



2015

Spire

Barre Congregational Church, UCC

Welcoming & Serving the Quabbin Area

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~Pastor's Pondering ~ January 2015

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible. ~ Hebrews 11:1

Happy New Year! May you receive God's abundant blessings throughout the upcoming year. May you recognize them when they come to you and rejoice!

God's blessings can be confounding. We don't always see the light for the shadows obscuring it. Feeling overwhelmed, we may miss the blessing in the curse. Starting a New Year for some people is a time of anxiety, regret and depression; many in our world look with skepticism on all the merry-making, choosing to believe that there is no hope, no point in looking forward when the past seems to prove that there is more bad in the world than good.

"Bah humbug!" Christ's followers say emphatically. Let Christ into your life and there will plenty of occasions to rejoice. Through Christ, God offers all who would receive him an ever-flowing stream of goodness if not giddiness. There is no such thing as a joy-less Christian. Not possible. Dorothy Sayer said, "Where Christ is present, optimism creeps in." Like those tiny little smirks at the corners of our mouth when we are feeling grumpy but someone or something nudges us out of our mood and we begin to smile in spite of ourselves. But the inclination has to be there to begin with, a practiced devotion to receiving all the good God offers us all the time – even when disguised as trouble, turmoil, challenge, change, hardship and sorrow.

The Apostle Paul reminds us in Philippians 4:8 to rejoice always, in all circumstances, and throughout the Psalms, even in times of great loss and sadness, we repeatedly find the wisdom, "sing to the Lord!"

So as we begin this New Year as God's beloved community under construction with its share of challenges, I'd like to share several of my optimism building blocks. In addition to scripture, especially from the Book of Hebrews, the lyrics of the following two songs make me smile and get me back on track. I hope you will feel blessed by them and the uplifting thoughts that follow.

How Can I Keep From Singing
lyrics by Robert Lowry 1860; music by Ira D. Sankey

My life flows on in endless song;
Above earth's lamentation
I hear the sweet though far off hymn
That hails a new creation:
Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear the music ringing;
It finds an echo in my soul—
How can I keep from singing?

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What though my joys and comforts die?
 The Lord my Savior liveth;
 What though the darkness gather round!
 Songs in the night He giveth:
 No storm can shake my inmost calm
 While to that refuge clinging;
 Since Christ is Lord of Heav'n and earth,
 How can I keep from singing?
 I lift mine eyes; the cloud grows thin;
 I see the blue above it;
 And day by day this pathway smoothes
 Since first I learned to love it:
 The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
 A fountain ever springing:
 All things are mine since I am His—
 How can I keep from singing?

** *

American Composer Natalie Sleeth (1930-1992) was born in Evanston, Illinois, educated at Wellesley College, and married to Rev. Ronald E. Sleeth who became President of West Virginia Wesleyan College where Natalie used her musical talents in a variety of roles; "...pondering the death of a friend (life and death, death and resurrection), pondering winter and spring (seeming opposites), and a T. S. Eliot poem which had the phrase, 'In our end is our beginning.' [she wrote Hymn of Promise.] "The seemingly contradictory 'pairs' led to the thesis of the song and the hopeful message that out of one will come the other whenever God chooses to bring that about."

Hymn of Promise lyrics and music by Natalie Sleeth 1986

In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;
 In cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!
 In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,
 Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.
 There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;
 There's a dawn in every darkness, bringing hope to you and me.
 From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery,
 Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.
 In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity;
 In our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity,
 In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory,
 Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

* * *

Then the quotation shared with me by a seminary professor at a particularly low ebb in my life may come from "a newspaper article about New Year's Resolutions on the first day of 1914 by the columnist Dr. Frank Crane:

Determine this year to be master of self; that you will control your thoughts, regulate your passions, and guide your own deeds; that you will not let events lead you by the nose.

Resolve to be happy.

Remember Lincoln's saying that "folks are usually about as happy as they make up their minds to be."

Crane's column about resolutions was printed in the Syracuse Herald of Syracuse,

New York. It also appeared in other papers in 1914 such as: the Moberly Morning Monitor of Moberly, Missouri; and the Grand Forks Herald of Grand Forks, North Dakota.”

