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Dear Friends,

Jerry Rockwood gave us all a treat in his Memorial Day sermon story, "A Day." Adults and children alike sat enraptured as he told us Native American stories of creation. You may find audio and video of the event on the church website <http://northprospectchurch.org/sermons-study/sermon-display/>

I spoke with Jerry the day before he preached, and I know from that conversation that one thing he loves about these stories is how they are infused with an appreciation of nature. The waterfowl, the turtle and the muskrat help build the land for the first woman to live on. The Great Spirit (in the form of the sun) paddles across the sky in a canoe. The animals beg to be placed in their proper habitat.

Jerry is right when he says that much of this appreciation for nature is lost on us now. There is so much electric lighting and haze that many people have never seen the Milky Way or the Northern Lights, or even

a firefly on a warm summer evening. Background noise drowns out the birdsong by day and the hum of insects by night.

Jerry blames most of it on technology or progress, so-called. Factories fill our demand for more and more things and fill the air with noise and ash. We demand cities that never sleep. Today it is not unusual to see a couple in a restaurant, both of them texting madly, and believe it or not, sometimes they are texting each other rather than talking. We put so much between us and our surroundings that we don't appreciate them very much. Jerry tells the story in which all the creatures of the earth thank the creator for all they have been given; all the creatures thank the creator except one, the human. Sadly, the story rings true.

Ironically, all this self-centered amusing ourselves leaves us little time to, well, amuse ourselves. The normal take on modern society is that all of our advancements have saved us time, and our quality of life is at a pinnacle. Sixty years ago it was predicted that by now we would have so much leisure time that we wouldn't know what to

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Thanks to Steve Bodwell for keeping the lawns trim and attractive this spring. Rebecca Ramsay, Matthew Galante and Christine Parsons have also signed up to mow; to make sure we don't get shaggy later on, we need a few more volunteers. It works best if you sign up for several weeks, then you can work around the weather and your summer outings. Call or email the church, or sign up at coffee hour.



Coming Up

Saturday, June 4

10:00am Craft Making

Sunday, June 5

11:00am Rev. Rose

Saturday, June 11

10:00am Craft Making

1:30pm Blessing of the Animals

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

10:00am Rev. Rose

Monday, July 4

Independence Day

Sunday, July 10

Sandwiches for Outdoor Church

10:00am Rev. Rose

Sunday, July 17

10:00am Rev. Rose

Sunday, July 24

10:00am Rev. O'Brien

Sunday, July 31

10:00am Rev. O'Brien

Sunday, August 7

10:00am Rev. O'Brien

Sunday, August 14

Sandwiches for Outdoor Church

10:00am Rev. O'Brien

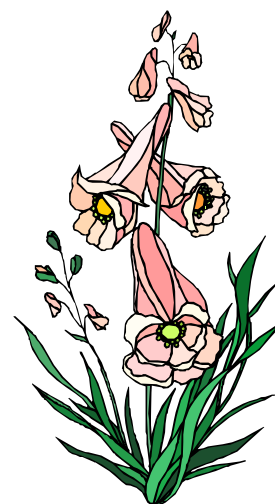
Sunday, August 21

10:00am Rev. O'Brien

Sunday, August 28

10:00am

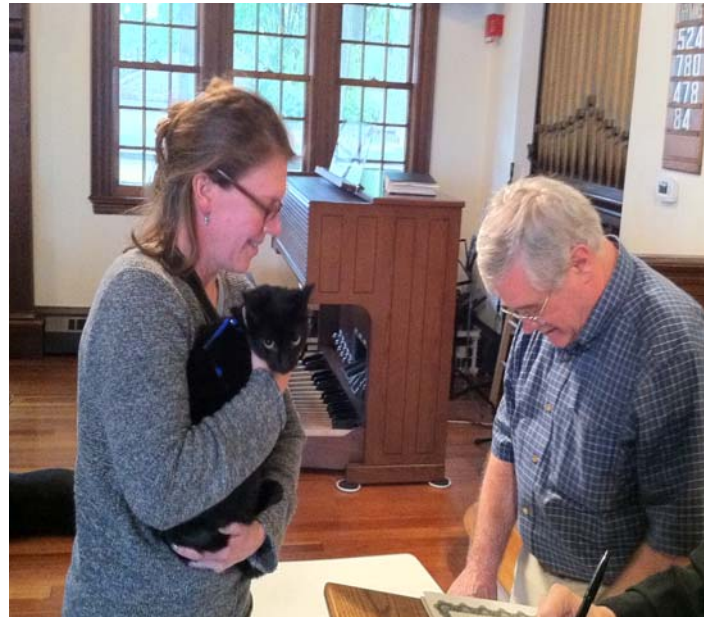
Rev. O'Brien



Blessing of the Animals

...May you be blessed with a long life, good health and a happy home. We acknowledge your presence as a blessing in our lives. Thank you, God, for your blessing for (pet's name).

On a rainy Saturday afternoon in June, North Prospect Union UCC held its third annual Blessing of the Animals. It has always been advertised as “rain or shine” but the other events had taken place in the sunny yard. What would we do? Move it inside, of course! With plenty of towels on hand for wet paws, the doors were open and the welcome mat was out. Folks seemed a little surprised, and certainly delighted. And their pets were on their best behavior. This fun and special time for pet owners and their furry, feathered or finned friends has become a tradition already in our young church and a great way to extend our hospitality to the neighborhood.



