



Good News

North Prospect Union UCC

Volume 28, Issue: May 2011

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From the Associate Minister

Now when Job's three friends heard of all these troubles that had come upon him, each of them set out from his home - Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They met together to go and console and comfort him. When they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him, and they raised their voices and wept aloud; they tore their robes and threw dust in the air upon their heads. They sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.

Job 2:11-13

Dear Friends,

Job's friends got it right. When they heard that their friend was in trouble they left their busy lives and came to Job. They had empathy for Job and

quietly sat with him for quite a long time. In this short passage we find the essence of pastoral care. Pastoral care can be described in just a few words. Be present, listen, empathize, and take care of yourself. But do not tear your clothes as Job's friends did! Self-care is very important. Pastoral care requires the *non-anxious* presence.

Pastoral care is not something that just ministers do but something we all have engaged in at some time in our life. Perhaps you have sat with a sick friend or comforted a family who suffered a loss. A visit may require you to quietly sit and listen to your friend or it may be a time of prayer together or a combination of both. Sometimes, only your quiet, comforting presence is all that is required.

I would like to share an experience with you that I once had which taught me more about pastoral care than all the books I have read on the subject. It was during my last year in divinity school.

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ANNUAL MEETING

NORTH PROSPECT UNION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sunday, May 15, 2011 at 10:00am

Coming Up

Sunday, May 1

11:00am Rev. Rose

Wednesday, May 4

11:30am ElderSpirit

Thursday, May 5

Cinco de Mayo

Saturday, May 7

10:00am Craft Making

Sunday, May 8

Mother's Day

Sandwiches for Outdoor Church

9:00am Communion Service for Women

9:45am Men serve breakfast, 9:45

11:00am Rev. Rose

Saturday, May 14

10:00am Craft Making

Sunday, May 15

10:00am Annual Meeting

11:00am Rev. Rose

Saturday, May 21

10:00am Craft Making

Sunday, May 22

Laity Sunday

11:00am Shelley Scruggs

Saturday, May 28

10:00am Craft Making

Sunday, May 29

John F. Kennedy's Birthday

11:00am Gerry Rockwood

Monday, May 30

Memorial Day

Wednesday, June 1

11:30am ElderSpirit

Saturday, June 4

10:00am Craft Making

Sunday, June 5

11:00am Rev. Rose

Saturday, June 11

10:00am Craft Making

Sunday, June 12

Pentecost

Children's Sunday and Potluck

Sandwiches for Outdoor Church

11:00am Tom Hathaway

Tuesday, June 14

Flag Day

Saturday, June 18

10:00am Craft Making

Sunday, June 19

Father's Day

11:00am Rev. Rose

Saturday, June 25

10:00am Craft Making

Sunday, June 26

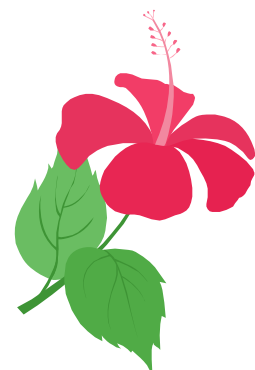
11:00am Rev. Rose

Sunday, July 3

11:00am Rev. Rose

Monday, July 4

Independence Day



Ministering through the Seafarer's Friend ~ Penny Light

From Spirituality to Activism (without having to choose one over the other) was the title of a gathering for worship, workshops and the sharing of recent and ongoing activist activities. The gathering was sponsored by the Pilgrim Association of the Massachusetts Conference at Christ Congregational Church, UCC, in Brockton on March 19. I represented our congregation.

After the opening worship service, I attended a workshop on Seafarer's Friend. I was eager to learn about this mission to which our congregation has been contributing. It was started in the late 1700's and was incorporated in 1827. Our speaker, Ryan Marshall (to be ordained in the spring) has for four years been the full-time coordinating chaplain for the port of Boston (Chelsea). There are others in Portsmouth, Portland and New Bedford.

Daily, the coordinating chaplain calls the Coast Guard to determine what ships (huge container-carrying vessels carrying ninety percent of what the US uses) will be coming in during the day. He then plans his visits and those of other available clergy, hopefully of the faiths and cultures of the visiting crews. A large proportion of the crews are Pilipino, presently 400,000 men at sea. The chaplain's visit is welcomed, following the Coast Guard pilot's. They are alerted to be friendly, but the guns they carry are intimidating.

