

EPISTLE

October, 2017



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

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Rev. Jeffrey Long-Middleton, who filled our pulpit on September 10th, has with his wife Ellen recently retired to Grand Isle after a pastorate of 38 years and raising four sons! At a special meeting of the Church Council on Sept. 24th it was unanimously voted to call Pastor Jeff and he has accepted with joy! He was active in establishing a Habitat for Humanity chapter in New Jersey, was a member of the Board of Directors of Howard Mental Health, and Burlington (VT) Peace Fellowship, and assisted in establishing the Burlington Emergency Shelter. Please extend a very warm welcome to Pastor Jeff!

Dear Church Family,

I am very excited to be the “Bridge Pastor” for this time of exciting transition. I understand my role to be one of preparing the way for your settled pastor. I take as my text the fortieth chapter of Isaiah. It speaks to a people coming out of trouble and transition to a renewed sense of their place within God’s purpose. The fourth verse gives expression to our mutual task: “Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.”

So what are the mountains we must climb? What are the rough places that need to be made into a plain? I cannot say. I turn to you and I trust that you know

what waits to be done if we are to become a strong and vigorous expression of Christ's body in the world.

It is the world that waits for our witness. We stand at a strange junction – called to be in the world but not of the world. In this age that sees falsehood proclaimed as truth, when the divide between the have and the have-nots grows ever wider, when we divide our nation between red and blue, black and white, and the needs of the least are lost amidst the greed of a few, the world cries for a people who will dare to be in the world but not of the world, who dare to hold themselves to a higher value than the expedient, who dare to form the cross at the intersection between the horizontal “way of humanity” and the vertical “way of God.” We did not choose the era in which we live. But amidst the challenge before us is the clarity of our purpose. This is our time and the ministry to which we have been called. While history is filled with calamitous moments, this the calamitous moment placed before us. Here. Now.

We have been tasked with proclaiming justice, with practicing mercy, and living out the calling of the Kingdom of God. We as individuals cannot do this alone and it will take more than the partial witness of Christ's Body. It will take our combined effort to make straight in the desert a highway for our God. The task begins now.



Faithfully,
Pastor Jeff

Singing a New Song



As a result of a request by the Ushers, the Diaconate met the end of August and discussed in length requesting the church purchase a set of “New Century Hymnals” to be an additional worship resource along with the NRSV Bible and Pilgrim Hymnals.

The hymnals were ordered by the Trustees and once here, the Diaconate will prepare a litany of dedication for their introduction to worship, and also will provide any congregant the opportunity to donate the cost of one or more in honor of a loved one (the same as was done for the Bibles and the Pilgrim Hymnals also). **If you would like to donate the cost of one or more please let a Deacon know; we are preparing special commemorative nameplates for the books.**

Why an additional hymnal? In the Preface of our 1931/1958 Pilgrim Hymnal the editors wrote, “Every generation responds to the call of Christ in its own distinctive way. There is a need for periodic revision of our hymnals ... (responding to) recent developments in hymnody, in church life, and in world history ...”

These additional hymnals will be placed at both ends of the pews because at present the pew racks are full. An alternative would be for the hymnals to be handed out with the bulletins. Both of these seem to work for other churches and with the input of the Ushers we will be watching to see what works best for our worshippers.

We invite you all to read the Preface in this new hymnal, and to come to appreciate the prayer and research and effort involved in its preparation by this new generation of liturgical music editors.

Responding As Best We Can



The Diaconate is so pleased with the hearty and prompt response (no surprise to us!) of our congregation to the call for financial help for those who need hurricane relief. As of this writing **\$285** has been donated and the Diaconate will match that aggregate up to \$250. It may seem such a small amount when billions of dollars are needed, yet we know from scripture that our offerings are equally blessed as those in the millions.

Mark 12:41-16:20 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

“He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

Blessings and thanks to all who gave and are still giving.

To Everything There Is a Season

The all-church Apple Social was held the afternoon of September 24th, and the enthusiasm for picking and pressing the apples was undiminished by the unseasonable heat! Hosted by Bob & Kathy Munson, this event has become one eagerly anticipated by all ages. Several gallons of oh-my-good cider was made and distributed to eager workers, along with Kathy's beautifully packaged homemade apple-shaped cookies.



