

Spire
 Barre Congregational Church, UCC
 Welcoming & Serving the Quabbin Area
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~Pastor's Pondering~ February 2015

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.' ~ Matthew 11:28-30

Picking up around the living room in the midst of the blizzard, I paused to read the headline from the January 3 Telegram & Gazette: "Seasonal cold replaces a practically balmy month – A mild December in Worcester." Ah yes, changeable New England weather.

As I write this with wind howling outside, snow blowing around and piling up, I'm thinking about the start of Lent on February 18 and the promise of Easter and Spring only 8 weeks away!

As the storm raged on, I began pondering what I will do during Lent this year. An acronym came to mind that I share with you as a way to remember what this holy season is about. I hope it also serves as an invitation to and a foundation for personal exploration in the adventure of deepening your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Listening

Enlightenment

Noticing

Transformation

L is for listening.

E is for enlightenment.

N is for noticing.

T is for transformation.

In view of the weather events we have experienced during January, I offer my thanks to Jim Haupt for beginning my Lenten reflection on January 13 when he wrote:

"Good morning! I hope you are well and enjoy the beautiful day. As I was praying this morning it occurred to me and I thanked God for the many varying types of weather He has given us. Like salt to food,

the weather gives our world different and more flavorful looks every time we see it. The trees are a prime example: ice makes them glisten, spring buds give them a warming hue that leads to the beautiful green summers and the colorful fall. It's amazing what you can take stock of with prayer! It would be so easy to complain about the cold, but more filling for me to be thankful for it as a gift."

What a blessing Jim's words are! I am grateful for his Listening to the stirrings of his own heart when he could have ignored them and grumbled about the cold.

On that day, his words brought Enlightenment; they brought light to my day and lightened my "burden" as I faced the details of the tasks that lay ahead. I'm so glad he paused to Notice the wonder of God's plan, appreciating the Transformation that takes place throughout nature and that can take place in each of us when we, too, make time to pray.

Inside this Issue	
Pondering	1-2
Prayer Concerns/ Parish News	3
Let's Get the Word Out	4
Adult Confirmation Class, CFS Supper, Inquirer's Annual Report, Church Supper; THANK YOUS	5
From Shirley Lewis, Wish-list	6-7
Calendar, lectionary	8-9

Lent is a time for listening. It is also a time for letting go of burdens that interfere with our relationship with Jesus and for becoming more aware of how little his Light weighs compared with the burdens imposed on us by the world. Jesus offers us His Light to help us find inner peace, joy, and genuine delight in living that isn't dependent on anything worldly except perhaps relationship with others who share our desire to know the Lord of Life as personal friend and Savior.

So Lent is a time for noticing Jesus' presence in the surprising, significant if small ways that help us feel centered, poised, and part of God's plan. When we accept that we are part of God's plan, we begin to be transformed from the inside out. Lent is the time each year when we come intentionally before God to be transformed, to be moved beyond ourselves into something new – like the blossoms of spring we so long for during winter.

On our way towards Spring and Easter, here is something else you might enjoy pondering from the January 18, 2015 UCC Daily Devotional by Kenneth L. Samuel.

Off to Great Places

You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways." Psalm 139:3

"All alone!

Whether you like it or not,

Alone will be something you'll be quite a lot.

And when you're alone, there's a very good chance

You'll meet things that scare you right out of your pants.

There are some down the road between hither and yon,

that can scare you so much you won't want to go on."

The words of Dr. Suess' "Oh, The Places You'll Go" set us on a path to great discoveries, enchanting encounters and wonderful experiences. But according to Dr. Suess, our journeys to exciting places and wondrous sites will inevitably lead us to the place of self-encounter.

The journey of self-discovery is the most amazing journey of all, because worlds outside of us have little meaning unless they touch and inspire the worlds inside of us. Dr. Fred Craddock said that the greatest distances in life are actually the distances between head and heart.

God has searched the nuances of our intimate being and fathomed the depths of our innermost inclinations. And God has found each of us to be worthy of love, respect and redemption.

