

EPISTLE

May, 2018



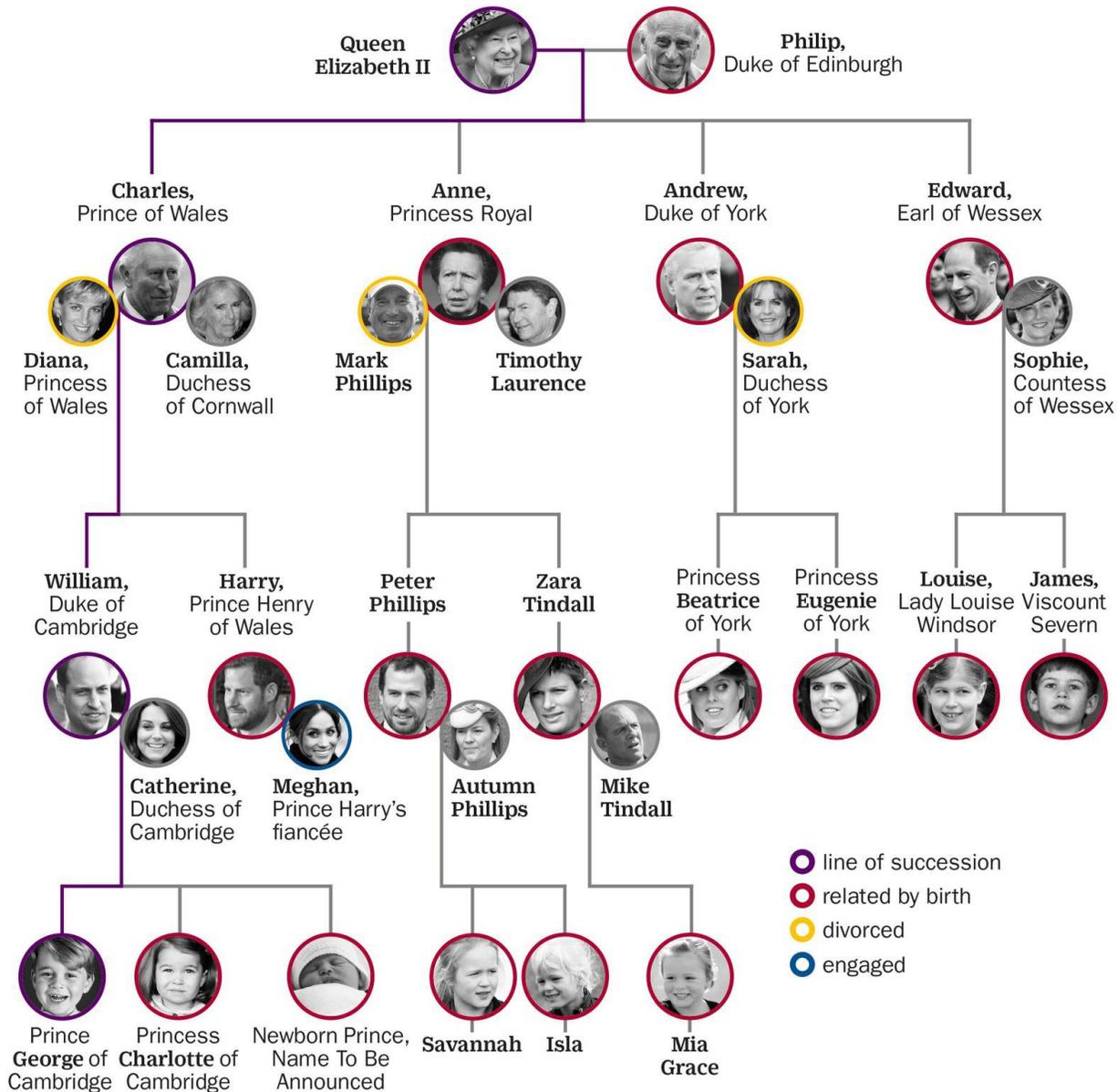
Bradford Congregational Church – UCC
An Open & Affirming Congregation!
Bradford, VT (802) 222-4034

Our website: <http://bradforducc.org>
email us at: bradfordvtucc@gmail.com
see us on Facebook: **Bradford Congregational Church**



Message from Pastor Jeff:

The British Royal Family – nuts, right? I've never understood the Brits fascination with the Royals or why so much public money would be spent keeping up appearances. But here is what the family tree looks like (on next page) ...



