

EPISTLE

December, 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:

You have to watch us preachers. We steal things. I'm always on the lookout for fresh ways to see faith, for a quote that captures, better than I could, what I am trying to say. Well, that's exactly what I am doing for this edition of the Epistle.

Norman DePuy was an American Baptist pastor who was, to say the least, rather unconventional. I think he has something to say to us in this Advent season – a way of looking at the mystery of God's incarnation that may help us understand why we are often blind to God's presence. It's called, *A Recruitment Parable*.

MEMO TO: Jesus, Son of Joseph, Woodcrafters of Nazareth
FROM: Jordan Management Consultant of Jerusalem

Thank you for submitting the resumes of the twelve men you have picked for management positions in your new organization. All of them have completed our battery of tests; and we have not only run the results through our computer, but have also arranged personal interviews for each of them with our psychological and aptitude consultant.

The profiles of all tests are included...It is the staff's opinion that most of your nominees are lacking in background, education, and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking. They do not have the team concept. We would recommend that you continue your search for persons of experience in managerial ability and proven capacity.

Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew

has absolutely no qualities of leadership. The two brothers, James and John, place personal interest above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine moral. We feel further that it is our duty to tell you that Matthew has been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau. James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus definitely have radical leanings, and they both registered a high score on the manic-depressive scale.

One of the candidates, however, shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness; meets people well; has a keen business mind and has contact in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious, and responsible. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your controller and right hand man.

We wish you every success in your new venture.

So Christ came and the world missed His coming. Should He come again, will we do the same?

Faithfully,
Pastor Jeff

Pastor Jeff's office hours

Sunday afternoons

all day Mondays

978-273-6399 is his recommended number to use at any time
calls to 802-222-4610 will be answered only when he is in the parsonage



2018 REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR Challenge for the Food Shelf

On December 2nd the Reverse Calendar boxes will be available to take home after the worship service. Each day, put in one item for the **Bradford Food Shelf**. Any non-perishable items will do as well as hygiene items. In addition to canned meals or boxed meal kits, they always need sundries like toilet paper, toothpaste etc. Instead of opening a door on your advent calendar each day before Christmas, you will be gifting an item for the Bradford Food Shelf at the Academy building. **On Christmas Eve we will all bring the boxes to church to be dedicated.** After the holidays our food shelf is in great need of being replenished and we will be ready with our boxes to do just that.

Everyone loves advent calendars to count them down to Christmas Day. If you want to try something a little different this year, you can create an advent calendar that you and your children put something into every day instead of taking something out.



[reverse advent calendar?](#)

(click for video)

Not only is this a fun thing for the whole family to do together, from decorating the advent calendar box itself to picking the goodies to go in it, it more importantly enables you and your family to be of help to others and to see the bigger picture at Christmas.

A Message from Organist John Atwood

One piece of news for you is that I had a successful exploration with Chris Rua (recorder) and Lucy McClellan (Viol di Gamba). We are planning a service after January 1 of music for recorder, gamba, and continuo (organ using less than three stops). I'm learning there are a lot of early music players in the region to tap for services!

This year the Advent and Christmas seasons will be varied and exciting! First, I want to welcome Lucia Button and her daughter, Beth Button to this season's choir which will

sing traditional English Christmas carols for Gathering Music on 9, 16, and 23 December. New anthem music will include "Gabriel to Mary Came" (9 Dec.), "People Look East and West" (23 Dec.), and a new arrangement of "Sleepers Awake" (2 December), The children will join the choir (16 Dec.) singing "Joy to the World". We particularly need men's voices! Lastly, Betsy Alexander and Bridget Peters will sing "The Virgin at the Crib" on Christmas Eve. Hymns for the congregation will all have familiar tunes, but most from the New Century Hymnal may have new or altered words. I will improvise amens at popular request!



Instrumental and organ music will feature compositions from the Bach family (Johann Sebastian Bach, Johann Michael Bach, and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach).

We particularly welcome flutist Sarah Saul during Advent III (Joy, 16 Dec.) who will play the "Hamburger Sonata" by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (Hamburger refers to the city in Germany, not something you buy at McDonald's!). Advent I (Hope, 2 Dec.) will feature "Sleepers Awake!") as a choir introit and as an organ prelude.

