



Vol. 8 Issue 2 • March-April 2017
P.O. Box 270 | Tunbridge, VT 05077
(802) 889-9828
thetunbridgechurch@gmail.com
www.tunbridgechurch.org

Pastor's Corner

Rev. Jo Shelnut, Interim Pastor

We have been launched into Lent! As we prepare the March/April newsletter, our Lenten journey is already underway. We can see the signs around us: the daylight slowly lengthens (hence the name Lent), nature is in a tug-of-war between winter and spring, schools take a brief spring break, we reset our clocks.

At services we use this time of vacillating light and dark to look inward and observe our own personal mixture of faithfulness and falling short. It is a time to turn aside from the journey to see where we have gotten off the track and with prayer, praise and service find our way forward with renewed faith.

This six-week journey offers us another opportunity to contemplate *the cost and joy of discipleship*. What do we surrender or put aside in order to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and how do we embrace and accept the grace of finding ourselves to be one of God's beloved children? Lent gives us time and space to wrestle with these realities all the while moving us ever closer to the great joy of Easter.

For me, my thoughts in this season keep circling back to one of the great founding ideas of faith in America — freedom of religion. I remember Sunday School teachers and ministers (school teachers, too) telling me as a child how lucky we were to be able to worship according to our own beliefs. I was as grateful as one can be, who has always had freedom and security to worship God as I chose.

That also meant I took quite a lot for granted until the opportunity to travel to other countries showed me that not everyone shared that freedom and security. It was a shock to see synagogues in Eastern Europe where armed guards kept worshipers safe during services. In Central America there were churches surrounded by barbed wire and gates and I was personally escorted to church and back, just to be sure the visitor made it home safely. That certainly opened my eyes and my heart to how the freedom to worship that we experience is nothing we can ever take for granted.

Our own history of religious freedom is not the simple story I was taught as a child. Different Christian denominations were the Established (state) religion in different states of the country. Non-Christian religions or the “wrong” Christian religions were banned or outlawed in many states and territories. We practiced our freedom by denying other Christians the right to worship in their own way. Thankfully, over time, this practice was given up and people were truly allowed the freedom to worship how and where they chose. The Congregational Church in Massachusetts was the last to be disestablished in 1840.

Religions are not all “essentially the same.” There are many real differences between them. But we do share this in common: if we want to continue to enjoy the freedom and security to worship according to our religious beliefs, we will need to defend the right of others to worship according to their

beliefs. I urge you to pray for — and speak for — the safety and freedom of all worshipers across our great and gracious nation.

*With you on the journey,
Pastor Jo*

Parish Council

Kay Jorgensen

A new sound system will soon be installed in the sanctuary. Rob Howe has worked with Seth Stoddard on the specs. A clip-on wireless mic and goose-neck pulpit microphone, plus a new amplifier, should greatly improve people's ability to hear well. As mentioned in an earlier newsletter, some of the donations given in Arlene Stockwell's memory will go towards the new system.

Repairs to the Parish House front walk and replacement of the front steps, which was expected to be done last fall, will be taken care of as soon as weather permits. The long-anticipated big job — painting the Congregational Church exterior — will also happen this year.

The church received a donation that specified it be spent on special projects, so the Parish Council is discussing other needs. Suggestions include upgrading wiring and lighting in the Congregational Church sanctuary and vestibule; replacing Congregational Church pew cushions and storm windows; replacing the outdoor crèche figures; installing a lawn sign; and making weatherization and other improvements at the Parish House. Other ideas are welcome.

The Parish Council welcomes Maureen Moriarty who was elected to a three-year term at the Annual Meeting. She succeeds Jim Sweeney whose term ended. The council appreciates his three years of service. Nancy Chapman and Ben Wolfe were reelected to the council.

Bylaws amendments that were voted at the Annual Meeting defined church membership and pastor responsibilities; revised the Pastor Search Committee procedure so that the committee's recommended candidate is presented directly to the membership for a vote; and added a section about conflict resolution.

Elsie Farnham headed up the pre-meeting potluck with help from Nancy Chapman and Margaret Rogers. Before dinner began the congregation gave Pastor Jo a card, flowers and cash gift in honor of her anniversary as interim pastor. The 2016 Annual Meeting voted to call her as our interim pastor, a position she assumed on Feb. 21.