There are several prayers that I take with me every day and the one that is the foundation I found in Jan Karon’s Mitford Series books; I would have dig through the series to find from which book this reference comes, but the worn piece of paper I have on the refrigerator has the chapter title “A Living Fire.” On page 359 is the prayer that I offer you as a blessing for every day:

“Thank you, God, for loving me. And for sending Your Son to die for my sins. I sincerely repent of my sins, and receive Jesus Christ as my personal Savior. Now, as your follower, I turn my entire life over to You. Amen.”

As a community of faith, we are building a living laboratory of love to share with future generations. *How can we keep from singing* about that?! God’s promise is for our good although when and how that will come about, that’s *something God alone can see*. Faith, trust, hope, and willingness to rejoice as our blessings increase can only lead to rejoicing in God’s goodness and a Happy New Year!

With love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pastor Deborah". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the "With love," text.

Annual Reports

Committee chairman are reminded please make sure your annual reports are in the office no later than **January 5, 2015.** If the report is not in it may result in not appearing in the annual report and it will be the chairman's responsibility to have it printed and distributed by **January 18th!**

Thank You!

The Flower Committee would like to thank those of you who donated flowers for the Christmas season. The Sanctuary always looks beautiful.

Thank you, Lynn Hartman, Sue Musnicki, Toni Brown, Ann Clark, & Beth Richard.

Collector's Monthly Report

December

Loose Offering	356.75
Missions	364.00
Current pledges	7,006.00
Rengo Music	60.00
Grapevine AA	65.00
Tue Hope Fens NA	20.00
Cont. Church Needs	1,050.00
PIF AA	100.00
Window payment	25.00
Christmas Fund	79.00
Esther Bacon Memorial Fund	100.00
Alice Allen Memorial Fund	20.00
Total for December	\$9,250.75

Community Friendship Supper

Thursday, January 16, 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.

Annual Meeting

The Annual meeting of the Barre Congregational Church will be held on Monday, January 26, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

The agenda for the annual meeting will be to hear reports of the committees of the church. Any business that may come before the congregation.

It is IMPORTANT every member attend!!!



Some New Year Thoughts

May the New Year give you the strength to face the challenges of life and courage to adjust the sail so as to take every situation to your stride. ~ anonymous

New Year arrives with hopes and it gives us new courage and belief for a very new start.

Wish you a very Happy New Year!!!!

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 out church a large donation.

The Worcester County Sheriff's 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 Evangelistis, Lt. Steve Hines and Officer Mike Mastrovito for the repair and improvement to the Ladies Parlor upstairs.

In February we plan to have a dedication and tour of the multi-purpose room and adjoining kitchen. We will invite the mentioned people plus our Barre Representative and Senator and Retired Senator, Steve Brewer.

Plan to attend this event and personally thank them for their contribution.

Date to be announced in the February Spire.

Thank you, Shirley Lewis & The Church Committee

Barre Food Pantry News

Our next distribution is **Wednesday, January 14th 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
- ◆ Canned chicken & tuna
- ◆ Macaroni & cheese
- ◆ Canned green beans
- ◆ Canned peas
- ◆ Canned carrots
- ◆ Canned potatoes
- ◆ Canned beans
- ◆ Fruit juices
- ◆ Rice dry spaghetti and or pasta
- ◆ Parmalat milk
- ◆ Pasta sauce
- ◆ Beef stew

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

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**)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		January 2015		1 Happy New Year!!!!	2	3 7:00 AA
4 9:30 Service/ Communion/Sunday School 11:00 Church Council	5 6-8 Girl Scouts 7:00 PPRC Annual Reports Due	6 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	7 9-1 Wendy's hours 6-8 Girl Scouts 6-8 Maplewinds Orch. 7:00 Boy Scouts 7:00 Church Committee	8 9-2 Wendy's hours 2:30-6 Music Lessons 7:00 AA 7:00 Al-anon 7:30 AA	9	10 7:00 AA
11 8:30 Choir warm-up 9:30 Service/Sunday school 11:00 Confirmation	12 6-8 Girl Scouts	13 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	14 9-1 Wendy's hours 10-12 Food Pantry 6-8 Girl Scouts 6-8 Maplewinds Orch. 7:00 Boy Scouts	15 9-2 Wendy's hours 2:30-6 Music Lessons 5:30 Community Friendship Supper 7:00 Al-anon 7:30 AA	16	17 5:30 Church Supper 7:00 AA
18 9:30 Service/Sunday School Annual Reports available	19 Martin Luther King Day	20 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	21 9-1 Wendy's hours 6-8 Girl Scouts 6-8 Maplewinds Orch. 7:00 Boy Scouts	22 9-2 Wendy's hours 2:30-6 Music Lessons 7:00 AA 7:30 Al-anon	23	24 7:00 AA
25 8:30 Choir warm-up 9:30 Service / Sunday School 11:00 Confirmation	26 7:00 Annual Meeting	27 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	28 9-1 Wendy's hours 6-8 Girl Scouts 6-8 Maplewinds Orch. 7:00 Boy Scouts	29 9-2 Wendy's hours 2:30-6 Music Lessons 7:00 AA 7:00 Al-anon	30	31 7:00 AA

