

Spire

Barre Congregational Church, UCC
Welcoming & Serving the Quabbin Area
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February
2016

Pastor's Pondering

“Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.” ~ Teresa of Ávila

Retirement sounds so final, so permanent. God knows, as you have also discovered by now, that I'm not a retiring type so I find that I'm approaching this phase of my life with curiosity and excitement although I'm not looking forward to having enough time, *in theory*, to clean all the drawers and closets and yes, Doug, the cellar! Nevertheless, there is a time for every purpose under heaven and accepting both that reality as well as the call to begin a new adventure appeals to me.

But how do I say goodbye? How do I leave behind the profession that has shaped my days, the rhythm of my weeks, given me identity, and blessed me with so many relationships that reveal the Living God in our midst? Do I focus on the future? Shall I analyze the past? Is it possible to conduct an exit interview with oneself to glean learning?

Perhaps all good questions but the image that keeps coming to mind is the way we've ended Diaconate meetings for the past several years while saying The Lord's Prayer. We hold hands – right hand, palm up; left hand, palm down – grasping each other's open, waiting hand. One hand is lifted palm up to receive what the other person is giving; the other hand is palm down as if placing a precious gift into the other's waiting hand. Indeed, what we willingly, lovingly offer each other at the end of each meeting is a benediction, the gift of good will offered freely and received gratefully. The outreach is itself a prayer, a promise to stand with each other. Even the preparation to share the moment is prayerful if playful as we try to get our hands positioned correctly, waiting for the one or two people who inevitably are out of sync to turn their hands up or down so they become part of the circle.

I don't recall who brought this practice to my attention but I am grateful. I've used it with Confirmation classes and at other meetings and there's a sense of completeness in the holding of a hand, one offering, the other receiving. I feel part of the gathered body of Christ in those moments.

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There is another interpretation for this ritual that I share now as I take my leave from the Barre Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, and make my way into the future as God guides me. Think of the palm down hand as the one that holds onto the past, that place of identity, an anchor for our life, a repository of memory, a link to time immemorial, a verification that we have been in a place for a certain amount of time. Like a ballerina doing an arabesque, one hand extended downward provides balance to the body as the other hand extends upward. So think of the palm up hand as ready to receive the blessings of the future, the place that beckons us to reach out with curiosity and confidence, that place of the unknown but not the unfamiliar because we bring to it who we are, a human balancing act that needs both to give and to receive.

There will be opportunities for both, of that I'm certain, because what is common to both the past and the future is Christ our Lord who strengthens and stabilizes us through all of life's passages, urging us to let go of the past when we find our palm shut tight, too full to receive anything new. What is common to both the past and the future is Christ our Lord who reaches first for our hand as he did to Peter on the stormy sea, saying, "Come, you who have enough faith to recognize me, now let me go with you. Reach for me because I will be there for you."

It's important to me that you know that Christ will be there for you as long as you are willing to reach out in faith. I will not be there but God will provide for your every need through others who are the body of Christ in this world. You will soon find yourselves in other capable hands. Let them grasp and guide you. Follow through on the MACUCC Central Association recommendations that the congregation voted last September so that you may receive the blessings of other churches' wisdom; then learn more ways to give of yourselves because you have so much to share.

I am moving on as you will, too, knowing that I must let go of your hand. Our common link to the past is that it's been nearly six years – 70 ½ months since I put my hand into your outstretched hands in mid-April 2010. Now our hands will be free, both of them, to be lifted up in thanksgiving to God for the good times and challenges, for the laughter and yes, the tears that cleared our vision or expressed our frustration or spoke the depth of emotion when words could not. Now our hands will be free to do the work of Christ as his ambassadors in the world, work that will come in forms yet to be revealed.

As we let go of each other's hands, let's use them to give each other "high fives" and to clap, a sign of affirmation, appreciation and rejoicing for what was good and for what will yet be good for both pastor and congregation!

With love,



Pastor Deborah

Retirement Party for Pastor Deborah.