Advent II (Love, 9 Dec.) will be a bit more mysterious beginning with chorale prelude on "Adeste Fidelis" (O, Come All Ye Faithful) by the American Charles Ives who composed the work at age 19 (1897). Ives was way ahead of his time, for instance, anticipating rock music 60 years before the term was coined.

On Advent IV (23 Dec.) or Christmas Sunday all the stops will be out for the postlude Magnificat "My Soul Magnifies the Lord" by J. S. Bach. Christmas Eve will have an air of expectation as the mood changes from Joy to quietude.

All during the season there will be liberal sprinkling of joyful French Baroque Christmas organ music by Louis Claude Da'Quin and Jean-Francois Dandrieu. Come one, come all for this joyous season!

Advent Devotional planning

On Nov. 25th, the Diaconate and Board of Christian Education, presented to the congregation a very special Advent devotional planner.



This daily and weekly devotional planner takes individuals, couples and families through the entire Advent season ... to recapture its wonder and meaning. The Advent weeks help us to:

- ★ Slow Down for Reflection
- ★ Keep a Christ-centered Focus
- ★ Manage the Inevitable Distractions
- ★ Celebrate Whatever Your Circumstances
- ★ Enjoy a God-pleasing Christmas
- ★ Wrap Up the Season

Every day has scripture readings, practical suggestions, prayers, and thoughts to ponder. The unique format stands alone as a flip book, one side devoted to families with young children and the other side for adults.

This planner can be used every year and we all hope it becomes an integral part of your Advent from now on. **If your family did not receive a copy please let us know!**

2018 Advent Worship schedule

1st Sunday of Advent: December 2nd we light the **Candle of Hope**, 10 a.m.

2nd Sunday of Advent: December 9th we light the **Candle of Peace**, 10 a.m.

3rd Sunday of Advent: December 16th we light the **Candle of Joy**
and the children portray the nativity story, 10 a.m.

4th Sunday of Advent: December 23rd we light the **Candle of Love** for Christmas Sunday, 10 a.m. And see the memorial poinsettias.



Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service
6:30 pm

when we light the
Christ Candle

2018 Christmas Memorial Poinsettias

If you would like your poinsettia(s) displayed on the altar platform
Christmas Sunday (Dec 23) and/or **Christmas Eve** (Dec 24) please:

- get the memorial details to Janice Larabee by Thursday, Dec. 20th (see below*)
- deliver the plant(s) to the church kitchen on Saturday, Dec. 22nd.

*The details Janice needs:

- in whose memory the plant is
- from whom the plant is being dedicated
- if you wish the plant to be saved for the Christmas Eve Candlelight service

How to contact Janice with the details:

- call her at 802 222 9920 or
- mail her at PO Box 216, Bradford VT, 05033 or
- email to bradfordvtucc@gmail.com (reply to this email) with "Memorial Poinsettias" as the subject line

If you do not live in our area and wish to order a memorial poinsettia through a florist, please let us know now via the above email address, with "florist poinsettia" as the subject line. A Deacon(Marcia Tomlinson) will work with you.



COMMUNITY DINNER

Like a hearty beef stew when winter has landed?
Come to our monthly Community Supper!
The next supper will be 6pm **December 27th** .

Hope you can join us!

Christmas
Dinner



YOU are most graciously and joyously invited to come feast amongst friends!

**Community Christmas
Dinner**

Noon

December 25th

We have lots of room for everyone, more than enough delicious ham and turkey and all manner of fixings, a wide array of glorious holiday desserts, festive lights and sounds, and all the welcoming smiles and laughter Christmas can bring.

The hall will be decked, just waiting for YOU!

(freewill donations always gratefully accepted)

for more information: Bethanne Tillotson 802-522-9271



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 DECEMBER (Year C)

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

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus



LECTIONARY YEAR C is here

Advent (the period before Christmas)

December 2 ... 1st Sunday of Advent

Jeremiah 33:14-16 (God's promise will be fulfilled)

Psalms 25:1-10

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 (Paul thanks God for faith growth)

Luke 21:25-36 (live attentively for God's coming)

theme hymn: *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*

December 9 ... 2nd Sunday of Advent

Malachi 3:1-4 (The day of YHWH is coming)

Philippians 1:3-11 (discern human needs ... and respond)

Luke 3:1-6 (John preaches a baptism of repentance)

theme hymn: *"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"*

December 16 ... 3rd Sunday of Advent

Zephaniah 3:14-20 (God will renew you)