Opening their beautiful garden-strewn property to us all, it was delightful to see youngsters and not-so-youngsters strolling to the Fairy Garden, to the Peace Garden, darting to and fro in the orchard, watching fish in the pond, and resting on the many benches and seats.

We were extravagantly welcomed and loved!

... and seasonal Sundae Sunday of welcome



On October 8th we will enjoy (and savor!) our annual Sundae Sunday after the worship service. Of great joy this year is that this will also be the first Sunday of our new Interim Minister Pastor Jeff! We do hope you will be able to join us in this welcoming tradition.



Annual Harvest Bazaar

The 2017 Harvest Bazaar is right around the corner and we need your help! Below are the areas that need donated items for

- Candy table- fudge, brittle, bark, treats. Please label your items if they DO HAVE nuts.
- Food table- breads, cookies, jellies, pickles, and other baked goods. Please label your baked goods if they DO HAVE nuts.
- Craft table- knitted and hand made items of any kind. some examples are socks, scarves, aprons, hats, mittens, quilts, jewelry
- Attic collectibles table- any gently used items that someone may find as a collectible.
- New addition this year, All Holidays Table! - if you have anything holiday related that we could sell, for example pre-owned ornaments or decorations, hand made holiday items. All holidays welcome: Any season!

Luncheon is from 11-1 and will be chili and cornbread with apple crisp and cider. Please contact Maribeth if you could work in the kitchen.

Date 10/14/17
Time 9am-2pm
Luncheon Time 11-1

Please bring items in beginning Thursday 10/12 and Friday 10/13. Please bring food items on Friday. Church will be unlocked.

Thank you!



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.**

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 United Church of Christ



(check out your conference's website [here](#))

What are the things, the practices, the habits that renew and restore you, especially when you are feeling overwhelmed, especially in these days of anxiety and uncertainty? While Pam Lucas will have much more to say about the Clergy Convocation just ended, I want to reflect on one aspect I found nurturing and life giving over these past few days.

The theme of water and living water was woven throughout our time together. For many of us, being around, on or in water is in and of itself renewing. One of our clergy brought her kayak for the free time. Another rode his bike out the Causeway in Lake Champlain. Some of us fish. Some swim. The sound of a tricking fountain accompanied our time. Many of us shared stories of healing and hope found beside still (and not so still) waters.

All of us have places, activities or practices that as the Psalmist says, "restore our souls." The challenge is making the time and space to do those things that we know bring renewal and respite to our souls. We all know we "should" do these things but often do not make the commitment to the very things that will help us to approach life and ministry with renewed energy and even insight.

As the busy fall washes over us with commitments, emails, responsibilities, carve out a space to do that which gives you joy. For those of you who knew Rufus Cushman, a saint of this conference, this was his never flagging question, "What gives you joy?" Go for a walk, go through Smuggler's Notch before the snow flies, use these precious warm days to enjoy living water, play music, better yet, play music with friends, build a bonfire, drink some cider and know that the work and ministry will be there for you with or without these breaks.

Blessings on your lives and the rhythms of work and renewal, activity and rest, weariness and refreshment. Let us be good about this balance for ourselves and let us gently remind our friends and loved ones when the balance is lost.

In the peace that passes understanding,
Lynn

Board of Missions and Social Action

In September, the Board of Missions and Social Action's meeting to plan what we would like to do for this coming year got us all rejuvenated and excited! Being a part of this wonderful group is one of the many things that makes our church great.

A note about the Help Kids India Benefit dinner

On August 19th, the BMSA hosted the Help Kids India benefit dinner. It was such a wonderful feeling seeing everyone work together to make this dinner happen. The volunteers exemplified the motto "many hands makes light work". If it were not for the volunteers and the support of the church, this dinner could not have happened. Because of all of the support, the dinner raised \$ 3,800 for this worthwhile charity.

Book Club

The BMSA is hosting another book club this fall. We will be reading *Nickel and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich. The book is about the author's experience when she decided to go "undercover" to see what it would be like to live on minimum wage for one year. We will be having a brunch and book discussion on October 28th. If you are interested in reading the book and being apart of the book discussion, please see Holly, Ginny, Patrick, or Lucia, for a copy of the book.

Collections

The Neighbors in Need collection is set for October 8th, but we will be taking donations for it through October 15th. Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry(CAIM). Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries(JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants.

Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice.

Church World Service

Again this year, you will have the opportunity to assemble Church World Service Hygiene and School Kits at our “Build-a-Kit” workshops after church during coffee hour, from October 15 to November 12. We are also soliciting donations for these kits. Below is a list of items that go into each kit. Church World Service is very particular about what goes into the kits, so we really need to stick to what is on the list. Don’t have time to shop for items? Have someone for Missions do it for you instead! We will happily accept donations towards buying items too! Ready, set, let’s build, and make this year’s school and hygiene kit building the best we have ever had!

School Kit

One pair of blunt scissors removed from the package (round tip only)

Three 70-count bound notebooks or notebooks totaling 200-201 pages.

One 30-centimeter, 12” ruler

One hand-held pencil sharpener removed from the package

One large eraser (no pencil cap erasers)

Six new, unsharpened pencils with erasers removed from the package

One box of 24 crayons



Hygiene Kit

One hand towel measuring approximately 15”x 28” to 16”X 32”(No fingertip, bath, dish towel, or microfiber)

One washcloth

One wide-tooth comb removed from the package

One fingernail or toenail clipper removed from the package

One bath size bar of soap in the wrapper

One toothbrush in the package

One toothbrush in the package

Ten standard size Band-Aids



A very special talk with a very special friend ...



This photo was taken on the day our congregation surprised Eris Eastman with a round of applause and gifts for her so-many years of dedicated service to the Church's Wild Game Supper. Shown here from left to right are: GS co-chair Rob Tomlinson, Eris, Ezra (Bud) Eastman, Marcia Tomlinson and Bobbi Mosenthal.

When asked this week what was she most proud of having accomplished, or of having participated in during her 65 years with the Bradford Congregational Church, her first thought went back to the 1960s when our church hosted the 3-day Vermont Congregational annual Meeting. Our church hosted the event twice, but it's the second time she recalls with special delight. She says she volunteered to co-chair if Nancy Perry would also. Who knew then that this dynamic team would come back to work hard on yet another stellar church event. But more on that later!

The second Congregational Annual meeting was held in mid-May and was the largest one to date. Eris was one of those who made sure everyone was housed with host families, or found lodging in towns as far ranging as White River Junction due to the sheer number of attendees. Knowing the meeting would be held before lilac season, lilacs were brought indoors and forced with perfect timing to be in full bloom for the weekend event held at the Armory. Eris recalls as if it were just yesterday how Miriam Parrott, a home decorator who lived on Kidder Road,

transformed the hall into a lush garden of birch trees (birches planted in tall containers) and baskets and baskets of white lilacs, the sight and scent of which was a delight to the senses.

Eris recalls so fondly how our minister, P.V. George put on an Indian Dinner at the meeting, doing the cooking himself and teaching anyone who wanted to learn. Huge dinners are nothing new for the Bradford Congregational Church!

Of course, nothing can compare to the sheer volume of dedication and hard work Eris put into the Game Supper. She remembers attending in the early 60s when it still a small Trustees fund-raiser dinner put on by the men for men (hunters). Eris remembers attending with Ezra and Cliff asking if she would take over handling the dining room and also publicity. And that is how, in 1966 Eris devised not only the like clock-work precision of the dining room but also the system of ticket sales wherein everyone is given a fair chance to secure a ticket. It was patterned on the way World Series tickets used to be sold, by ensuring all ticket requests were posted no earlier than a set date, and then opening them as they arrived.

It was a system which became increasingly necessary because in the mid-70s the publicity which Eris pursued had caused a tremendous popularity for the event, growing from 76 diners in 1966 to 1,400 in 1976. She said she will never forget when we had to turn away 1,400 dinner-hopeful because we already had 1,400 reserved. That was the last year we attempted to feed that many because the last of the diners came through after 9 pm and clean-up didn't finish until dawn.

All these years Eris was was the one who would greet every single diner as they completed going through the buffet line and would guide them to their waiting table. So many times, she would smile hugely at children being introduced to their first game, only to return year after year, bringing fiances, spouses, and finally their own children. And Eris remembered them all!

Another system put into place by Eris was the critique, held after the last of the diners had left. The various heads of committees would gather to eat and discuss what had gone right and why, and what had not gone right and why.