The chaplain brings onto the ship special phone cards which are sold to the seamen at low cost, and also offers to have volunteers drive the seamen to such places as Mariners' House, a hotel; the Seafarer's Center, where there are games, a lending library and a chapel; or the Cambridge Galleria. This alternative to taxis avoids the expense as well as the suspicion which is felt by many non-Americans since 9/11.

The greatest gifts the chaplain brings on board is a listening ear and the worship services he or she conducts. The chaplain is available to mediate in cases of misunderstanding between captain and crew, often of different cultures, and to guide seamen to medical help. In 2010, almost 11,000 people were visited.

The chaplain also brings on board warm coats, magazines, hand-made cloth ditty-bags containing daily necessities (also small ditty-bags containing little things for the seamen's children), hand-knit wool caps, mittens and Balaclava helmets, for all of which the recipients are said to be *very* appreciative. I have instructions for all of the above.

There are twenty to thirty people in a crew, staying at sea nine months to a year. After two or three months on land, they often go back to sea. In four years of work, our speaker had seen only one American crew.

Administratively, in Boston there is an executive director, the coordinating chaplain and three part-time chaplains. Portland has one chaplain and two volunteers, and there is one chaplain in Portsmouth.

I am very moved by the concept of this ministry which has been offered for 220 years. *Anyone for knitting caps or mittens, or making ditty bags?*



As part of the Seafarer's Friend program, the Rev. Don Jennings (in plaid shirt) visits the crew of the Swan, a vessel flying a Cyprus flag and whose crew are Greek, Polish, Romanian and Filipino.

Rev. Douglas W. Johnson photo.

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One day I was at home trying to finish a paper that was due the next day. I only had a couple hours to work on it before I needed to leave for my next class. My mother was dying and I was trying to take care of her. I was not only stressed and sad but anxious beyond anything reasonable. I was frantically trying to get everything done and to meet all the demands that were on me. I was also on call as the hospital chaplain at the time. On this busy day I received a call asking me to come to the hospital right away. My anxiety level rose even higher. I quickly packed up my things, drove to the hospital and rushed to the patient's

I walked into the room and the lights were dimmed, the afternoon sun was streaming through the window. There were no machines; there was only the sound of the patient's quiet breathing. I shut the door, sat down, and began to pray silently, as I did not want to disturb her. I neglected to tell you that she had lost her eyesight in the last few months. She was totally blind. As I sat there my anxiety began to slip away. I began to feel a sense of calm unlike anything I've ever felt. In a few moments she said, "Corey, I am at peace and I am ready." When I looked at her she had a smile on her face. There was no need for words or spoken prayers, for the room was infused with silent prayer, there was peace and a feeling of joy. Through the silence a presence could be felt. I remained with her for several hours. When I left the hospital I was in a state of complete calm. My anxiety was gone. I had not felt peace like that in a long time.



This experience has never left me and has reoccurred many times over. When we extend ourselves to someone in need we may find that we have received more care than we gave. I know that it is not easy to put things aside and visit someone in need as we all have our own lives and troubles. But if you find that you can extend yourself in this way I can assure you that you will feel a sense of purpose and possible peace and you will, even if you can't see it at the time, have touched someone's life with grace.

Blessings,

Corey

Laity Sunday ~ May 22

Traditionally the Sunday after Easter, Laity Sunday has been pushed all the way back to May 22nd this year, since Easter (dependant on the lunar calendar) was the absolutely latest it could be, Mother's Day can't be tampered with, and NPU's annual meeting is set by the by-laws. Shelley Scruggs will preach, and there are roles for about as many more people as wish to help lead worship. This is an equal-opportunity privilege; everyone is welcome, and encouraged, to participate. Speak with Corey.

Book Review ~ Christine Parsons

The Year of Living Biblically by A.J. Jacobs

In the summer of 2005 journalist A.J. Jacobs committed himself to spending a year living according to all the rules and advice laid out in the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments. Not just the easy, obvious stuff, like not killing or not committing adultery, but the more obscure and puzzling, like not wearing clothes of mixed fibers and wearing only white clothes, and the really hard ones, like not coveting, lying or gossiping. A non-religious Jew, Jacobs spent the first nine months concentrating on the Old Testament laws, and the last three months on the teachings of Jesus and others in the New Testament.

