

EPISTLE

May, 2019

WARNING: The 208th Annual Meeting of the Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ, Bradford, Vermont will be held on Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 7:00 pm in the church vestry.

Bradford Congregational Church – UCC
An Open & Affirming Congregation!
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email us at: bradfordvtucc@gmail.com
see us on Facebook: **Bradford Congregational Church**

Word From The Pastor

Easter is behind us. We passed through all the commemorations of Holy Week and have come out on the other side. But to say that Easter is “behind us” may be misguided. People have a tendency to think that any event that is “behind us” is something we can move beyond – like having fallen and injured ourselves. It is “behind us” meaning it is in the past and while it may have been a significant life event, the purpose of life is to move into the present unencumbered by the past. We can move on, often as if the event was an inconvenience to the life we were meant to be living.

Easter, however, is to have the opposite effect. Easter is meant to inform and shape our present. It is a revolutionary event where the calculus of the world’s moral reckoning is shattered by a newfound fact. If Copernicus’ discovery of a heliocentric solar system caused a revolution in astronomy and became the foundation for new understanding, the resurrection of Jesus is meant to set our understanding of power, goodness and grace on a new footing. It is not merely an event. It, like the Copernican revolution, is a discovery.

Our task, then, is not to set Easter “behind us” but to set it before us. Easter is to become the guiding principle for life, the new calculus for moral behavior.

One is not defeated by the foolishness of compassion but made triumphant in the eyes of God. One is not diminished by being the least, but exalted as the greatest. One is not ridiculed for being meek, but made the rightful heir of all the world. One is not crippled by suffering, but can now find suffering to have a redemptive purpose.

We know all this, right? Why, then, is it so difficult to live it? I imagine it is like placing the Sun at the center of our solar system. We know Copernicus got it right. We have shaped our science in the light of that fact. Yet we still speak of the Sun coming “up,” when in reality the Sun does not move relative to the earth. So it is in the world of ethical and religious truth. We know that virtue rests with those who live their lives for others, but as we live our lives, the ethical calculations of the world make it look like the strong prevail against the weak, that the Golden Rule of “do under others as you would have it done unto you,” is a frail substitute for the “Silver Rule” of “do it unto others before they have a chance to do it unto you.” Just like those who live in the world of astrophysics are fools if they do not conform their science to the findings of Copernicus, those of us who claim Christ as our savior are fools if we ignore the truth of Easter’s revolution. To make it something that is “behind us” rather than something which is meant to guide us into the future is like claiming that the Sun orbits the earth rather than the other way around. Cling, then, to the power and truth found in the affirmation of “He is risen” and let it guide us to the glory God has set before us. Easter is not “behind us.” It is before us.

Faithfully,
Pastor Jeff



From your Diaconate

A reminder: every Communion Sunday small “Diaconate Fund” envelopes are placed in the pews. It is through your generosity that the Fund is available for helping those in need, be it heating oil, electricity, shelter, food, or medicine. Every donation, no matter its size, is graciously accepted!

Blessings to you all, from your Board of Deacons.

Our Church Family

For several weeks in the vestry the Board of Mission & Social Action displayed the “ingredients” to make Church World Service health and school kits. Thanks to the generosity of Women's Fellowship, the BMSA and church family we constructed 34 health kits and 34 school kits. They will all go to ST. J at the end of the week to be shipped to a warehouse and be ready for distribution following a domestic or international disaster.

Stay tuned for a possible re-start of the Youth Group!



Micah and Bob huddle over a new puzzle

Coming to our sanctuary **May 4th**

North Country Chorus NCC Spring Concert

Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* and Gabriel Faure's *Requiem*.
Performances:

May 3 (Friday) at Littleton Congregational Church, 7:30 pm

May 4 (Saturday) in our church, 7:30 pm

May 5 (Sunday) at South Church, St. Johnsbury, 3:00 pm

Palm Sunday Choir Festival

Thank you, everyone, for your help behind the scenes as well as in attendance for this year's festival. We continue to hear accolades from participants and attendees. This is one of several events our church hosts every year, much to the delight of the churches surrounding us. I think I speak for us all that the debut of the Grace Bell Choir was heavenly!

