

Please join us next year!



Make it a Sundaes Sunday September 11

Your Diaconate is once again inviting one and all to celebrate our church with the annual SUNDAY SUNDAY welcoming service and fellowship.



Ice Cream – toppings – fudge – whipped cream – fruit – cheese and crackers

See you then!

**There's a dazzling and exciting line-up of events coming this Fall.
Here's a sneak peek!**

Thursday, September 8th – 6:30 pm – Orientation/Identity Bible Study led by the Rev. Mark Pitton of the Vermont Conference

Wednesday, September 14th – 7:00 pm – one of three Search Committee small group meetings (members may choose one of the three to attend) at which we will share our wishes, dreams, and aspirations for the church as well as our next minister

Sunday, September 11th – Welcoming and Sundaes Sunday!

Sunday, September 18th – 11:45 am – Search Committee small group meeting with a light lunch

Saturday, September 24th – 2:30 pm – final Search Committee small group meeting

Thursday, September 29th – 7:00 pm – Orientation/Identity movie ... one of the many very good presentations as recommended by the denomination. Part of the decision of which movie to show will be based on the suggestions and ideas placed in the suggestion box by the congregation

Sunday in mid-October TBA – 11:45 am – Orientation/Identity Panel discussion and information session with a light lunch served.

Saturday, October 29th – 8:45 am to 1:30 pm – Healthy Communication workshops and Nancy Brown return!

Sunday, November 6th – 11:45 am – Orientation/Identity Circle Conversation, an intentional sharing of personal experiences about loved ones and friends who have faced the issues we've learned about. This sharing experience will be carefully facilitated in the Healthy Communications circle format.

Note that this list does not include Board meetings, Church Council, the start up of the choir, Sunday School events, the Bazaar or the Game Supper!!!

**Whew!
We are one busy and “doing”
church!**



From the Historian

Memorial Gifts to our Church
and/or Memorial Funds (1810-2016)
part one

Before 1980 there was no “official list” of Memorial Gifts. In preparation for the Dedication of the Sanctuary Renovation and the printing of “Out of Our History,” Louise Hutchinson and Eris Eastman, Clerk, researched the records and came up with a list. Soon after this, the By-Laws and Constitution added the responsibilities of maintaining a Memorial Book to the duties of the Clerk.

Here is the list at the present time and recorded in the Memorial Book:

- 1814 – Silver Communion set given by Capt. William Trotter
- 1838 – Parsonage and Church bell bequeathed by Timothy Ayer, Jr.
- 1846 – Gallery (balconey) clock – given by Johnson A. Hardy
- 1875 – Town Steeple clock – given by Charles P. Corliss
- 1877 – Library of 52 books and Bible – given by the Rev. Silas McKeen (books disappeared circa 1955)
- 1891 – ½ the amount of the church debt – given by David Blakely
- 1896 – McKeen Memorial tablet – given by Philemena McKeen
- 1900 – 2 engraved Silver Communion plates – given by William E. Norcross
- 1905 – 2 engraved Silver Trays for the tiny glasses and Dispenser for filling them (Sterling Silver), given by Adeline Low Blakely
- 1909 – Bible for Sunday School – given by M/M John W. Prichard
- 1909 – Pulpit Bible, given by Mrs. H. W. Stevens
- 1914 – Stained Glass windows
 - 1) “Christ Holding Globe” in memory of Adeline Prichard Low Blakely
 - 2) “Lamb Lying Down” in memory of George Washington Prichard
 - 3) “Symbols of Holy Week” in memory of Mary Julius Sargent
 - 4) “Seal of State of Vermont” in memory of Gov. Roswell Farnham
- 1931 – 2 Communion Plates given by Dr. F. P. Dwinell
- 1938 – Double Stained Glass Windows (“Gospels”) in memory of Alice E. Bacon
- 1941 – Altar Set (Cross and Candlesticks) given by Mrs. Ruth Keating (cross returned to Mrs. Keating in 1979 by mutual agreement when Sanctuary renovated)
- 1946 – Painting “Christ and the Doctors” given by Adeline Low Blakely
- 1956 – Vestry Piano given by Mrs. Florence Osgood (replaced in 1999 and donated to B.A. & G.S.D. Elementary school)
- 1957 – 2 Pewter Tea Plates and Pitcher given by Miss Mary Chamberlain

1958 – Empire Sofa given by Mrs. Florence Farnham Osgood (some question on this)

1959 – Home of Florence F. Osgood (formerly Gov. Roswell Farnham house) given by Mrs. Osgood's daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Carret, from Mrs. Osgood's estate – later sold and proceeds put into a Trust Fund in name of Florence Farnham Osgood.