Pastor Search Committee

The Pastor Search Committee is about to enter the confidential period when it will no longer be sharing information with the congregation. As explained most recently at the Annual Meeting and a worship service, committee members alone will review pastor candidate profiles, conduct interviews, check references, attend candidates' church services and otherwise get to know the candidates personally and theologically.

The United Church of Christ Vermont Conference office in Randolph, which started helping The Tunbridge Church in late 2015 when we needed pulpit supply and an interim pastor, continues its assistance. It posted notice of our vacancy for a part-time pastor on the national UCC website under "ministry opportunities," a site people from various denominations visit. In addition, the search committee contacted the area conference offices for the Baptist and Methodist churches and placed display ads in The Herald and Valley News.

Pastor Search Committee members will not discuss the position with any potential candidate who has not gone through the UCC website. That is because the conference office will make sure that candidates who ask for our church profile are in good standing with their denominations before our information is shared. Once candidates have the profile they will contact the search committee directly if they want more information about our church and the part-time position.

The committee has no idea how many potential candidates there will be and how long this part of the search process will take. The members agree that the person they recommend to be called as the new pastor will have their unanimous support.

When that decision has been made the search committee will meet with the Parish Council, discuss the candidate and ask the council to schedule a Special Meeting for the purpose of calling a new pastor. The recommended candidate will preach at the Sunday morning worship service that day and leave the church while the vote is held after the service.

Only church members may vote. Please talk to a Parish Council member if you would like to become a church member and help select the next pastor.

Outreach Committee

Nancy Chapman

The Outreach Committee has compiled the 2017 calendar of events. Several of the dates aren't firm yet and not all of the times are set. Please mark your calendars for a busy church year, which began with the Annual Meeting and potluck dinner and the Just Desserts fundraiser in February.

The Outreach Committee hopes to sponsor a Sugar on Snow party

depending upon the availability of snow and the syrup production this spring. If you or someone you know has syrup they could donate, please let Elaine Howe or Margaret Rogers know.

The church community will be invited to a welcome event for our new pastor later this spring or early summer. Additionally a goodbye get-together will be held to thank Interim Pastor Jo Shelnett for her outstanding service to our church.

April events include the Good Friday service at 7:30 p.m. on April 14; Easter sunrise service at the top of Strafford Road (specific time to be announced), followed by breakfast at the Town Hall; and the traditional Easter worship service in the church at 10 a.m. The first of the year's Super Senior Luncheons will be April 29 at 12 at the Town Hall.

The annual Youth/Children's Day service and celebration to conclude the Sunday School season and honor the young people will be June 4. A Super Senior Luncheon will be June 24 at Town Hall.

On July 8 the annual Community Yard Sale will be held on the Parish House lawn. The church will accept Christmas and other donations for its tables and people are invited to pay a small fee for lawn space for their wares. More details will be in the next newsletter. The annual Ice Cream Social will be July 11 on the Parish House lawn.

August begins with the annual outdoor service on the first Sunday, the 6th, at Judie Lewis's pond on Dickerman Hill Road. The third Super Senior Luncheon will be Aug. 26. The Festival of Worship Service, the traditional musical service during the World's Fair, will be the Sept. 17 at 9:30.

October will be busy with the Oct. 7 annual 5K Fun Run/Walk to benefit the Food Shelf, starting at 9:30 on Spring

Road, and the Anything Apple fundraiser at Town Hall, beginning at 11. The Super Senior Luncheon season ends Oct. 28 at the Town Hall at 12 p.m.

Thanksgiving bags of homemade treats plus cheese, crackers and fruit for seniors will be packed on Nov. 18 at 1 p.m. at the Parish House and delivered.

December will bring several Christmas traditions: Church decorating at a time and date to be determined; caroling to seniors on Dec. 15; and packing of Christmas boxes for Food Shelf families on the 16th.

March/April Events

Regular Events:

Sunday Service: 10 a.m. Congregational Church in Tunbridge Village.

First Sunday of the month: Holy Communion

Making Change: Wednesdays, Parish House, 5:30 p.m.

Choir rehearsal Thursdays, 7 p.m.

Community Food Shelf: Fridays, Parish House, 4-6 p.m.

Special Events: Easter Season

April 9: Palm Sunday Service, 10 a.m.

April 14: Good Friday Service, 7:30 p.m.