I am always open to suggestions, comments, and ideas for next year's festival. But fair warning, if you want less hymns you're out of luck!

Marcia Tomlinson

Sometimes events and/or changes come up after the Epistle has been uploaded. It's always good to check the Weekly Email for last minute updates.

To be added to the **Weekly Email** list, [click here](#). If you have an area event to list in the weekly Email's "Around Town" section, please let us know!

May Adult Study:

The adult study group for the Lord's Prayer will be soon. Watch the Weekly Email for the starting date and time. We will be taking the prayer phrase by phrase in contemplation and discussion.



Illustration 1: It takes many hands and lots of courage to change THIS lightbulb!

Lectionary Readings MAY (Year C)



May 5 -

Acts 9:1-6 (Christ's tormentor is transformed)

Revelation 5:11-14 (worthy is the lamb that was slain)

John 21:1-19 (commissioned to “feed my sheep”)

Psalm 30

theme hymn: *Blessing and Honor and Glory and Power*

May 12

Acts 9:36-43 (God will stand by those without power or hope)

Revelation 7:9-17 (vision of glory and joy of the faithful)

John 10:22-30 (Jesus' flock hears and follows him)

Psalm 23

theme hymn: *Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine*

May 19

Acts 11:1-18 (Peter explains God's challenge to him)

Revelation 21:1-16 (the new Jerusalem comes down on the promised day)

John 13:31-35 (Christ gives glory to God in the life he led)

Psalm 148

theme hymn: *Spirit of the Living God*

May 26

Acts 16:9-15 (Lydia's heart is opened to Paul's message)

Revelation 21:10,22 - 22:5 (friends and foes reconciled)

John 14:23-29 (the Paraclete is sent)

Psalm 67

June 2

Acts 16:16-34 (defeat transformed into victory)

Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21 (the Alpha and the Omega)

John 17:20-26 (we are united in Christ)

Psalm 97

theme hymn: *We All Are One in Mission*

June 7 - Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21 (let me tell you about Jesus!)

Romans 8:14-17 (live in harmony)

John 14:8-17 (more on the Paraclete)

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

theme hymn: *Come O Spirit, Dwell Among Us*

June 14

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 (Wisdom was present at the creation)

Romans 5:1-5 (stand up straight ... and rejoice!)

John 16:12-15 (the Spirit of Truth will guide us)

Psalm 8

theme hymn: *Ancient of Days*

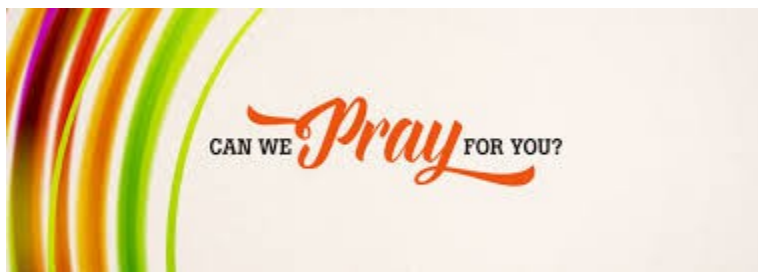


**Prayer requests may be emailed to
our prayer group or [here](#)**



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.**



This Epistle is a monthly publication of the Bradford Congregational Church. It is uploaded just before the 1st of each month. Anyone wishing to receive the email notification of it may request it by emailing the church email below.

Some helpful links:

- our website is <http://bradforducc.org/>
- our church's email is bradfordvtucc@gmail.com
- Click on [EPISTLE](#) to read back issue of this newsletter
- our Sunday School, Music and Missions are at [Programs](#)
- Past Sermons can be accessed at [News & Sermons](#).
- our congregation's activities are listed on our [online calendar](#)
- our Facebook page link is [Bradford Congregational Church](#)