And you would know what is expected of you. You would, in time, learn what it means to be part of the royal lineage.

So, why am I talking about the Royals? Because we, like them, have a lineage that impacts who we are and what we are called upon to do. We celebrate this lineage on May 20th – Pentecost. And note what happened.¹ On that day long ago, the disciples were visited by the Holy Spirit and given a gift. It wasn't just any old gift. They suddenly had the ability to speak in foreign languages. Why? Well, you would think that they were given this gift so they could use it. They could now share the Christian story with the world.

Get it? The Church was given a gift that shaped its purpose. Like being born into

¹See Acts 2

the Royal Family, we were born into our own unique community whose purpose is to share the power and joy we have found in Christ. That's our lineage. Indeed, it's what made Christ available to those who preceded us. Someone long ago shared their faith with those from a foreign land. Their calling is now our calling.

I think it is Prince Charles who is next in line to the throne of England. But what I am sure about is that you and I have inherited the gift and the obligation to share the joy we have found. So this May 20, remember your lineage and the gift of Christ that is meant to be shared.

Faithfully,
Pastor Jeff



A special series of Bible Study began Monday, April 2nd in the vestry:

The Bible & It's Interpretation
A historical overview of the Bible in Western Culture
Each Monday night beginning April 2 at 7:00 through May 28, 2018

You are still invited to join!

The study is based on Pastor Jeff's lecture notes developed from a course offered by the Rev. Dr. Peter Gomes. The study explores much of the history behind the creation of the Bible, how it has been interpreted by Western Culture and the challenges we face in how we look at the bible today.

Below is a listing of the topics covered at each session:

April 2 The Christian Bible and the Problem of Interpretation/The Movement Toward "Fixity:" Determining the Shape of Scripture

9th Principles and Profiles in Interpretation/Augustine: the Father of Interpretation

16th Martin Luther: Sola Scriptura and the Politics of Constipation/John Calvin: The enjoyment of God in a Fallen World

23rd The purging of the Margins: King James and the Protestant Consensus/The Great Migration: The Bible and the Exemplary Nation

30th

From Commentary to Criticism: The Germans, Harvard, and the Text/William Ellery Channing and the Baltimore Sermon

May 7th The Bible as a Text Book for Social Reform: The case of Slavery/Charles Hodge and

the Faith Once Delivered to the Saints

14th Charles Augustus Briggs and Protestant Modernism/Pius X and Catholic Modernism

21st Fundamentalism: Battling for the Bible/Modernism: Adapt or Die

28th Neo-Orthodoxy: Closing the Barn Door/Black Power: The Politics of Inclusion/The Feminist Hermeneutic: What has SHE got to do with it?

All are welcome so please share this with anyone you think might be interested.

Questions should be directed to Pastor Jeff:

Pastor Jeff Long-Middleton 978-273-6399 pastorjeffuccbradford@gmail.com

Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ, Bradford, VT

“The Church of the Lighted Window” “An Historic Congregational Church”

“Wherever you are on your Spiritual Journey, You are Welcome Here!”

May 1, 2018

Dear Members and Friends:

The 207th Annual Meeting of the Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ, Bradford, Vermont, will convene on Thursday, May 17, 2018 at 7:00pm in the Church Vestry.

The annual reports of the various officers, boards, committees and organizations for the past year are included in this booklet. We hope you will take the time to read these reports and bring the booklet to the meeting with any questions, suggestions or concerns you may have.

AGENDA

OPENING - Recite Covenant Together: Daniel Perry II, Assistant Moderator

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 2016 ANNUAL MEETING: Barbara Joslyn, Clerk

HEAR AND ACT ON THE REPORTS OF:

1. Treasurer
2. Trust Fund Committee
3. All Other Reports

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

1.. Shall we transfer the deed of the Old Church Theater to the Old Church Theater for the sum of \$1.00. (See the following page for the report from the Trustees to the Church Council on April 12, 2018.)