Sometimes I wonder why God is more excited about my past, my present and my potential than I am. God must see some things in me that I'm too busy looking elsewhere to see in myself. Maybe it's time for me to interrupt my ambitious itinerary and take a long journey home.

Prayer

"You're off to great places, today is your day! Your mountain is waiting. So . . . get on your way!" Amen.

Reverend Kenneth L. Samuel is Pastor at the Victory in Christ for the World Church, Stone Mountain, Georgia

On our way to Lent and then through Lent and beyond, may the Light of Jesus guide us through the storms of life and lead us to deep peace within our soul.

With love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pastor Deborah".

Pastor Deborah

Community Friendship Supper

Thursday, February 19, 2014

5:30 pm

Please let me know if you can set up, cook, serve, clean up, shop or donate food items. It is important to know, well in advance, to avoid over shopping or under staffing.

If you would like more information please call Janice Handrahan—1-508-882-3159.

Ladies Parlor Update

The Ladies Parlor has been transformed into an exciting, inviting multi-purpose room. The transformation became possible when Jim and Lorraine Peddle gave our church a large donation.

The Worcester County Sheriff's Department helped to keep costs down by providing a painting crew as part of their community service.

We are indebted to Jim and Lorraine Peddle, Sheriff Lew Evangelidis, Lt. Steve Hynes and Officer Mike Mastrorio, for the repair and improvement to the Ladies Parlor upstairs.

Lighting has been added to enhance the stained glass window. The cabinets are in place for the media center. Thank you to Adam Knipe for all his hard work. Also, thank you to Shirley Lewis, Irene Stevens, and Steve Morrall

Roast Pork Dinner

Saturday

February 28, 2015

5:30 pm

\$10.00 for adults

\$5.00 for children under 12

For reservations please call

Lisa 978--355-0140

Families are always *Welcome!*



Music Ministry Opportunities

Looking for a way to praise God and have fun? Here's a couple opportunities to try!!

1. Adult Choir—Ages high school and up—Tuesday nights at 7 pm in the sanctuary. We would enjoy your fellowship if only to try it for Lent through Easter, (February 24 through April 5th). Talk to any choir member, Deb Page or Karla Peterson.
2. Bell Choir—Multigenerational, Tuesdays at 6 pm, starting February 24th in the Ladies Parlor. If you can hold a bell and watch a pointer, you're ready!! Check with a Bell Choir member for the "real scoop" or see Deb Page or Toni Brown!

In our music, God is glorified!

P.S. God has a good sense of humor!!

Collector's Monthly Report

January

Loose Offering	285.00
Missions	315.00
Current pledges	5,650.00
Rengo Music	20.00
Initial offering	63.00
PIF AA	100.00
Water bottle	39.40
Esther Bacon Memorial Fund	60.00
Alice Allen Memorial Fund	25.00
Total for January	\$6,057.40

Peace is a daily, weekly, a monthly process, gradually changing Opinions, slowly eroding old barriers, quietly building new structures.

~John F. Kennedy

Barre Food Pantry News

Our next distribution is **Wednesday, February 11th from 10:00 am—noon** with preparation the day and evening before on Tuesday the 13th.

For our upcoming January distribution, we have need of additional:

Peanut Butter

Macaroni & cheese

Canned green beans

baked beans

Canned pasta

Beef stew

Volunteers are welcome!!! If you would like to volunteer please call Sonja, 978-355-6921 or Chuck 978-355-6463.

Project Purple Schedule Changes

Due to the Blizzard the following changes have been made to the Project Purple schedule: The showing of "Anonymous People" and the Learn2Cope presentation will take place, respectively, next Monday and Tuesday, February 2 & 3 at 6:30 PM at the Health Center.

Your Prescriptions and You" scheduled to take place at the Senior Center this Wednesday starting at 10 AM as well as the "Preventing and Preparing for Peer Pressure" program at Ruggles Lane will now take place on Wednesday, February 4 at 10 AM and 6 PM respectively.

Please note the time change for "Preventing and Preparing for Peer Pressure" - 6 PM on 2/4.