1960 – Pipe Organ substantially rebuilt and totally altered, funded by various members and friends

1963 – Large Print Pulpit Bible in memory of Bernice Taylor by six friends

1965 – Painting of Christ – painted and given by Ann Hall

1965 – Picture of the Madonna, presented to the Sunday School in memory of her daughter, Janice Marie Kinghorn by Lena Mason

1965 – Vacuum Cleaner given by Mr. & Mrs. Maynard Denny

1967 – Small Silver Plate for communion, in memory of Mrs. Elizabeth Hale by her friends

1969 – Altar for the Sunday School, in memory of Mrs. Helen Heath by her friends

1969 – Stained Glass window (“Follow Me”) in memory of Frances Dimick Beebe by her husband, Dwight Beebe

1969 – Stained Glass Window (manger scene) in memory of Florence Farnham Osgood by her daughter, Elizabeth Carret

1969 – Stained Glass Window (descending doves) in memory of Jeanette Beebe Tillotson by her father, Dwight A. Beebe

1969 – Protective Storm Sash for each memorial window, given by various members and friends

1972 – Christian Flag, in memory of Eda Prescott by the Stever family

1974-75 – Sunday School Lectern, in memory of Dr. Gerbaine and Irene Chickering by family and friends

1980 – Sanctuary Altar, given in memory of D. Clifford McLam by Helen McLam McCoy and her family and friends

1980 – Triptych Behind Altar, built and given by the Rev. John B. Knight

1980 – Sanctuary Lectern given anonymously

1980 – Carpet in Pastor's study by Mr. & Mrs. Norman Davis

1980 – Sanctuary Renovations in memory of Mr. & Mrs. George Carson by Robert and Henrietta Simes and other donors (members and friends) and Wild Game Supper funds

? - Grand Piano, given by Estate of Mrs. Barton Hooker (Clara) – replaced and given to Brookside Nursing Home in White River Junction, VT

1991 – Hymnals, given by members and friends – see labels in front of hymnals

? - Large Print Pew Bibles

- 1) In honor of Lena Mason by Margaret Pratt
- 2) In memory of Mr. & Mrs. Herbert Perryman, Sr. by Herbert & Gene Perryman
- 3) In memory of William Lightfoot by the Wm. Lightfoot family
- 4) In memory of Harold Waterhouse by the Gary & Marcia Tomlinson family
- 5) In honor of Ethel Metcalf Weidenbach by Ezra & Eris (Metcalf) Eastman

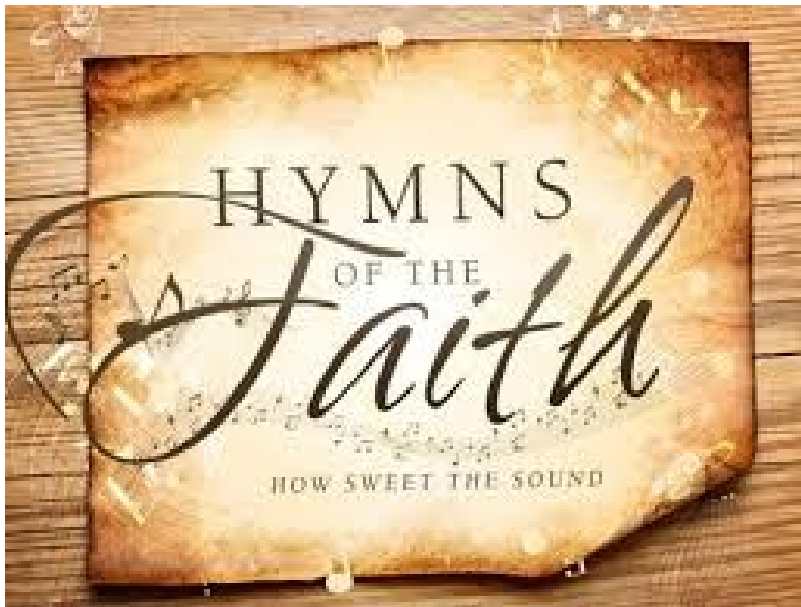
..... to be continued next month

Eris, Historian

Of Hymn Sings and Concerts

September always has a way of creeping up softly from behind the slow-paced August's back. This summer that was a song unto itself with lots of sun and warmth will soon make its final bow and step aside for the cool, crisp melody of Fall. And that will mean keeping an ear tuned here for concerts and other music news.

As soon as these are scheduled we will post them to our website and social media, as well as in the Sunday bulletin. When possible there will also be advance warnings right here in your monthly Epistle.



Anyone who would like for us to host a hymn sing, please let a member of the Music Team know (Randy Odell, Marcia Tomlinson, John Atwood, Rev. Kinder) ... if there is enough interest we'll schedule one!

From our Conference Associate Minister, Rev. Jim Thomas

Over the course of a year, I get to visit many of our congregations; sharing worship, teaching a workshop, leading retreats, and more. Sometimes I leave these interactions a bit depressed at the navel gazing and hand wringing. Other times, I can sense the excitement and commitment to discipleship that will ensure a healthy future. To paraphrase Justice Potter Stewart, I'm not sure how to define Congregational Vitality, but I know it when I see it.

When I speak about Vitality, one of the ways that I recommend to nurture it is by reconnecting to the community in mission and ministry. Dr. Lovett Weems Jr. of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership points out that the longer a congregation exists, the less connected it tends to be with its community.