Saturday, March 12 at Hartman's Herb Farm starting at 4 PM. There will be a full dinner buffet and entertainment. \$25.00 for adults; \$12.50 for children ages 6-12 and free for children 6. Reservations needed by March 5. Call Irene Stevens 978-355-2227 or Lynn Hartman 978-355-2015



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner

**February 9,
2016
5:30 pm**

If you would like to help, donate food or give a monetary donation please see Kevin Fogarty, Erica Skerry or Stacie Demetropoulos.

Church Supper Roast Beef Dinner

Dinner includes salad, vegetables & desert
Saturday, February 27, 2016
5:30 pm

Adults \$12.00 Children under 12 \$5.00

Upcoming Events for March

Boy Scout Ham & Bean Supper, Saturday, March 5, 2016 starting at 5:00 pm—7:00 pm with continuous sitting.

Tickets \$10.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children (5 to 12) under 5 Free.

Women's Fellowship Luncheon Meeting, Monday March 7, 2016 at noon. The program will be Wedding memories. Refreshments. Movie of wedding fashion show of yore. Bring you wedding picture or album to share.

Post 2 Corn Beef & Cabbage Dinner, March 12, 2016 from 5:00—7:00 pm

A Reception For Arthur & Pastor Deborah

To extend your wishes to Arthur & Deborah on their retirement there will be a Reception after church on Sunday, February 28th after church in Fellowship Hall.

Sunday School News

There will be no Sunday school on February 14th. February 28th will be Pastor Deborah's last Sunday in church before her retirement. The children will be singing during the service please plan to arrive by 9:15 am.

The children will be working on a project in Sunday school that we would like the children to be involved in. Your attendance on 2/7 and 2/21 would be appreciated.

Thank you, Erica Skerry

The Healing Quilt

Update: 113 four inch squares of material have been sent, one to each family in the Barre Congregational Church.

The squares will be sewn together around a picture of the church. The quilt represents the church family supporting each other and the church.

Out of the 113 squares, 17 squares have been returned and donations have been received in the month of January. The fundraiser will end on March 31st and the squares will be sewn together after that time. Proceeds will go towards Margaret Keyzer.

Checks should be made out to Barre Congregational. Donations can be put into the collection plate, dropped off at the church office or sent to Shirley Lewis, 42 Dana Rd., Barre, MA 01005

Food Card Program

Program (like a Visa Card) in \$50.00 denominations in cooperation with Barre Food Store, Summer Street. Cards will be on sale in the church office during Wendy's hours, after church the Church Committee is running a Food Card at 10:45 am during coffee hour or call 978-355-2517. For each card sold the BCC will get 5% returned to the operational account of the church.

You may pay cash or check. Checks made out to:
Barre Congregational Church
At the bottom put food card.

Bell Choir

Bell Choir rehearsals will begin again on Tuesday, February 2nd. 6:15 pm—6:50 pm in the Upper Room. If you would like to join or have any questions please see Toni Brown or Deb Page.

Here are three great ways for you to be involved with Heifer this spring!

Day Camp at Heifer Farm

Sessions in April, June, July, August
Monday-Friday | 9am-4pm | Extended care available | \$275

Campers age 7-12 enjoy a week bursting with fun on the farm! Camp activities include plenty of time with the farm animals, scavenger hunts, baking and cooking, games, crafts, and plenty of good old fashioned fun! To register, fill out the attached forms. For any questions and to return forms, email reservations@heifer.org.

Pancakes at the Farm

March 5, 6, 12 & 13
9am-1pm | Reservations Recommended
Admission: \$12 for adults, \$6 for children ages 3-10, free for children 2 and under

Celebrate the maple sugaring season at our annual pancake breakfast! The meal includes pancakes covered in Heifer Farm maple syrup with a side of farm-raised pork sausage, coffee, and juice. After breakfast, tour the farm to see our sugar house, meet the newborn lambs, and explore the Global Village. To make a reservation, call [508-886-2221](tel:508-886-2221) or email heifer.farm@heifer.org.

Heifer Blues Benefit Concert

Saturday, February 6
7:30 pm - 11 pm | Blue Plate Lounge in Holden, MA
\$20 suggested donation at the door for Heifer International

Enjoy an evening with three bands: The Rusty Mikes (a vintage blues band), Organic Chemistry Bop n' Pop (an organ jazz band), and Chet Williamson (a jazz & blues musician). Bring your friends, relax with a drink, enjoy some good music and support a good cause all in one evening!