Shrove Tuesday

Shrove Tuesday ~ Hosted by our Youth Group in collaboration with the Christian Education Committee and Diaconate, our Mardi Gras Celebration gets under way at 5:30 PM on Tuesday, February 17!

On the evening before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent, we hope you will join the fun in Fellowship Hall!

"Shrove Tuesday is the day before the start of Lent. Its name is derived from the old English practice of confessing one's sins on this day in preparation for the holy Lenten season. The verb "to shrive" means to confess oneself and receive absolution. (from *Celebrations, The Complete Book of American Holidays* by Robert J. Myers)"

There will be activities, Mardi Gras paraphernalia, music, great fellowship, and an abundant assortment of food including pancakes (gluten free available), breakfast meats, fruit, butter, syrups and more. All ages are welcome. A free will offering will be taken to help defray costs. Please also bring some pet food item for the Food Pantry.

Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 18 from 4 to 7 PM in the Chapel - come for a time of personal reflection in preparation for Lent and your walk with Jesus toward the Cross and his victory over death that we will celebrate on Easter, April 5.



Unlike a formal service in past years, the Deacons and Pastor Deborah would like to offer an extended period of time so that you can drop by to receive ashes, anointing with healing oil, or if you prefer spend time in personal spiritual renewal.

Pastor Deborah and members of the Diaconate will be available to pray with you or you may choose to sit quietly in prayer, read the handouts and scripture passages that will be available, start a Lenten journal, or just listen to the music of the Monks of Weston Priory to refresh and center soul.

Regardless of religious background, everyone is welcome.

FEBRUARY 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:30 choir warm-up 9:30 Service/ Communion/Sunday School 11:00 Confirmation	2 6-8 Girl Scouts	3 9-1 Wendy's hours 2:30-6:00 Music Les- sons 6-7 Girl Scouts 7-8 Girl Scouts 7:00 Choir 7:00 Narcotic Anony- mous	4 9-1 Wendy's hours 6-8 Girl Scouts 6-8 Maplewinds Orch. 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:00 Church Committee	5 9-2 Wendy's hours 7:00 AA	6 7:00 Women's Fellowship Game Night	7 7:00 AA
8 9:30 Service/Sunday school	9 6-8 Girl Scouts	10 9-1 Wendy's hours 9:00 Food Pantry set- up 2:30-6:00 Music Les- sons 6 Food Pantry set-up 6-7 Girl Scouts 7-8 Girl Scouts 7:00 Choir 7:00 Narcotic Anony- mous	11 9-1 Wendy's hours 10-12 Food Pantry 6-8 Girl Scouts 6-8 Maplewinds Orch. 7:00 Boy Scouts	12 9-2 Wendy's hours 7:00 AA	13	14 7:00 AA
15 8:30 choir warmup 9:30 Service/ NO Sunday School/ Baptism Sage-Morin	16 President's Day ~~~~~	17 9-1 Wendy's hours 5:30 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner 7:00 Narcotic Anony- mous ~~~~~ School Vacation Week ~~~~~	18 9-1 Wendy's hours 4-7 Distribution of Ashes (Chapel) Ash Wednesday	19 9-2 Wendy's hours 5:30 Community Friendship Supper 7:00 AA ~~~~~	20	21 7:00 AA 1:00 Barre Women's Club Puppet Show
22 8:30 Choir warm-up 9:30 Service / Sunday School 11:00 Confirmation	23 6:30 Diaconate	24 9-1 Wendy's hours 2:30-6:00 Music Les- sons 6:00 Bell Choir 6-7 Girl Scouts 7-8 Girl Scouts 7:00 Choir 7:00 Narcotic Anony- mous	25 9-1 Wendy's hours 6-8 Girl Scouts 6-8 Maplewinds Orch. 7:00 Boy Scouts	26 9-2 Wendy's hours 2:30-6 Music Lessons 7:00 AA	27	28 7:00 AA 5:30 Church Supper

Daily Lectionary Scripture References

February 2015 (Year B)