New congregations have to pay attention to trends and demographics to ensure their survival. As congregations become settled and stable and larger, their focus invariably shifts from reaching new disciples to caring for current members. It's a shift from external sensitivity to internal focus. The longer a congregation exists, the more disconnected it can become. That's not good news for our churches, now averaging almost 200 years old.

Churches that seek a renewed sense of vitality can often find it by reengaging their communities, finding a renewed passion and purpose in serving others. Moreover, this mission and ministry can become an important new entry point for both participation in the life of the church and financial support. Time and again I see examples of our churches that are receiving significant financial support from members of the community they serve - from those who are not members or even attendees of worship. This support comes when the congregation establishes itself as a spiritual and literal force for good; where the congregation is perceived as 'value added' to the community at large, not just its membership. These same congregations are, by no coincidence, growing numerically. It's important to note that this is mission and



ministry done 'with' your community, not 'to' or 'for' your community. It's a partnership.

Imagine then, my delight after a visit with the Waitsfield United Church of Christ last evening to talk about their stewardship campaign. This is a congregation that through regular community meals and a myriad of other ways has successfully reengaged their community. They are, just a few months in, very close to reaching their Capital Campaign stretch goal of \$375,000. This will be added to more than \$260,000 in grant monies already awarded to improve their facility to better meet the needs of their community.

Here's the part I don't want you to miss. About 25% of the contributors, and more than 50% of the total funds, came from people unaffiliated with the congregation. Let that sink in for a bit. A congregation that is seen as an important, contributing partner to the community in which they reside can expect significant financial support from that community. It can also expect growth in attendance and participation. It's not WHY you reengage your community, but it is an anticipated positive result.

To return to Dr. Weems, he invites you to ask yourself this question: "If your church closed today, who would miss it other than your members?"

If your congregation is ready to recommit to local mission and ministry, to reengaging with your community, we're here to help. We'd be honored to walk the journey with you. Be in touch!

Peace,
Jim
Rev. Jim Thomas
Associate Conference Minister for
Stewardship, Church Vitality and Finance

Board of Missions and Social Action

The Board of Missions and Social Action recently had a meeting, and boy what an amazing group of people we have! Over the summer, through our outreach to Bradford Elementary School, we were able to connect families to scholarships that were available to send Bradford kids to summer camp this year. We were very grateful that we could do this for the children in Bradford and hope to be able to continue this support next year.

Missions is now gearing up to start the Church World Service Health and School Kits in the month of October and ending in November. We are hoping to continue our past partnerships with the Sunday School and Storm Odell to create these kits. More details to come, stay tuned! As you know, there is so much that Missions does throughout the whole year for those in need.

Whether it is Neighbors in Need, the Vermont refugees program, or One Great Hour of Sharing. A lot of effort goes into these different outreach programs and they are all successful because of your generosity. Because there is so much going on, and it is often hard to keep track of it all, below is a list of upcoming missions that the BMSA is involved in. Please put them on your calendar so they can be successful again this year. Thank you so much for all of your support.

October-November: Church World Service health kits and School kits

October: Neighbors in Need Collection

December: Christmas Fund Collection

Some links to important One Great Hour of Sharing and Church World Service stories and news

[This is Frank](#) ... One Great Hour of Sharing helps get food to those who need it most. Click here to watch Frank's story.

[SUPPORT U.S. DISASTER RESPONSE](#)

Widespread, devastating flooding in Louisiana; other floods and tornadoes across the U.S. South, Southwest and Midwest; wildfires in California; the water crisis in Flint, Mich - there are so many U.S. disaster recovery needs right now. Read about UCC Disaster Ministries' response in the [Disaster Updates](#) section of this website, and support these and other domestic response efforts through the [UCC's USA Relief Fund](#).



and did you know about ? **AmazonSmile** ... ?

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to United Church Of Christ whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.

Visit: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/13-1957221>.

and ...

CWS Kits are small packages of supplies assembled by volunteers and shipped to families and communities in need around the world.

[Watch here to learn just how our kits are distributed and welcomed](#)

and lest we ever forget what we've been doing for so many years
[the CWS blankets](#) through the Blankets Plus program.

Lectionary Readings **September** (year C)

Sept 4 - 16th Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 18:1-11 Philemon 1-21 Luke 14:25-33 Psalm 139:1-6,13-18

theme hymn: *Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*

Sept 11 - 17th Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28 1 Timothy 1:12-17 Luke 15:1-10 Psalm 14

theme hymn: *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy*

Sept 18 - 18th Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 8:18 - 9:1 1 Timothy 2:1-7 Luke 16:1-13 Psalm 79:1-9

theme hymn: *O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go*

Sept 25 - 19th Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 32: 1-3a, 6-15 1 Timothy 6:6-19 Luke 16:19-31

Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16

theme hymn: *Now Thank We All Our God*

Oct 2 - Lamentations 1:1-6 2 Timothy 1:1-14 Luke 17:5-10 Psalm 137

theme hymn: *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*

Starting this month, a (Pilgrim Hymnal) hymn on the Lectionary selections is added so readers may carry the theme in tune form throughout their week!