Barre Food Pantry

Barre Food Pantry volunteer opportunities.

The Barre Food Pantry at the Barre Congregational Church on the common in Barre center welcomes volunteers between 6:30 pm and 8:30 pm. Volunteers are needed to help set up the room and sort, date and pre-bag donated groceries for free distribution the next day.

Also, volunteers are needed from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon to help staff the tables, help clients "shop" the food bank offerings and help carry groceries to clients' cars.

The pantry is back to needing donations of clean, heavy **paper one-dozen egg cartons, Canned pasta w/meat sauce, rice or rice mixed, mac & cheese, dry cereal, oatmeal & fruit juices.** Donations can be dropped off at the Barre Congregational Church, the Barre Senior Center, or the Woods Memorial Library.

People in need of food assistance are welcome at the Barre Congregational Church on the common in Barre center from 10:00 am to noon for free monthly distribution of fresh, frozen and canned food made available through local and regional donations and state and federal government programs.

Note: The Barre Food Pantry would like to encourage clients to bring their reusable grocery tote bags with them when they come to pick up food at distribution.

For additional information call Sonja @ (978) 355-6921 or Chuck @ (978) 355-6463.

Community Friendship Suppers

Come for good food, for good fellowship, for goodness sake! Bring friends or make new ones. Everyone needs a break from cooking once in a while! Suppers are free and open to the public. Free will offerings are added to our Missions income to help those in need close to home and far away. All are welcome!!!The Community Friendship Suppers are from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm. on the third Thursday of each month.

Next Supper is February 18, 2016!!!!
Baked Ham Dinner

Collector's Report

Loose	355.98
Current	6,855.00
Missions	350.00
Int. offering	80.00
Grapevine AA	40.00
PIF	100.00
Healing Quilt	985.00
Memory Warner Smith	50.00
Total	\$8,815.98

Treasurer's Report

Expenses: 1/1/16-1/27/16

Payroll	7,000.00
Office Supplies	294.00
Telephone & Internet	201.00
Equipment Maintenance	00
Diaconate	74.00
General Maintenance	35.00
Cleaning Supplies	00
Miscellaneous	641.00
Flowers	00
Water & Sewer	00
Heat & Gas	900.00
Insurance	871.00
Electricity	264.00
Snow Removal	120.00
Piano/Organ	765.00
Alarm	00
Total	\$11,165.00
Income	
Loose	356.00
Pledges	6,855.00
Other	908.00
Investment Interest	1,622.00
Total	\$9,741.00

Offering Envelopes & Pledge Cards

If you have lost your pledge card and would like to fill one out there are some outside the office, in the narthex or you can call the church office , 978-355-4041& one will be mailed to you.

There is a place to check off if you would like envelopes or would like some call Margaret Marshall, 978-355-4510 ,collector will make sure you get them.