2. Shall we amend the 6-year Term Limits to No Term Limits to the following:

- ✠ • Board of Christian Education
- ✠ • Board of Mission and Social Action
- ✠ • Flower Committee
- ✠ • Music Committee
- ✠ • Nominating Committee
- ✠ • Publicity Committee
- ✠ • Usher Committee

3. Nominating Committee Report for 2018-2019.

4. Proposed Budget - 2018-2019.

5. Other business.

ADJOURN

CLOSING PRAYER

Sincerely,

Daniel Perry II, Assistant Moderator

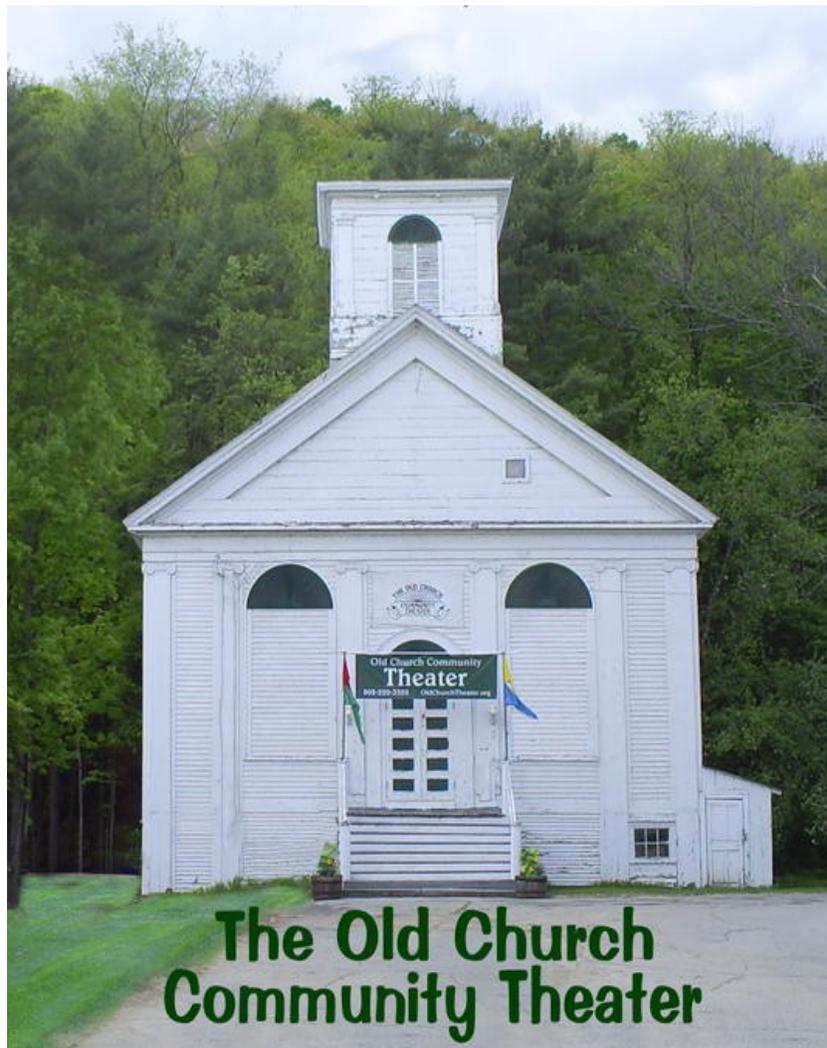
Barbara Joslyn, Clerk

1. Shall we transfer the deed of the Old Church Theater to the Old Church Theater for the sum of \$1.00.

From the Trustees to the Church Council regarding the Old Church Theater building, April 12, 2018:

The UCC Board of Trustees agrees unanimously that they are committed to selling the building for a nominal amount of \$1.00 to the Old Church Theater (OCT). According to our by-laws, this proposal has to be approved by the voting members of the church. The following items in the proposal were discussed between the Trustees and the Old Church Theater:

