



Good News

North Prospect Union UCC

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From the Associate Minister

Psalm 62:5-8

For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him.

He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

On God rests my deliverance and my honor; my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.

Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.

Selah

Dear Friends,

Prayer is the very heart of our Christian faith. There are times that our prayer life is very rich and other times that we may find it difficult to pray. There are times when our prayers may feel unsat-

isfying. As a minister I sometimes find myself in the desert looking for an oasis of prayer but I can only see a mirage of what I seek. I imagine some of you may have experienced something similar to this at some point in your lives.

The first step on the road to prayer is to realize prayer that does not begin and end with me or you. Prayer is not rooted in how we should pray but whom we should pray to. In prayer we are drawn to God's own relationship of mutual dwelling with us. We begin to pray and we find to our surprise before we have ever uttered a word, God has already started the prayer meeting. We don't make it happen, it is already happening.

Many of us have been taught to pray by rote. Saying the same Lord's Prayer over

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FLOWER SUNDAY ~ September 17

Bring a long stemmed flower to be gathered with others in a vase to symbolize or coming together again for the start of a new season. There will be some on hand if you forget.



Coming Up

Sunday, September 4

10:00am Rev. Rose

Monday, September 5

Labor Day

Sunday, September 11

Sandwiches for Outdoor Church

Sunday School Registration

Patriot Day

11:00am Rev. Rose

Sunday, September 18

Begin Sunday School

Flower Sunday

11:00am Rev. Rose

Sunday, September 25

10:40am

Hymn Sing

11:00am Rev. Rose

Sunday, October 2

11:00am Rev. Rose

Wednesday, October 5

ElderSpirit

Sunday, October 9

Sandwiches for Outdoor Church

11:00am Rev. Rose

Monday, October 10

Columbus Day

Sunday, October 16

10:40am Hymn Sing

11:00am Rev. Rose

Sunday, October 23

11:00am Rev. Rose

Sunday, October 30

Pot-luck

11:00am Rev. Rose

Monday, October 31

Halloween

Wednesday, November 2

ElderSpirit

Sunday, November 6

Daylight Saving Time Ends

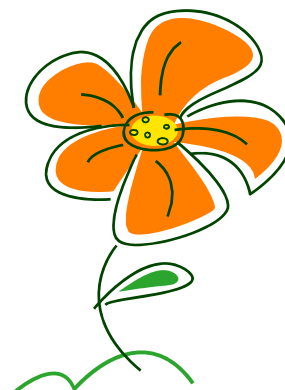
11:00am Rev. Rose

Tuesday, November 8

Election Day

Friday, November 11

Veterans Day



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and over again and losing our train of thought before we've even gotten to the second line. Sometimes it is just too difficult to concentrate, particularly if we are at a time in our lives when we feel that God is silent. There are times when the words just do not come to us when we pray and we become frustrated and lost in the chaos of our thoughts.

You don't need to talk to pray, but you do need to set aside a particular time and place in which to pray in silence. What I'm suggesting is that you take the time to do nothing, think nothing, feel nothing on your own and just sit and relax and let God take over. In other words surrender yourself to God. There are many instances in Scripture that God speaks through the silence.

Regardless of how or where or when you pray, God silence is always there, always comforting and always available if only for a moment. That one moment may be enough to fill us with God and help us get through the rest of our day. So take the time to listen to the ever present voice of God through the silence.

Blessings,

Corey

Prayer Ideas



From the spring/summer edition of *The Progressive Christian*, available from the church library, we have Donna Schaper's column on prayer titled "No Topic Too Small." In it, she offers these suggestions for getting away from the prayer-as-wish-list and returning to prayer as an act of relationship.

- ~ *When you are not able to sleep, pray for each person you love by name. Slowly. This is not counting sheep, so much as counting connections.*
- ~ *Hum, "Great is thy Faithfulness" until you've done it too long and it starts to drive you crazy.*
- ~ *Give out 100 blessing each day, then be off duty.*
- ~ *Say a Kaddish or mourner's prayer on the date of every death you remember. Make a list for yourself. Don't let Facebook be in charge of your memory.*
- ~ *Pray that Jesus will continue not to answer questions. In scriptures he is asked 300 or more. He answers a few. Never beg in a prayer. Ask, but don't beg.*
- ~ *Take your heart to the down-trodden. Understand the words "trodden down."*
- ~ *If you have lost your grip, don't be around people who tell you to "get a grip." Instead listen to God's love for your former and present level of grip.*
- ~ *Pray to keep a smile in your voice when you speak, both to strangers and friends. Pray to trust love into your character and theirs.*

What I Did on My Summer Vacation

In the course of human life, it is all but impossible to avoid being part of a group. Whether we take part in soccer teams, books clubs, church communities, social circles at the workplace or even our own families, it seems that being part of groups is part of being human.