Transferred from savings for ordinary expenses: \$0.00

Operating deficit \$1,424.00

♥♥♥♥ February 2016 ♥♥♥♥

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
	1 6:00 Girl Scouts	2 9-1 Wendy's hours 6:00 Bell Choir 7:00 Choir	3 9-1 Wendy's hours 6:30 Church Committee 6-8 Maplewinds 7:00 Boy Scouts	4 9-1 Wendy's hours 7:00 AA	5	6 2-5 Jenkins Party 7:00 AA	
7 8:30 choir warm-up 9:30 Service/ Communion / Sunday School	8 6:00 Girl Scouts	9 9-1 Wendy's hours 9:00 Food Pantry set-up 5:30 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner 6:00 Bell Choir 6:00 Food Pantry set-up 7:00 Choir	10 9-1 Wendy's hours 10-12 Food Pantry 6-8 Maplewinds 6 Q-Drug Program 7:00 Boy Scouts Ash Wednesday	11 9-1 Wendy's hours 7:00 AA	12	13 7:00 AA	
14 9:30 Service / Baptism/ NO Sunday school Valentine's Day	15 6:30 Diac-nate President's Day	16 9-1 Wendy's hours 6:00 Bell Choir 7:00 Choir	17 9-1 Wendy's hours 6-8 Maplewinds	18 9-1 Wendy's hours 5:30 Community Friendship Supper 7:00 AA	19	20 1:00 Barre Women's Club 7:00 AA	
21 9:30 Service / Sunday school	22 6:00 Girl Scouts	23 9-1 Wendy's hours 6:00 Bell Choir 7:00 Choir	24 9-1 Wendy's hours 6 Q-Drug Program 6-8 Maplewinds 7:00 Boy Scouts	25 7:00 AA	26	27 5:30 Church Supper 7:00 AA	
28 8:30 choir warm-up 9:30 Service/ Sunday school 11:00 Reception for Pastor Deborah & Arthur	29 6:00 Girl Scouts	School vacation week — February 15-19					

Daily Lectionary Scripture References February 2016 (Year C)

Mon., Feb. 1

Psalm 56
1 Kings 17:8-16
1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Tues., Feb. 2

Psalm 56
2 Kings 5:1-14
1 Corinthians 14:13-25

Wed., Feb. 3

Psalm 56
Jeremiah 1:11-19
Luke 19:41-44

Thurs., Feb. 4

Psalm 99
Deuteronomy 9:1-5
Acts 3:11-16

Fri., Feb. 5

Psalm 99
Deuteronomy 9:6-14
Acts 10:1-8

Sat., Feb. 6

Psalm 99
Deuteronomy 9:15-24
Luke 10:21-24

Sun., Feb. 7

*Last Sunday after
Epiphany/Transfiguration*
Exodus 34:29-35
Psalm 99
2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2
Luke 9:28-36 [37-43]

Mon., Feb. 8

Psalm 35:11-28
Exodus 35:1-29
Acts 10:9-23a

Tues., Feb. 9

Psalm 35:11-28
Ezekiel 1:1-2:1
Acts 10:23b-33

Wed., Feb. 10

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. 11

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16
Exodus 5:10-23
Acts 7:30-34

Fri., Feb. 12

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16
Exodus 6:1-13
Acts 7:35-42

Sat., Feb. 13

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
John 12:27-36

Sun., Feb. 14

First Sunday in Lent
Deuteronomy 26:1-11
Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16
Romans 10:8b-13
Luke 4:1-13

Mon., Feb. 15

Psalm 17
1 Chronicles 21:1-17
1 John 2:1-6

Tues., Feb. 16

Psalm 17
Zechariah 3:1-10
2 Peter 2:4-21

Wed., Feb. 17

Psalm 17
Job 1:1-22
Luke 21:34-22:6

Thurs., Feb. 18

Psalm 27
Genesis 13:1-7, 14-18
Philippians 3:2-12

Fri., Feb. 19

Psalm 27
Genesis 14:17-24
Philippians 3:17-20

Sat., Feb. 20

Psalm 27
Psalm 118:26-29
Matthew 23:37-39

Sun., Feb. 21

Second Sunday in Lent
Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18
Psalm 27
Philippians 3:17-4:1
Luke 13:31-35 or Luke 9:28-36

Mon., Feb. 22

Psalm 105:1-15 [16-41] 42
Exodus 33:1-6
Romans 4:1-12

Tues., Feb. 23

Psalm 105:1-15 [16-41] 42
Numbers 14:10b-24
1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Wed., Feb. 24

Psalm 105:1-15 [16-41] 42
2 Chronicles 20:1-22
Luke 13:22-31

Thurs., Feb. 25

Psalm 63:1-8
Daniel 3:19-30
Revelation 2:8-11

Fri., Feb. 26

Psalm 63:1-8
Daniel 12:1-4
Revelation 3:1-6

Sat., Feb. 27

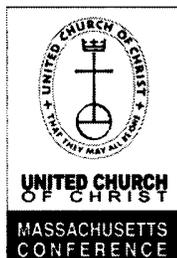
Psalm 63:1-8
Isaiah 5:1-7
Luke 6:43-45

Sun., Feb. 28

Isaiah 55:1-9
Psalm 63:1-8
1 Corinthians 10:1-13
Luke 13:1-9

Mon., Feb. 29

Psalm 39
Jeremiah 11:1-17
Romans 2:1-11



God's family, the Church

What is a Church? Is it a special building or is it any place where God's people meet? The Bible tells us that the Church is actually a **group of people** who love the Lord. That means, WE are the Church (Read 1 Corinthians 12:27 and Colossians 1:18).