- ✂ • The land under the building (extends to under the eaves) will be included. Paul Hunt (OCT) said he believed the steps and front portion of the building are on the church lot. A survey will be done prior to the transfer; OCT will be responsible for that expense.
- ✂ • Bradford UCC should not bear any expense in the transfer, as it is giving the property to the OCT.
- ✂ • The UCC Church has priority of the driveway/parking.
- ✂ • The UCC Church is responsible for insurance until the transfer (property & liability).
- ✂ • The transfer will take place by the end of 2018.
- ✂ • No rent will be charged to OCT up to the transfer as they are only using the building for storage.
- ✂ • The water and sewer has been turned off, so there will be no billing for water/sewer usage.



Community Supper

April was a tad different. The Diaconate hosted a church-wide Potluck Brunch after worship on the 22nd. And then the regular community supper, also a potluck, was held on the 26th. Not everyone can attend the evening suppers but when the brunches are held perhaps more will be able to join in this fun.

**Reminder: The Community Suppers are now the
4th THURSDAY of each month**

The next Supper will be May 24th at 6pm. Hope you can join us!



Always plenty for everyone at Community Supper

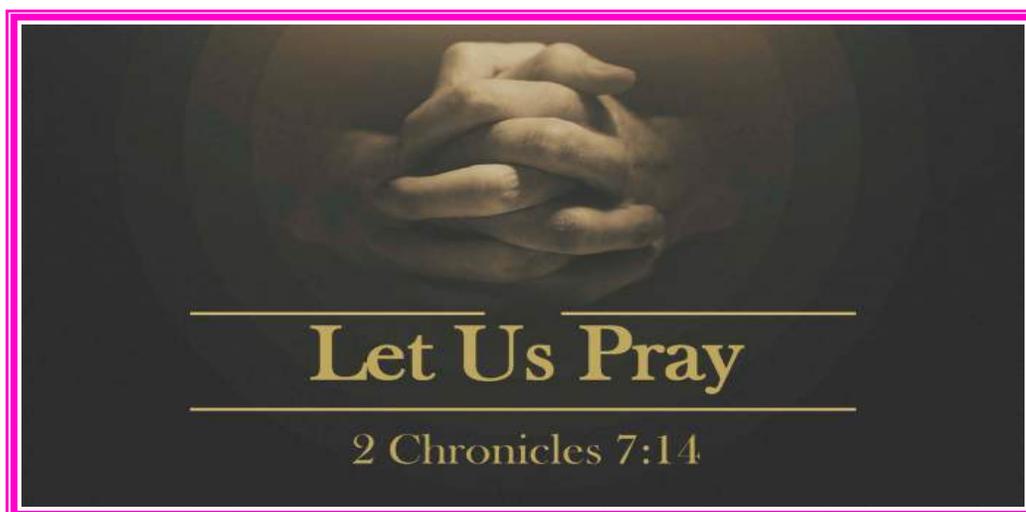
Prayer requests may be emailed to
[our prayer group](#) or [here](#)

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 MAY (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



Eastertide to Pentecost and beyond

May 6 - 6th Sunday of Easter

Acts 10: 44-48 (the Spirit descends on Gentiles too!)

1 John 5: 1-6 (what comes when you profess Jesus as the Christ)

John 15: 9-17 (love one another as He loved us)

Psalm 98

theme hymn: *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

May 13 - 7th Sunday of Easter (Mother's Day)

Acts 1: 15-17, 21-26 (casting lots to choose Judas' replacement)

1 John 5: 9-13 (belong to the Son and have eternal life)

John 17: 6-19 (Jesus' prayer for all of us)

Psalm 1

theme hymn: *Come, Holy Spirit, Our Souls Inspire*

May 20 - Pentecost

Acts 2: 1-21 (Drunk? No! Filled with the Holy Spirit!!!)

Romans 8: 22-27 (the Spirit supports our hope)

John 15: 26-27; 16:4b-15 (Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth)

Psalm 104: 24-34, 35b

theme hymn: *Holy Spirit, Truth Divine*

May 27 - Trinity Sunday

Isaiah 6: 1-8 (Here am I ... send ME!)

