

EPISTLE

January, 2019



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:

I am not a “church growth” expert. Expert or not, growth is at the core of the Christian experience. Failing to grow is failing God. But don’t take my word for it. Here’s what Jesus had to say following His resurrection and in His final appearance to His followers (Matthew 28:18-20)

“¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Clear enough. Christians are called to bring people to Christ, to grow the church – the “body of Christ.”

There is another facet. Not only are we called to bring people to Christ, we are called to grow in Christ. We’ve all done this. No one would argue their faith is as it was when they were children. It has changed, been shaped by our lived experience and faced times of doubt that hardened its metal.

So a question comes to mind. Can growth occur without change? No. To grow is to change. I think this is at least in part why God said, “Behold, I make all things new.” To grow into the new thing God is doing means we must be open to change.

I mention all this because we are beginning a new year. I do not know what the future holds, but I do know what God expects – growth. So in the days ahead let us seek not what has been, but what God intends. May we, pastor and people, seek to grow the

church and to grow together. May we overcome any fear we might have of change so we might embrace the One who makes all things new.

I wish you not just a Happy New Year but a faithful one,

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

Our Organist, John Atwood

I haven't selected the music for most of the month as we enter a period of Ordinary Time, but selections will be varied. For Sunday January 13 as a prelude I will play "The Old Year has Passed" from J. S. Bach's Little Organ Book (Orgelbuchlein). The Orgelbuchlein consists of 45 pieces that Bach intended to sharpen the skills of his organ playing kids, and is considered a set of some of his most difficult organ works, even if each piece is short, I believe a case of paternal "tough love" rather than sadism!

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!



VT Conference Associate Minister Paul Sangree

Hi!

It is good to write to you today as your new associate conference minister! I started at the beginning of December, and have had the chance to "shadow" my wonderful predecessor, Pam Lucas at a number of events. Pam has had such a meaningful ministry in our conference over the past 19 years, and it has been such a gift for me to see personally just a few of the ways that she has touched the churches and the pastors of our conference. I know that we are all profoundly grateful for her.

I have also had the chance to spend some time with our conference minister, Lynn, who has such a wealth of knowledge about our churches and who cares so deeply about our ministry together. Jesse and Charri are also such gifts in our conference office, so it has been a great month to get to know all of them.

But now that the Advent and Christmas seasons are over, I am looking forward to getting out to spend time with more of you! I was a parish pastor for 32 years, serving churches of all different sizes, and I am a good listener, so I will look forward to hearing how your ministry is going, both the good and the bad. I also want to hear from you about how our conference can help you, and how you could help the people and churches of our conference.

So please reach out to me! You can reach me at sangreepucc@gmail.com, or at 508-838-0475. I would love to get together for lunch or coffee or any other time that is good for you. Invite me to come to spend time with a group, or invite me one-on-one. I would also love to come visit your churches on a Sunday morning-I promise you that I am a good preacher and will not embarrass you!

I look forward to our future together!

Faithfully yours,
Paul



COMMUNITY DINNER

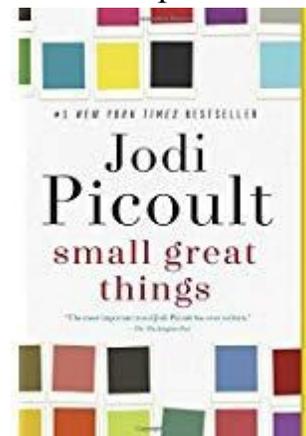
Like a hearty beef stew when winter has landed?
Come to our monthly Community Supper!
The next supper will be 6pm January 24th.

Hope you can join us!

Board of Mission & Social Action

January 13th Catherine Kidder will do a mission moment as the sermon. She will talk about her latest trip to India and Help Kids India. Hopefully Catherine will be able to bring fair trade items from India to sell during coffee hour. The Board of Mission and Social Action will present a check for \$700. to HKI, from our GameSupper Funds. Ginny will present the check during the service with a plea to donate or purchase items at Coffee Hour.