Isaiah 12:2-6 (song of Thanksgiving)

Philippians 4:4-7 (demonstrate gentleness and forbearance)

Luke 3:7-18 (dispose of your greedy ways)

Pageant Sunday



December 23 ... 4th Sunday of Advent

Micah 5:2-5a (YHWH will return the remnant home)

Psalms 80:1-7

Luke 1:39-55 (two annunciation stories)

Hebrews 10:5-10 (the new covenant will be esta

Christmas Season

Christmas Day

Isaiah 9:2-7 (see the great light, the presence of God)

Titus 2: 11-14 (we live in the light of His second coming)

Luke 2: 1-14 (Gloria in excelsis!)

Psalms 96

theme hymn: *Break Forth, O Beauteous Light*

December 30 - 1st Sunday after Christmas

1 Samuel 2:18-20,26 (Samuel grows in stature and in God's favor)

Colossians 3:12-17 (clothe yourself with kindness and compassion)

Luke 2:41-52 (Jesus grew in stature and favor)

Psalms 148

theme hymn: *In the Bleak Midwinter*

Season of Epiphany

January 6, 2019 ... Epiphany (the 12th Day of Christmas)

Isaiah 60: 1-6 (Awake! Open Your Eyes! Rejoice!)

Ephesians 3:1-12 (all the people share the same promises)

Matthew: 2: 1-12 (Magi from the East arrive)

Psalms 72: 1-7, 10-14

theme hymn: *We Three Kings of Orient Are*

Ordinary (Ordinal) Season

Ordinary time is when we focus on our faith-in-action, our mission. The other times are penitential or celebratory or meditative. Notice how much of our year is meant to be in action! The first time of action is right after Christmas when we are called to tell the world that Jesus Christ is born! The second stretch, the big one after Pentecost, is to tell the world in word and deed the Good News of God's steadfast love and salvation.

January 13 ... Baptism of the Lord

Isaiah 43:1-7 (the power of God is at work)

Acts 8:14-17 (the gospel is preached in Samaria)

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22 (Jesus is baptized)

Psalms 29

theme hymn: *How Firm a Foundation*

January 20

Isaiah 62:1-5 (a promise to intercede for Jerusalem)

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (a variety of gifts but one Spirit)

John 2:1-11 (a transformative first miracle)

Psalms 36:5-10

theme hymn: *I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me*

The **Revised Common Lectionary** runs in three-year cycles with each year focusing in on one Gospel as well as related Psalms, Epistles, and Old Testament selections:

- Year A Gospel of **Matthew**, begins 1st Sunday of Advent in 2019, 2022, etc.
- Year B Gospel of **Mark**, begins 1st Sunday of Advent in 2020, 2023 etc.
- Year C Gospel of **Luke** begins 1st Sunday of Advent in 2018, 2021, etc.

Portions of the Gospel of John are read throughout Eastertide, and are also used for other liturgical seasons including Advent, Christmastide, and Lent.



Friday, Dec. 21
7:30 p.m.

Full Circle performs its annual Holiday Concert
Directed by Jennifer Yocom
accompanied by Patricia Norton

Full Circle, a 23-voice singing group, will present an eclectic selection of holiday and winter pieces. As usual, there will be opportunities for audience participation.

The concert is free but donations are gratefully accepted.

Mission/Social Action



The BMSA and SERRV will be at the **Giving Fair** on **December 8** at Oxbow High School. The Giving Fair is an opportunity for nonprofits to gather to sell items and ask for donations to help support their causes. You can do your holiday shopping and support a worthy cause all in one day. If you have any questions about the Giving Fair, please contact Holly Young.

(The name **SERRV** is an acronym for **Sales Exchange for Refugee Rehabilitation and Vocation**. The program grew from assisting World War II refugees, to working with impoverished people throughout the world.)

Upcoming Offerings

December: **Christmas Fund**

Bazaar News:



First and foremost thank you to everyone who contributed and/or helped with our Annual Bazaar that was held on October 20th. As usual the community was very supportive and we took in about \$1500.00. We had some great food and many treasures to sell. Some of the leftover items were sold the night of the Game Supper and the diners contributed about \$660.00.

We will have a meeting after the Holidays to discuss how we can pay it forward and support needs of our church and community. Thanks again for all you do to support your Women's Fellowship.

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:

- 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](#)