Romans 8: 12-17 (boldly cry out, "Abba!")

John 3: 1-17 (Nicodemus searches out Jesus at night)

Psalm 29

theme hymn: *Holy, Holy, Holy*

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*

History and Back Stories



As one of our church's delegates to the 2018 Vermont Conference annual meeting (held the last weekend in April) I had the very good fortune to attend a workshop for and by church historians in Vermont. It is so sad to learn how many congregations have lost whole centuries of historic documents due to fire, flood and neglect. There are only a very few who had someone like our historian Eris Eastman who learned and practiced best document

stewardship. It is she who made sure our most valuable papers and artifacts are secured in the bank vault and where necessary are layered beneath rice paper sheets in special archive boxes.

It is my hope (plan) that during my tenure I will begin to actually transcribe the oldest of the documents so that anyone wishing to read them will no longer need to touch them or go to the vault. Every time a human hand, even when gloved, touches an old document there is a microscopic effect. There will come a day when these old documents are no

longer legible. It is up to our generation to make sure we've recorded them in time.

I assume it will take many years to get this all transcribed, digitally recorded and uploaded. Due to our extreme good fortune of having had superb Clerks and Board Secretaries since 1793, and also due to our location which was in a major hub in the early days, there are a ton of documents such as Association minutes, annual meeting minutes, ecclesiastical minutes, sermons, and letters back and forth between ministers. Since penmanship and even cursive writing is fast becoming a thing of the past, I take it to be of utmost importance to at least begin this arduous process where it was last left off. What good are historic and historical documents if no one can read them.

Meanwhile: 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.

All of these back stories can be found on the website's “Church News” page and to locate them you can **click here**. (Soon there will be a separate link for these short extras.) Each month I post one Back Story here for those without access to our website.

(Our original church community worshiped in a small meeting house built in 1793 by a special town meeting vote. That first one was the town church and was supported by the taxpayers for the next 17 years. That co-mingled church/state existence will be the subject of another Back Story in the future.)

“The Introit ... then and now

In 1810 a small Bradford group banded together and organized the Calvinistic Congregational Church of Christ. The name would change a couple of times but we have always carried the title of Congregational Church.

That first name, however, indicated the theological seriousness with which the society took its faith. The showy “high church” traditions were not what they wanted. John Calvin, a great conservative theologian, maintained that only what is found in the Word of God may be introduced into the worship of God.

The **Introit** now sung by our choir every Sunday to start our worship service would not have been a part of the worship in our original Calvinistic Congregational Church. Such a song would have been considered “Lutheran” because Lutherans believed that what is not strictly forbidden in the Word of God may be allowed in the worship of God.

A careful yet very important distinction to our church’s theologically-conservative founders

“Introit” comes from the Latin *Introitus* meaning entrance and was the musical introduction to the liturgical (scripted) celebration of the Catholic Mass and was retained

by the Lutherans after the protestant reformation sparked by the priest Martin Luther. Introits were also retained by the Anglicans and were common in the time of Elizabeth I. Our Puritan ancestors (called Separatists in England) dropped the Introit and any rituals not explicitly defined as pure and genuine and permitted.

It would take another 100 years before our faith family relaxed enough to let in the beauty and spiritualism of the ancient Introit.”

Marcia Tomlinson, Historian

Christian Ed



Starting in May, every 3rd Sunday the older students will remain for the whole worship service in order to learn more about ushering, reading the scripture, and helping learn about taking the offering. They will also learn to listen to the sermon and its key message(s).

The service includes a scripture reading, singing a hymn, taking offering/doxology and saying the Lord's prayer. We hope this gives them exposure to the elements of the service they miss when they come downstairs, helps build a collection of hymns that they know and gives them opportunities for participation.

On the last Sunday in April the Sunday School prepared and served the Coffee Hour refreshments. This is something they have been doing for us every

fifth Sunday of the month. We're so spoiled by our kids!!!

Children's Sunday is scheduled for June 10th.

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 link to 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](#)