When God's people get together—like on a Sunday—that group of is called a Church. The Church is like a family, and in this family, God is our Father and we are His children.

Find and circle the words that describe a family.

C	X	R	X	Z	X	X	Z	C	X	X	U	X	
L	O	V	E	Z	X	X	S	H	A	R	I	N	G
O	Z	X	L	X	X	Z	X	Z	R	X	Z	D	X
S	X	Z	A	X	Z	T	O	G	E	T	H	E	R
E	Z	X	T	X	Z	X	Z	X	X	Z	X	R	Z
N	X	X	I	X	T	X	X	H	X	M	X	S	X
E	N	C	O	U	R	A	G	E	M	E	N	T	X
S	Z	X	N	X	U	X	Z	X	L	X	A	X	Z
S	X	Z	S	X	S	X	Z	P	X	L	X	N	X
X	X	X	H	X	T	X	X	I	X	S	X	D	Z
X	F	X	I	X	Z	X	Z	N	X	X	X	I	X
S	U	P	O	R	T	X	G	I	V	I	N	G	
X	N	X	N	Z	X	Z	X	X	Z	X	X	G	X
X	X	Z	X	E	Z	X	X	Z	X	Z	X	X	X

The closeness of God's family



The family of God gets together to:

- Worship and praise God Colossians 3:16
- Learn about what the Bible says Colossians 1:28
- Use our gifts to help others 1 Corinthians 12:4-7
- Bring our offerings to God 1 Corinthians 16:2
- Spread the good news of Jesus 1 Corinthians 3:8-9
- Encourage one another Hebrews 10:25
- Pray for others Matthew 18:19-20
- 'Break bread' (have communion) Acts 2:46

Memory verse:

All the letters have grouped together to make one HUGE word. Can you figure out the meaning of the word by copying the letters to the spaces below.

Let us not give up meeting together
but let us encourage one another
and all the more as you see the day
approaching Hebrews 10:25

Let _ _ _ _ _ ;
_ _ _ _ _ ;
_ _ _ _ _ ;
_ _ _ _ _ ;



Barre Congregational Church

P.O. Box 936

Barre, MA 01005

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

Extravagant Welcome. Changing Lives.

Not Good

Matthew Laney

"Then God said, 'It is not good for the human to be alone.'" - Genesis 2:18

In Genesis chapter 1, God created light, earth, sky, oceans, flora and fauna and each time God said, "That's good!" In chapter 2, God created Adam and that's when the trouble started.

Although Adam enjoyed a stress-free existence in a tropical paradise, he was alone. For the first time, God looked at creation and said, "That's *not* good." God attempted to resolve the problem by creating an endless array of animals from which the bachelor might select a life-partner. But none of them made Adam's heart sing and none received the final rose. So God anesthetized Adam, removed a rib and shaped it into a second human who was like the first but with some unique features and abilities; some might say she was an upgrade.

When Adam came to, it was love at first sight. He said to Eve: "You are bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh," a pickup line that has not been used since. Actually, it was a poetic way of saying, "In you, I see myself. In you, I understand who I am."

It is "not good" to live in isolation. That's a hard message for introverts like me. I crave alone time.

But the biblical truth is, without others, I don't know who I am and I can't fully appreciate who God is, because (for Trinitarians) God is community, perfect partnership.

Find time to be with others today. Look at them deeply until you see yourself—which might make them easier to love. You might even see God. And that's good.

Prayer

God, help me do the hard and wonderful work of human connection so that I may truly love others, myself and you.

Matthew Laney is the Senior Minister of Asylum Hill Congregational Church, UCC, in Hartford, Connecticut.