

# EPISTLE

June, 2018



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

our website: <http://bradforducc.org>  
email us at: [bradfordvtucc@gmail.com](mailto:bradfordvtucc@gmail.com)  
see us on Facebook: **Bradford Congregational Church**

## **Message from Pastor Jeff:**

### **The Long View**

We live in an age of immediate gratification. We want what we want now, not in some promised future. After all, how can we measure the success of our efforts if we must wait for the result? The longer the wait, the more distant the connection between our effort and our intention becomes. Our age wants results in the now of our immediate context and thus faith is a hard sell.

Faith, you see, is not predicated on immediate fulfillment. Indeed, if it were it would not be faith – we would act in faith and our act would be immediately rewarded. But that is not how faith works – in part because the things of real worth are realized by living in the faith that our reward awaits us in an unseen future.

This past week I planted a flowering tree at our home. The trunk is maybe an inch in diameter. My purpose was two fold. First, I wanted a future affirmation of spring's arrival. I won't see any flowers this year, but maybe next year. My second purpose is to provide some shade for our deck. In the afternoon, the sun is so intense that it severely limits the use of the deck. It will be years before that second purpose is realized. I hope to someday see both the flowers of spring and my hoped for shade. We'll see. Most likely the tree will outlive me. I hope it does. It will serve as my gift to some unknown beneficiary. To plant a tree, or a garden is always an act of faith. Unstated in our planting is our trust in a future yet unseen.

Horticulture is not the only place where faith is woven into our action. Kindness,

taking a courageous stand for what is good, these may not have immediate rewards. Indeed, courage can get you into trouble when insisting on doing what is right when others have staked our futures on some moral expediency. And the good we do is not always perceived as good by those for whom we do it. When a child is prevented from pursuing a dangerous course of action, she may not see it as a kindness to protect her from harm. Indeed, the child may see the parents' good intention as an arbitrary abuse of power. The parent knows better. The child lacks the developed faith to see it as a form of caring.

I, too, may fail to take the long view faith requires. I, like the Israelites of old, may lack the needed faith to wander in the wilderness of unfulfillment. But in my better moments, I hold to the insight of Julian of Norwich – “All will be well.” Her insight is only possible if we take the long view. In the interim, let me share with you what gives me solace in the wisdom of Reinhold Niebuhr:

“Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we must be saved by love. No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe as it is from our standpoint. Therefore we must be saved by the final form of love which is forgiveness.”

Take the long view. Live in faith. Trust in the goodness of God. The reward may lack immediacy but what it lacks in speed it makes up in value.

Faithfully,  
Pastor Jeff



## Community Supper

We're looking forward to seeing you on June 27<sup>th</sup>

**Reminder: The Community Suppers are now the  
4<sup>th</sup> THURSDAY of each month**

Hope you can join us!



*Always plenty for everyone at Community Supper*

It is a wonderful time to be on the **Board of Missions and Social Action**. We have so many exciting things that we are doing throughout the year! For example, we recently hosted a showing of *It's Criminal* with a panel discussion at the Bradford Academy. This was a very moving night filled with tears and hope. We also recently invited Wisdom Stoves come and present a Mission Moment during a Sunday worship service. Wisdom Stoves designs cook stoves that reduce the risk of health issues to women and children in Kenya who traditionally cook over an open flame. The company's founders, Nathan

and Meredith Puffer, told the congregation the very moving story about how they started this amazing organization. If you would like more information on Wisdom Stoves, please visit our website at [www.wisdomstoves.org](http://www.wisdomstoves.org).

BMSA would also like to take this time to thank Lucia Button for her many years of service on the Board of Missions and Social Action. Her insight and passion can never be replaced. Lucia will still continue to help us through her two favorite outreach projects: Community Dinners and selling SERVV items (at least 3 times next year).

We also would like to welcome Beth Button to BMSA! We are all very excited to have her join us and look forward to working with her. Welcome Beth!