Sun., Feb. 1

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Psalm 111
1 Corinthians 8:1-13
Mark 1:21-28

Mon., Feb. 2

Psalm 35:1-10
Numbers 22:1-21
Acts 21:17-26

Tues., Feb. 3

Psalm 35:1-10
Numbers 22:22-28
1 Corinthians 7:32-40

Wed., Feb. 4

Psalm 35:1-10
Jeremiah 29:1-14
Mark 5:1-20

Thurs., Feb. 5

Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
Proverbs 12:10-21
Galatians 5:2-15

Fri., Feb. 6

Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
Job 36:1-23
1 Corinthians 9:1-16

Sat., Feb. 7

Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
Isaiah 46:1-13
Matthew 12:9-14

Sun., Feb. 8

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
Isaiah 40:21-31
Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
1 Corinthians 9:16-23
Mark 1:29-39

Mon., Feb. 9

Psalm 102:12-28
2 Kings 4:8-17, 32-37
Acts 14:1-7

Tues., Feb. 10

Psalm 102:12-28
2 Kings 8:1-6
Acts 15:36-41

Wed., Feb. 11

Psalm 102:12-28
Job 6:1-13
Mark 3:7-12

Thurs., Feb. 12

Psalm 50:1-6
1 Kings 11:26-40
2 Corinthians 2:12-17

Fri., Feb. 13

Psalm 50:1-6
1 Kings 14:1-18
1 Timothy 1:12-20

Sat., Feb. 14

Psalm 50:1-6
1 Kings 16:1-7
Luke 19:41-44

Sun., Feb. 15

Transfiguration of the Lord
2 Kings 2:1-12
Psalm 50:1-6
2 Corinthians 4:3-6
Mark 9:2-9

Mon., Feb. 16

Psalm 110:1-4
Exodus 19:7-25
Hebrews 2:1-4

Tues., Feb. 17

Psalm 110:1-4
Job 19:23-27
1 Timothy 3:14-16

Wed., Feb. 18

Ash Wednesday
Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12
Psalm 51:1-17
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Thurs., Feb. 19

Psalm 25:1-10
Daniel 9:1-14
1 John 1:3-10

Fri., Feb. 20

Psalm 25:1-10
Daniel 9:15-25a
2 Timothy 4:1-5

Sat., Feb. 21

Psalm 25:1-10
Psalm 32
Matthew 9:2-13

Sun., Feb. 22

First Sunday in Lent
Genesis 9:8-17
Psalm 25:1-10
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:9-15

Mon., Feb. 23

Psalm 77
Job 4:1-21
Ephesians 2:1-10

Tues., Feb. 24

Psalm 77
Job 5:8-27
1 Peter 3:8-18a

Wed., Feb. 25

Psalm 77
Proverbs 30:1-9
Matthew 4:1-11

Thurs., Feb. 26

Psalm 22:23-31
Genesis 15:1-6, 12-18
Romans 3:21-31

Fri., Feb. 27

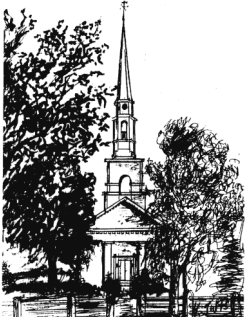
Psalm 22:23-31
Genesis 16:1-6
Romans 4:1-12

Sat., Feb. 28

Psalm 22:23-31
Genesis 16:7-15
Mark 8:27-30



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Barre Congregational Church

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*The world needs the distinct values, vision
and voice of the United Church of Christ—*

Continuing Testament.

Extravagant Welcome. Changing Lives.

Save the Dates:

- ⇒ **Friday, February 6, 2015** at 7:00 pm—
Women's Fellowship Game Night Hosted by
Charlie Page
- ⇒ **Tuesday February 17, 2015**—Shrove
Tuesday Pancake Supper
- ⇒ **Wednesday February 18, 2015**—Ash
Wednesday Service
- ⇒ **School Vacation Week**—February 15th—
21 (**NO** Sunday school on the **15th**)