Daily Lectionary Scripture References January 2015 (Year B)

Thurs., Jan. 1

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
Psalm 8
Revelation 21:1-6a
Matthew 25:31-46

Fri., Jan. 2

Psalm 148
Proverbs 1:1-7
James 3:13-18

Sat., Jan. 3

Psalm 110
Proverbs 1:20-33
James 4:1-10

Sun., Jan. 4

Jeremiah 31:7-14 or Sirach 24:1-12
Psalm 147:12-20 or Wisdom 10:15-21
Ephesians 1:3-14
John 1:[1-9] 10-18

Mon., Jan. 5

Psalm 110
Proverbs 22:1-9
Luke 6:27-31

Tues., Jan. 6

Epiphany of the Lord
Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
Ephesians 3:1-12
Matthew 2:1-12

Wed., Jan. 7

Psalm 110
Exodus 1:22—2:10
Hebrews 11:23-26

Thurs., Jan. 8

Psalm 110
Exodus 2:11-25
Hebrews 11:27-28

Fri., Jan. 9

Psalm 110
Exodus 3:7-15
John 8:39-59

Sat., Jan. 10

Psalm 29
1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-12
Luke 5:1-11

Sun., Jan. 11

First Sunday after Epiphany
Baptism of the Lord
Genesis 1:1-5
Psalm 29
Acts 19:1-7
Mark 1:4-11

Mon., Jan. 12

Psalm 69:1-5, 30-36
Genesis 17:1-13
Romans 4:1-12

Tues., Jan. 13

Psalm 69:1-5, 30-36
Exodus 30:22-38
Acts 22:2-16

Wed., Jan. 14

Psalm 69:1-5, 30-36
Isaiah 41:14-20
John 1:29-34

Thurs., Jan. 15

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
Judges 2:6-15
2 Corinthians 10:1-11

Fri., Jan. 16

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
Judges 2:16-23
Acts 13:16-25

Sat., Jan. 17

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
1 Samuel 2:21-25
Matthew 25:1-13

Sun., Jan. 18

Second Sunday after Epiphany
1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20]
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
1 Corinthians 6:12-20
John 1:43-51

Mon., Jan. 19

Psalm 86
1 Samuel 9:27—10:8
2 Corinthians 6:14—7:1

Tues., Jan. 20

Psalm 86
1 Samuel 15:10-31
Acts 5:1-11

Wed., Jan. 21

Psalm 86
Genesis 16:1-14
Luke 18:15-17

Thurs., Jan. 22

Psalm 62:5-12
Jeremiah 19:1-15
Revelation 18:11-20

Fri., Jan. 23

Psalm 62:5-12
Jeremiah 20:7-13
2 Peter 3:1-7

Sat., Jan. 24

Psalm 62:5-12
Jeremiah 20:14-18
Luke 10:13-16

Sun., Jan. 25

Third Sunday after Epiphany
Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Psalm 62:5-12
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20

Mon., Jan. 26

Psalm 46
Genesis 12:1-9
1 Corinthians 7:17-24

Tues., Jan. 27

Psalm 46
Genesis 45:25—46:7
Acts 5:33-42

Wed., Jan. 28

Psalm 46
Proverbs 8:1-21
Mark 3:13-19a

Thurs., Jan. 29

Psalm 111
Deuteronomy 3:23-29
Romans 9:6-18

Fri., Jan. 30

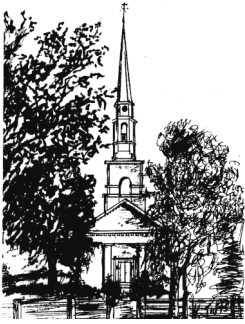
Psalm 111
Deuteronomy 12:28-32
Revelation 2:12-17

Sat., Jan. 31

Psalm 111
Deuteronomy 13:1-5
Matthew 8:28—9:1



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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.