As you all know, our church is a **5 for 5 Opportunities for Giving** church. Throughout the year, we collect the offerings that give us the status of a 5 for 5 church. Below is a calendar of those offerings, as well as the different projects the BMSA participates in throughout the year.

**October** - Neighbors In Need Offering; SERVV at Women's Bazaar

**November** - Reverse Advent Boxes with Sunday School; SERVV at Game Supper; Mission Moment: Help Kids India with Catherine Kidder

**December** - Christmas Fund Offering (VT Conference); Giving Fair (second Saturday); SERVV at Giving Fair

**January** - Book Group, title TBD

**March** - One Great Hour of Sharing Offering (during Lent); CWS Health and School Kits

**April** - CWS Health and School Kits

**May** - Strengthen the Church Offering (on Pentecost Sunday)

**Fourth Thursday of Each Month** - Community Dinner



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.**



## Lectionary Readings JUNE (Year B)

*The theme hymns are linked to video performances ... click on each if you desire listening to hymns as you read your scriptures or meditate on them*



**our time ... spreading the Good News**

### June 3

1 Samuel 3: 1-10 (God calls to Samuel instead of Eli!)

2 Corinthians 4: 5-12 (promote Christ, not ourselves)

Mark 2: 23 - 3:6 (controversy of legalism versus the Lord's work)

Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18

theme hymn: *O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee*

### June 10

1 Samuel 8:4-11, 16-20 (the people refuse to heed the king warning)

2 Corinthians 4: 13 - 5:1 (ours is the Resurrection faith)

Mark 3: 20-35 (there is an unforgivable sin)

Psalm 138

theme hymn: *Hope of the Word*

### June 17

1 Samuel 15:34 - 16:13 (Samuel finds and anoints David)

2 Corinthians 5:6-10, 14-17 (in this earthly life we live by faith)

Mark 4:26-34 (2 surrealistic parables)

Psalm 20

theme hymn: *We Walk By Faith and Not By Sight*

## June 24

1 Samuel 17:32-49 (David vs Goliath ... ironic mismatch)

2 Corinthians 6:1-13 (how we act reflects on the Gospel we profess)

Mark 4:35-41 (Jesus quiets the storm)

Psalms 9:9-20

theme hymn: [\*Give to the Winds Your Fears\*](#)

## July 1

2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27 (How are the mighty fallen!)

2 Corinthians 8:7-15 (yet for our sakes he became poor)

Mark 5:21-43 (in faith is the healing)

Psalms 130

theme hymn: [\*God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending\*](#)

## July 8

2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10 (the elders anoint David as King)

2 Corinthians 12:2-10 (God's Grace alone sustains us)

Mark 6:1-13 (many took offense and rejected him)

Psalms 48

theme hymn: [\*O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee\*](#)

## July 15

2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19 (David learns the power of the Ark)

Ephesians 1:3-14 (give us discernment regarding our calling)

Mark 6:14-29 (John is imprisoned)

Psalms 24

theme hymn: [\*Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather\*](#)

## History and Back Stories

Several times a month I write a “back story” for the weekly email and the website. These back stories expand on an element of the upcoming worship service. Sometimes the back stories are on the history behind a tradition, sometimes they go into the history of a hymn, and sometimes they are a biography of a composer or Saint or preacher. Here is one from the last several weeks:

Not all the history in and for our church is from hundreds of years past. Some is within living memory, too! This back story is about a lovely tradition brought to/for our ministers by a family from New Jersey.



For a span of almost 40 years, our church's ministers were presented a carnation to wear on Mother's Day.

This delightful tradition was brought into our sanctuary with the arrival of the Green family, who moved here in the early 1960s from Madison, New Jersey.

On each Mother's Day, Bobbi Green would make sure a white or a red carnation boutonniere was placed on the pulpit for the minister to pin to his jacket or stole. White carnations are meant to honor the memory of

deceased mothers while red carnations honor those who are living.