The next BMSA book group will be on March 10th. Once again it will be a pot luck brunch and discussion of the book SMALL GREAT THINGS by Jodi Picoult. The books will be ready to borrow by the end of January. Please let Ginny or Holly know if you would like a copy. Photo of the book cover in attachment.
Thanks so much

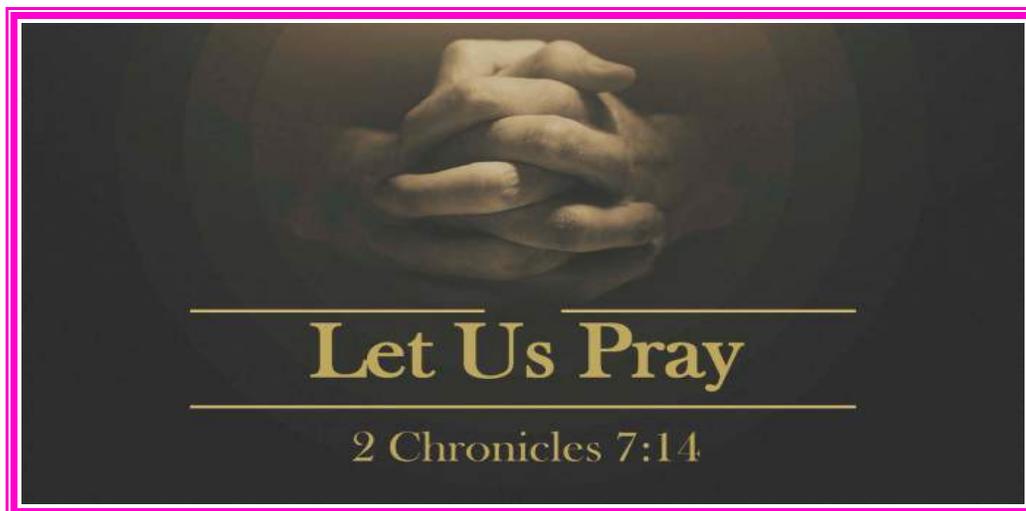


Prayer requests may be emailed to
[our prayer group](#) or [here](#)



It is our privilege to pray for you and those you care about.

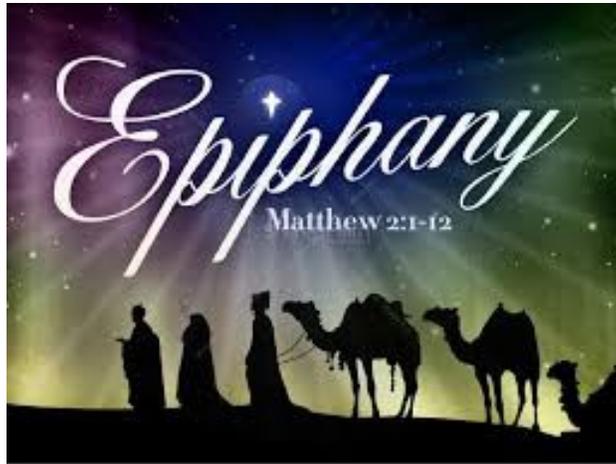
**We pray for each other,
without ceasing
and your prayer requests
are held in strict confidence.**



Lectionary Readings JANUARY (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

to Epiphany and beyond!



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)

Psalm 36:5-10

theme hymn: [*I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me*](#)

January 27

Nehemiah 8:1-3,5-6,8-10 (All listen, all watch, all respond)

1 Corinthians 12:12 - 31a (discerning essential gifts)

Luke 4:14-21 (Jesus returns home; opens his public ministry)

Psalm 19

theme hymn: [*When In Our Music God Is Glorified*](#)

February 3

Jeremiah 1:4-10 (“Fear not ... I am With You”)

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (the many meanings of Love)

Luke 4:21-30 (admiration turns to rejection)

Psalm 71:1-6

theme hymn: [*Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak*](#)

February 10

Isaiah 6:1-8 (9-13) (“Here am I; send me!”)

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 (Christ died for our sins)

Luke 5:1-11 (you will be fishers of men)

Psalm 138

theme hymn: [*Here I Am, Lord*](#)

February 17

Jeremiah 17:5-10 (trust in the Lord, not earthly institutions)

1 Corinthians 15:12-20 (Christ HAS been raised from the dead)

Luke 6:17-26 (blessings ... and woes)

Psalm 1

theme hymn: *O for a World*

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.

Author Visit
Bradford Public Library Wednesday, January 23, 6:30 PM



Join author [Beth Button](#) for a discussion of her first book, [Project](#). Beth grew up in Bradford, Vermont and has recently moved back here, after living in Washington State for many years. She also grew up in our church family and we all celebrate her new venture. Congratulations, Beth!

Stormy Weather Reminder: the 10:00 a.m. worship service will always be held on Sunday morning no matter what the weather, but we know only you can assess the road conditions where you live. Please be safe this winter! - the Diaconate

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
 - 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](#)