

EPISTLE

July, 2019



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

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Word From The Pastor

The world of today may not know it, but it is in desperate need of a rebirth of the Christian faith. I do not mean all the world's peoples must become Christian if civilization is to continue – such a presumption would be a denial of the unique elements of transcendent truth found in the faith of others and would presume too noble a virtue for the Christian community. What I am suggesting is that both the Christian and non-Christian world embrace the reality of sin and the partiality of our respective claims on truth. While Christ may indeed be virtue in its pure form, those who follow in His Way can make no such claim. Our individual finitude, the limits of time and space, foisted upon our corporal being makes one's thoughts and opinions subject to those same limits. Thus a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant male, like myself, may wish to claim his truth to be a universal truth for all, but to make such a claim one must be blind to the truth born out of the same limits that those living in another time or another place legitimately claim as their own. This is not to say that humanity is left with only relative truth that reduces all truth to nothing more than individual experience. Humanity's sense of justice suggests that we are capable of grasping the truth claims of those unlike ourselves even if our understanding of that truth is at best partial. What is needed is a universal humility

that is aware of the nature of sin. It is our tendency to ignore our own involvement in sin that leads us to presume a virtue that exceeds that of our adversary. I believe this is what led Reinhold Niebuhr to write:

“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 are 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.”¹

In this era of division it is important to try to bridge the gap between our various points of view. Yet far more critical is for each of us to remember the gap between our individual selves and God. It is critical that I remember my limits for in so doing I, too, may see my need to be forgiven and thus create an opening for God’s love even in the midst of conflict.

Faithfully,
Pastor Jeff

a note from our organist, John Atwood:

I wish to thank the choir for its service to the church community and to me, as each member brings something different to the service, the combined talents allow the flexibility of performing a broader range of compositions than would otherwise be possible. And the choir members bring this off with less than 45 minutes practice each week!

The members are: sopranos Janice Blake, Joan Osgood, and Martina Stever; plus Bridget Peters (soprano or alto), and Marcia Tomlinson (alto or tenor). Janice, we know you are still recovering from your fall and we miss you! We hope to see you all next September 8.

(see page 11 for this summer's lineup of special music)

¹Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1952) 63.

From your Diaconate

A reminder: every Communion Sunday the small “Diaconate Fund” envelopes are placed in the pews. It is through your generosity that the Fund is available for helping those in need, be it heating oil, electricity, shelter, food, or medicine. Every donation, no matter its size, is graciously accepted and lovingly applied!

Lectionary Readings JULY (Year C)

July 7

2 Kings 5:1-14 (Naaman's servants talk him back to the river)
Galatians 6:1-16 (we are accountable for what we say and do)
Luke 10:1-11,16-20 (then 70 are appointed)
Psalm 30

theme hymn: Beneath the Cross of Jesus

July 14

Amos 7:7-17 (a foundation of justice is out of plumb)
Colossians 1:1-14 (intercessory prayers explained)
Luke 10:25-37 (responsibilities outweighing being a helping hand)
Psalm 82

theme hymn: O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

July 21

Amos 8:1-12 (faithlessness, disobedience, hypocrisy: be warned!)
Colossians 1:15-28 (do not shift from the hope of the gospel)
Luke 10:38-42 (Martha. Mary. Come out of the kitchen and listen)
Psalm 52

theme hymn: Be Thou My Vision

July 28

Hosea 1:2-10 (on being children of God)
Colossians 2:6-15 (root yourself and stand fast in Christ)
Luke 11:1-13 (a simple yet profound prayer)
Psalm 85

theme hymn: Let All Who Pray the Prayer Christ Taught

August 4

Hosea 11:1-11 (But how can I give up on you, God asks)

Colossians 3:1-11 (set your mind and heart on Christ)

Luke 12:13-21 (the future is in God's hands, not ours)

Psalm 107:1-9,43

theme hymn: O for a World

August 11

Isaiah 1:1,10-20 (enough of your false offerings, already)

Hebrews 11:1-3,8-16 (faith is belief in God's promises)

Luke 12:32-40 (giving to those in need pleases God)

Psalm 50:1-8,22-23

theme hymn: The God of Abraham Praise

August 18

Isaiah 5:1-7 (how long will God abandon his beloved vineyard?)

Hebrews 11:29 - 12:2 (scrap your sins and keep your eyes on Jesus)

Luke 12:49-56 (wait, wait, Jesus came to “cast fire upon the earth”?)

Psalm 80:1-2,8-19

theme hymn: O Love That Will Not Let Me Go

August 25

Jeremiah 1:4-10 (you want me to prophesize?)

Hebrews 12:18-29 (pay heed to what you hear)

Luke 13:10-17 (isn't the Sabbath best honored by doing God's work?)

Psalm 71:1-6

theme hymn: O Christ, the Healer



Children's Sunday on June 9 was a great success! The kids were very proud to ring the church bell, do the readings, take the collection, and generally be in charge of the church service. Afterwards, the kids and the rest of the congregation enjoyed a delicious picnic lunch at Elizabeth's Park--we couldn't have picked better weather for it! Thank you to everyone who helped make the day a success, and who continues to love and support the wonderful children of our church.
-Angela Colbeth, Valerie DiLorenzo, Kim Frydman, and Bridget Peters
The Sunday School Teaching Team





Acolytes: taking their role seriously

Balloons and smiles decorated the Sanctuary





Many helping hands for the offering!



Eye-Spy ... crosses!

and then it was time for the picnic at Elizabeth's Park!



Bright sunshine, gentle summer breezes, delicious food, and most of all ... multi-generations enjoying a special day together.

It's nice to know we'll keep on seeing each other now that Sunday School is year round!

**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.**



Sometimes events and/or changes come up after the Epistle has been uploaded. It's always good to check the Weekly Email for last minute updates.

To be added to the **Weekly Email** list, [click here](#). If you have an area event to list in the weekly Email's "Around Town" section, please let us know!

After the 2019 year, Kim Merrill and Bethanne Tillotson will no longer be available to coordinate the **annual Community Christmas Dinner** held in Bradford on Christmas Day.

Kim and Bethanne are willing to work with new people this year to learn the coordination and management of this essential event. If you are willing to take on this important role, please email Kim (kmm5957@gmail.com) or Bethanne (bandgtillotson@gmail.com) ASAP.

If no one comes forward by October 30, this will unfortunately be the last year for the dinner. Please come forward to keep this important event available to our local community. Thank you for your support. Kim Merrill and Bethanne Tillotson

More from Organist John Atwood: a look into some very special music coming up in August! He says: here is the list of four performances during church services I have lined up for August 4 to and including September 1, although exact dates of three performances are yet to be determined.

August 11. Organist Peter Beardsley, who frequently accompanies the North Country Chorus, will play Fantasy in A Major by C. Franck, and Variations on "A Mighty Fortress" by modern composer, Andrew L. Clarke. Other musicians who have committed performances, but not dates are as follows.

Betsy Alexander will sing a group of religious songs, possibly on 1 September
The Seven Stars Baroque Ensemble will perform works by English composer, William Corbett (Sonata #1) and Marin Marais (selections from Suite in g minor). The last composer composed music mostly for viols, and was hired by King Louis XIV, the Sun King. This ensemble directed by Chris Rua, includes three recorders, a viola da gamba, and the organ (soft flute stops). The date will probably be 18 or 25 August.

Danelle Sims will perform Bach Arias on Flute. Danelle played at Bradford some time ago, and we welcome her back!

This Epistle is a monthly publication of the Bradford Congregational Church. It is uploaded just before the 1st of each month. Anyone wishing to receive the email notification of 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](#)