When Search committees were formed to look for a new minister, one of the questions was always, "Is your mother still alive?" Then, every year on the second Sunday of May, Deacon Ray Green would slip the appropriate carnation boutonniere on the pulpit when he arrived for choir practice.

Receiving these carnations were: Rev. Livingston, Rev. Rehm, Rev. Knight, Rev. Marsh, Rev. Campbell, Rev. Cookson, Rev. Bartlett, and Rev. Seminario.

Marcia Tomlinson, Historian



*Children's Sunday is June 10th*



**Please join us!**  
**Children's Sunday is scheduled for June 10<sup>th</sup>**

## **Fellowship News**

We held a meeting on April 19<sup>th</sup> at the church to review our finances and decide what organizations we would like to support with money we have raised, to discuss if we want to do a Bakeless Bake Sale to benefit the kitchen, whether the Bazaar would go forward and whether or not to update our Women's Fellowship booklet.

These were the decisions that we made:

- 1) to contribute \$300.00 to the Board of Mission and Social Action to help with the Church World Service Health & School kits they put together each year;
- 2) to contribute \$500.00 to the church general fund to assist in the painting of the vestry hallway and bathrooms;
- 3) that the Bazaar will be held this year on October 20<sup>th</sup> as Maribeth Ames has agreed to chair it for another year; Thanks Maribeth!!
- 4) to go forward with the Bakeless Sale;
- 5) and to update the Women's Fellowship booklet.

So by now you should of received the Bakless notice in the mail that includes a request at the bottom for your updated information for the booklet. We have had a great response and want to thank everyone for supporting the needs of our kitchen.

If you haven't responded yet and wish to update your contact information for our new 2018 Women's Fellowship Booklet, please e-mail me at [esneastman@fastmail.fm](mailto:esneastman@fastmail.fm). with your name, home phone number and/or cell number and e-mail address. If you don't want your name included in the book, let me know and I'll delete any information we have. We are hoping to get the new booklet to the printer by the middle of June.

Thanks again for your continued support.

Susan Eastman  
Steering Committee Member

**On June 23<sup>rd</sup>** the Rev. Dr. Greg Wilson will present a seminar. He is a Fellow with the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, has had a counseling practice for 25 years, and in recent years his attention has moved from the therapy office to focusing on the social justice and environmental issues of our current age.

Workshop: **Healing through Understanding**

Recovery, mental health, and relational well-being all stem from a grounding in emotional life, which is an evolving process across many stages of life. Understanding the relationship of our emotional lives to difficulties like addictions, marital problems, and even challenges at work and with friends is one way to reorient life toward well-being and a solid recovery practice.

Join Rev. Wilson on June 23rd from 12:00 to 3:00 pm at the Bradford Congregational Church in Bradford VT, to engage in this work of understanding, change and recovery.

**Free of Charge, Preregistration Preferred**

To sign up, call Cleo at 802 333 3527 or email [cleo.kearns1@gmail.com](mailto:cleo.kearns1@gmail.com)



*Rev. Dr. Greg Wilson*

There is no question that both individuals and families today face crises ranging from grief and trauma through addiction and mental illness to loss of meaningful work, financial stability and social support. Dealing with these issues (which often go together) can be a difficult and challenging process. Even the struggle to access and choose between existing treatments and resources can be overwhelming. Their goal is to help create a sound strategy for people to move toward healing. Their approach is consider the life and well-being of each individual as a guiding principle toward recovery for all.

In this workshop, they will introduce you to some ways of identifying and working with, patterns of relationships that shape our interaction with others, patterns that usually have deep familial and social roots. Through a series of imaginative exercises, they will help you see these patterns more clearly and learn to move beyond them so that they do not tie up your energy and restrict your ability to respond creatively in the present moment.

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

### Some helpful links:

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- our website is <http://bradforducc.org/>
- our church's email is [bradfordvtucc@gmail.com](mailto: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](#)