Jacobs relates the events of his year in a wry and funny voice. But he's thoughtful and serious, too. Jacobs found himself changing in ways that surprised and, mostly, delighted him. For example, making the Sabbath a true day of rest came hard to the workaholic New Yorker, but over time this became one of his favorite rituals. He used himself as a test case to try to figure out whether behaving in a godly way can inspire faith in God. (The answer? Kind of.)

Jacobs learned about and visited other groups who strive to live biblical lives, including orthodox Jews, the Amish, and several groups of evangelical Christians. These sections of the book are among the most surprising, as Jacobs's preconceptions (and ours?) bump up against the reality of these other quests for godliness.

I think this book would make a good study group text for our church. It's not scholarly, but it's a great account of a regular guy really engaging the Bible, striving with his whole heart to live the way it says we should, if we could figure it out.



Women's Communion Service and Breakfast ~ May 8

Celebrate the mothers in your life, and everyone who has filled those shoes for you, with our special Mother's Day worship. Then enjoy breakfast prepared and served by the guys. And then enjoy watching them clean up the kitchen! The communion service begins at 9:00 and regular worship is at 11:00.

ElderSpirit Pot Luck ~ Wednesday, May 4

It's time to put your aprons on again: The May meeting of ElderSpirit will feature a pot luck, so bring one of your favorite dishes. If you bring the recipe as well, we can copy and swap them after dinner.



Stewardship Sunday ~ June 5

The challenge of a stewardship campaign is to make an old message fresh each year, and to make ourselves fresh and new to hear it. The message is always that our church needs us, our generosity, our *money*, to continue. A fresh way to think about this? How about, we strive through our church to do God's work on earth, and money is an earthly tool we use. It's a messy and imperfect tool, to be sure, but we're messy and imperfect, too, doing the best we can.

Our congregation is generous, even in these still-difficult times. We give of our time, our talents, our labor, and yes, our money. This young, green season can be a time to reflect on our generosity, and commit anew to being open-handed toward our selves, our neighbors, and our dear church.

Over the next weeks we'll be hearing Stewardship Minutes during Sunday worship, and we'll receive our pledge cards in the mail. May we all turn fresh eyes and hearts to our stewardship of our church and our world.

Christine Parsons



Guest Preacher

Yellow Turtle, whom we usually call Jerry Rockwood, will share some Native American stories with us on Sunday, May 29th, Memorial Day weekend.

Herbert S. Wilkins

Long-time church member Herbert S. Wilkins died April 27. His funeral will be at the church on May 3 at 10:00am. Herb had retired from the MBTA, where he was an engineer. He was a Staff Sergeant in the US Air Force, a veteran of WWII and the Korean conflict. During his younger years, Herb was active at North Street Union where he was a deacon for more than twenty years. One of his granddaughter Heather's earliest memories is of her Grampa and Don Polley taking the collection during worship, nodding to one another so they would be in sync as they started up the aisles (there were two, then), She also mentioned his giving his grandchildren quarters to put in the dish on the coffee table- Others recalled how much he helped out with the dinners which were a big part of church life. His wife Ruth, who predeceased him, is remembered for her talents in the kitchen, and was described by Heather as a most creative Sunday School teacher.

Herb was the loving father of Debbie and her husband Mark Nevers, and Brenda Wilkins, and the grandfather of Heather, Eric, Travis and Amber Nevers.



MAY

13-Bill Dunphy

22-Florence Carvelli

23-Liam Bodwell

24-Jerry Rockwood

29-Alice Moyer

30-Amy Moyer

Is your birthday here? If not, please contact the office.

Joys & Concerns

Tracy Harmon's mother has been living with cancer for more than two decades, and is close to the end of her struggle. Tracy asks that we keep her mom and the family in our prayers.

We continue to pray for the needs brought to the community in worship each week, for a brother with mental illness, for diagnostic tests with good outcomes, for patience, for our children's health and safety, for successful surgeries. And we are grateful for those blessings that are pure grace, and for those that are the result of one another's caring efforts.

Thanks continue to come from the loved ones of those we remembered with cards, phone calls and visits; an on-going concern is reminding folks who don't get out much that they are not forgotten.