Eris would start the week after Thanksgiving planning for the next year's supper. In a pre-computer age, she was always in written contact with newspapers, radio and television stations, and magazines. She is rightfully proud of the dozens upon dozens of press releases and interviews and accommodations (a governor

helicoptering in, an NBA basketball star coming in the back, sending Nancy McLam and Nancy Perry to Boston to be on TV, etc.)) she made for the supper.

Why did Eris pick these two particular events? She smiled as she thought about that and said “Well, I guess I grew up with the Game Supper ... Evan has just got his first deer that year.” And the Congregational Annual Meeting? “Ah, that was a once in a lifetime event!”

As we sat and chatted about people and times of her life, Eris remembered something else she was proud to have been a part of, the March of Dimes. First, she chaired the effort in Bradford and then Orange County, and eventually worked on the Vermont drive. When it was so greatly needed, Eris was there to help organize and accomplish the steep goal for victims of polio.

We chuckled when I asked Eris what committees and boards of the church she has served on. “I think it would be easier if I tell you the ones I haven't,” she laughed. Of all the many ways in which a woman could serve the church then, here are the ONLY ones she didn't do: Music Committee, Deacons, Moderator, and Treasurer. She also was never the Superintendent of the Sunday school, although she did teach grade 5/6 for six years and did serve on the board of Christian Education.

For those of us who know and love Eris, we are also deeply appreciative for the years of service she has dedicated to our church. And she will always hold a very dear place in the hearts of the young girls who have been drawn to her over the years, little ones who were welcomed into her pew with warm hugs and dangling earrings and bracelets and necklaces. And she will always have a special place in the hearts of the young boys, now grown men, for whom hers was an always open door for discussing whatever was weighing them down at the time.

Eris, we love you.

Lectionary Readings **OCTOBER** (Year A)



October 1

Exodus 17: 1-7 (rock of ages cleft for the Israelites!)

Philippians 2:1-13 (he took on human form)

Matthew 21:23-32 (2 sons and vineyard work to be done)

Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16 (Incline your ears to God's teaching)

theme hymn: *At the Name of Jesus*

October 8

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20 (the Mosaic covenant)

Philippians 3:4b-14 (to be “in Christ”)

Matthew 21:33-46 (parable of the wicked tenants)

Psalm 19 (the heavens tell the glory of God)

theme hymn: *Be Thou My Vision*

October 15

Exodus 32:1-14 (the Golden Calf! Moses intercedes for the People)

Philippians 4:1-9 (seek unity, harmony, in the Lord)

Matthew 22:1-14 (wedding feast parable)

Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23 (forgive our golden calf moments)

theme hymn: *Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart*

October 22

Exodus 33:12-23 (Moses plead for the people ... again!)
I Thessalonians 1:1-10 (a church strong in life and faith)
Matthew 22:15-22 (render unto Caesar ...)
Psalm 99 (Praise God's saving acts)
theme hymn: *I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me*

October 29

Deuteronomy 34:1-2 (Moses viewed the Promised Land ... from afar)
I Thessalonians 2:1-8 (God gave Paul and the church the strength)
Matthew 22:34-46 (loving God=loving your neighbor=loving God)
Psalm 90:1-6,13-17 (God is our best dwelling place)
theme hymn: *For the Beauty of the Earth*

November 5

Joshua 3:7-17 (God is with His people into the Promised Land)
I Thessalonians 2:9-13 (they welcome God's word despite sufferings)
Matthew 23:1-12 (greatness is revealed only in service to others)
Psalm 107:1-7,33-37 (the redeemed give praise)
theme hymn: *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*

November 12

Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25 (ceremony of covenant renewal)
I Thessalonians 4:13-18 (all believers will share in the resurrection)
Matthew 25:1-13 (parable of the bridesmaids)
Psalm 78:1-7 (tell the children of their God)
theme hymn: *Watchmen, Tell Us of the Night*

The theme hymns listed with the Lectionary reading lists are found in our hymnals and/or the Hymn folders and are listed here only as lyrical illustrations of the week's scripture selections, so readers may carry the theme in tune form throughout their week! Click on their titles to hear them.



PLEASE consider going paperless for this monthly newsletter.

Notify us by [clicking here](#)



Happiness is the Community Supper!

**Every 4th Wednesday ... our next will be October 25th
... see you then!**