For all the time we spend inside of these various groups, we tend not to think about the informal roles we play within them. Yes, a soccer player may be completely aware of her role as goalie, however, she may be completely unaware of her role as the informal leader of the team, the person her teammates will turn to for advice even before even the coach. Acknowledging these informal roles, whether they are useful roles or maladaptive roles, allows a person to more fully and more healthily engage with the other members of a group.

I spent this past summer in a program called “Clinical Pastoral Education,” or CPE for short. There are CPE programs all across the country in various healthcare settings such as hospitals and retirement communities. These programs have two goals. The first is to introduce ministers-in-training to the ins and outs of pastoral care in healthcare settings. This goal is achieved through 25 hours or more a week of intensive pastoral care giving combined with personal and group reflection on these experiences. The second and arguably more important goal of CPE is to identify what roles a person plays inside of groups. This goal is achieved through an “Interpersonal Relations Seminar.” During this seminar, group members sit in a circle and, with the guidance a supervisor, talk through the relational dynamics they have been experiencing throughout the week. This is at once a fascinating and painful process. If entered into fully, one begins to recognize the roles that one takes up inside of groups and also what reactions one has to other people’s behavior. The theory is that a minister with such self-awareness will better be able to provide care, support, and leadership to a church community.

My own CPE experience took place at Havenwood-Heritage Heights Retirement Community in Concord, New Hampshire. This community was started in the 1960’s as a retirement home specifically for UCC ministers. Although it has broadened its mission since its inception to include people from all walks of life, it has still retained its religious roots and is home to many retired clergy. My learnings this summer were many but I found the insights about my functioning in groups to be the most poignant. Perhaps unsurprisingly to many of you, I learned that my go-to roles are the same roles that many youngest children take up, those of provocateur and jokester. Through both my pastoral care-giving and my interactions with my fellow interns I learned both about the relationship-building and relationship-destroying potential of these roles. It is my greatest prayer that these insights will make me a more able minister as I continue on as the director of religious education this year.

Both in closing and in the true spirit of the provocateur I would like to leave you with these two questions:

What roles to you play inside of groups?

How can these roles help build a better, more loving church community?

Joys & Concerns

Jerry Rockwood was in a serious car accident this summer and is working his way back with all the fortitude and good cheer one would expect from Jerry. His son, Mark, spoke of visiting him in the hospital, expecting to see his dad intubated and having another somewhat one-sided conversation. What he found was Jerry, minus the breathing tube, singing along with the national anthem at the start of the ball game, and asking for his beadwork because he was bored! That's our Jerry.

Before she even had time to get settled in Virginia, Peggy Rice was diagnosed with a tumor which required brain surgery. She's a very determined woman, however, and is making great strides in rehab. She expects to be home within the week. Peggy and Jerry can use our continued prayers for their recovery.

Our thoughts are with Marilyn MacLeod whose brother Everett passed away this summer. Marilyn was in Maine on vacation at the time, and was grateful to have visited him just the week before.



SEPTEMBER

5-David Krebs

8-Wende Weinstein

11-Dudley Rose

15-David McGill

18-Dylan Galante

20-Corey O'Brien

Jerry Rockwood

Dick Lavallee

27-John Micco

Muriel Dawes ~ 1913-2011

Muriel B. Dawes, our oldest member and the one who traced her North Avenue Congregational (Cambridge) roots back the farthest, passed away at home August 24th.

Muriel moved to Cambridge from Ontario after college, and got a job at Harvard where she met Chester, then a professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering. She was athletic and participated in many sports. She rarely talked about herself and her activities so her church family was surprised when, in her 80's, she showed up one Sunday with a broken ankle - which occurred during a bowling tournament! At the time, she was also delivering Meals-on-Wheels to shut-ins, one of her many volunteer positions.

Muriel was a staunch supporter of her church, attending faithfully (when she wasn't at her beloved island in Maine), and serving for many years as a deaconess. She is remembered for the quiet and thoughtful way she participated in meetings; never speaking just to get her two cents' worth in, or call attention to herself, Muriel would listen to a discussion and then ask for clarification or offer an observation which helped move the conversation along. Folks also recall how she enjoyed chatting at coffee hour, even recently remembering small details of their lives that showed her interest in her church friends. She will be missed.

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September 2011



Upcoming!

Hymn Sing, September 23, 10:40

ElderSpirit, October 5, 11:30