Summer Worship Hours

Beginning the first Sunday in July and continuing through Labor Day, worship will begin at 10:00. At present, the church will not be offering childcare, but kids are always welcome in worship. You may want to bring a bit of a diversion for younger children. For pastoral emergencies, when you need to speak with one of the ministers, your best bet is to call Dudley during July, and Corey during August. Of course, you may call either at home, as necessary. The office will be staffed irregularly; emails and phone messages will be checked frequently.

And when it feels just too hot to go to church, don't forget the lovely air conditioning!

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do with it. Conversely, it was generally thought that ancient humans worked day and night to barely survive. That predicted leisure never materialized. Recent discoveries about our “primitive” forbears suggest that they worked about two hours a day. For at least some of the rest of the time they listened to the birds and crickets and made up wonderful stories about the night sky’s constellations. They beheld the whitewash brushstrokes of the Milky Way and rolling colors of the aurora borealis.



It’s easy, I realize, to wax on nostalgically about an over idealized past. Our primitive ancestors spent some of those extra hours running for their lives from the Woolly Mammoth. There was no relief from the pulsing pain of an abscessed wisdom tooth. The menu wasn’t four-star. There are a lot of reasons to be glad for when and where we are.



That said, as Jerry says it, we miss out on a lot, too. A friend of mind was once told that she didn’t know how to do nothing. Many of us don’t know how to do nothing, I venture. Taken to its extreme, I’m not sure we’d want to. But in this summer season, when things seem to naturally slow down a bit, it’s a good time to take a look at what we’ve been missing. Spend a few evenings in a remote spot and watch the heavens glimmer and hear the voices of God’s other creatures. Curl up with a good book. Spend some time talking (not texting) with friends. Take the time to be grateful.

Like most good advice, slow down and smell the flowers can sound simplistic and trivial. We say, halfheartedly, O sure, we need to do that. But like most good advice, it’s a lot easier said than done. If it came naturally we might still have those two-hour work days. All this is to say, it takes some effort to do nothing, or at least for most of us it does. So, as a bit of an inducement, this fall I will be asking you to **bring in an object that captures for you how you got away from the bustle or slowed things down or saw the world around you more fully**. I can’t wait to hear your stories!

Blessings,

Dudley



Pledge Reminder

Thanks to all those who have submitted their pledge cards! We’re looking for a few more, however, and have learned that several people didn’t receive their stewardship letter in the mail. Please contact the office if you need one. Others just keep on giving faithfully, year after year, (which is the bottom line, really) without pledging but please bear in mind that the finance committee can better plan for our expenses - and our future - if they know how much they have to work with.

Our joyful giving keeps our church strong.

Children's Sunday. . .

Let It Shine was not just the title of the sermon preached on June 12. It was a theme that ran throughout the Children's Sunday service. After the sermon, Tom Hathaway invited the congregation to consider how we might let our lights shine and write our thoughts in space provided in the bulletin. Some of the comments: "Share what makes me happy," "Call or visit lonely folks," "Be kind," "Give teacher appreciation gifts," "Keep a sunny disposition so I can bring cheer to others," "I won't complain at work," "Keep a positive outlook (smile)."



The Christian Education program has grown considerably since the merger in 2006, and we're gratified to see the children and youth growing, too, in their knowledge and maturity. With limited resources, the church is successfully serving kids of many different age groups and learning styles. Our light is definitely shining!

. . . and Tom's Farewell

Following worship we enjoyed a pot luck dinner and socializing before saying goodbye to Tom. He has graduated from divinity school and will be working as Executive Director of the Outdoor Church while he completes his requirements for ordination. Kay Wheelock, our resident poet who memorializes many an occasion with her craft, read a delightful, humorous tribute to Tom, and several people spoke of his accomplishments while at NPU.





Joys & Concerns

Eric Fellingner participated in the bike-a-thon for Multiple Sclerosis, raising over \$1800.

Laurie Garden is out and about following pneumonia, which seems to have knocked her out of commission for much too long.

Peggy Rice is returning to Virginia this month. Her last Sunday is expected to be June 19. We will certainly miss her, and can appreciate how pleased her daughter Diane and son David will be to have her nearer them.

Sally Addison is a great-grandmother!

JUNE

14-Jen Bears McGinley

15-Anthony Spada

26-Leona Graham

JULY

5-Tom Hathaway

Mary Jane Gadbois

7-Sandy Dunphy

11-Anne Kelley

13-George MacKinnon

19-Nancy MacKinnon

21-Cheryl Spada

22-Bob Seiler

23-Janet Christo

AUGUST

3-Bill Moyer

11-Christine Parsons

19-Matthew Galante

24-Don Polley

Recommended Reading

Cami Walker was debilitated with MS, both weak and in pain, and severely depressed when a friend and spiritual healer suggested the traditional African practice of giving away a gift each day for a month. The rules were simple: The gift could be almost anything, but she was to give it mindfully and then write about it in her journal. And if she skipped a day, she was to begin again.

29 Gifts: How a Month of Giving Can Change Your Life is the book that book that came out of her experience. The description of her life with MS and the results of not feeding her disease with attention, when it was all she could do to make a salad or climb a flight of stairs, make an interesting story. The range of symptoms the author experienced during flare-ups was instructive, and the concept of sustained giving, when she felt she hadn't a thing to contribute, could be employed by anyone (as evidenced by worldwide response to her 29 Gifts website). It's a short, thought-provoking book.

Barbara McLean

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