April 16: Easter Sunrise Service at the top of Strafford Road, time to be announced; Easter Breakfast, Town Hall; Festival Church Service, 10 a.m.

April 29: Super Senior Luncheon, Town Hall, 12 p.m.

Thanks

Belated thanks to the 2016 choir members and organist/choir director Judie Lewis for providing such a nice variety of music on so many Sundays last year: Bunchie Angell, Connie Button, Eve Ermer, Priscilla Farnham, Nan Frost, Marybeth Lang, Sharon Mee, Sue Rogers, Janet Zug and Pastor Jo Shelnut.

Thanks to Mary Fisk for doing the 2016 audit before the budget was presented at the Annual Meeting. She also collects the Parish House recycling and trash — a big thanks for doing that. Geoff Hansen created the church website and continues as webmaster. He's not responsible for the content, which was badly out of date but is better now. We thank him for keeping the church presence online.

Gordon Barnaby helped us get through the winter by plowing the Parish House parking area. Nancy and Randy Chapman took down the crèche and moved the figures indoors on the coldest day of the new year. The church undecorating and packing of ornaments and decorations was headed by Euclid and Priscilla Farnham with help from Nancy and Randy, Rob Howe and Kay Jorgensen.

Pastor Jo has given the Nativity Pageant costumes and manger set to our church. We look forward to many more pageants thanks to her kindness and direction of the pageant which was presented on Christmas Eve.

Our church recently sent \$300 to help First Baptist Church of Lebanon which lost its downtown church in an arson fire. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the special offering.

Many bakers, silent auction item donors, entertainers, attendees and

workers helped us raise \$1,946 at the Feb. 11 Just Desserts evening. Thanks to everyone, including the Rec Breakfast patrons who donated \$119 for baked goods the morning after Just Desserts. The proceeds will be used for painting the church and capital projects.

Silent auction donors were: Anichini, Hoyt Bingham, Black Krim Tavern, Boardway & Cilley, Sylvie Desautels, Joanne Herrick, Rob Howe, Kay Jorgensen, Marybeth Lang, Saturday Sewing Circle, Felicity Swayze, Tunbridge Public Library, Union Agricultural Society and Janet Zug.

Nancy Howe headed the Town Hall setup and decorations with help from students Isabella Amodeo and Abby Gross, Nancy and Randy Chapman, Ed Howe, Elaine Howe, Rob Howe, Kay Jorgensen and Margaret Rogers. Neil FitzGerald, who also performed classical jazz that night, set up the microphones and sound system. Helpers during the event were the two Nancys, Elaine, Rob, Kay and Margaret plus Kate Caldwell, Theresa FitzGerald and Judy Tucker. Shelia and Gordon Mitchinson stayed to help clean up and proved that it pays to attend Better Bones — they're whizzes at folding and stacking chairs.

News and Notes

New Members

We are pleased to welcome Margaret and Bob Rogers of Spring Road as members of The Tunbridge Church.

New Baby

Congratulations to Kim and Ken Danforth of Orange whose daughter, Addison Ann, was born Dec. 21. She has been coming to Sunday worship services with her parents and great-grandparents, Sadie and Ernest Kennedy of Chelsea.

Felicity's Book

Felicity Swayze recently published *War Torn: A Family Story*. It is an account of Felicity's early life after she and her twin, Peter, and their mother were hurriedly evacuated from England in August 1940. After two weeks at sea in a convoy of evacuation ships and troop carriers escorted by battleships they reached Halifax, Nova Scotia. The book is available from Felicity and in paperback and Kindle editions through Amazon.

Happy Birthday

MARCH

- 04 – Sharon Mee
- 07 – David Wolfe
Eve Ermer
- 09 – David Smith
- 13 – Stephen Rixford
- 21 – Shelia Mitchinson
- 30 – Lisa Amodeo

APRIL

- 07 – Elaine Howe
- 08 – Nan Frost
- 09 – Edward Howe
Judy Hilts
- 13 – Alec Frost
Don Hilts
- 20 – Rob Howe
Kay Jorgensen
- 21 – Linda Lazaroff
- 25 – Vivian Smith
- 26 – Shirley Boles

Parish Council

Kay Jorgensen, President
Dawna Neron, Vice President
Sue Barnaby, Secretary
Townsend Swayze, Treasurer
Nancy Chapman
Rob Howe
Maureen Moriarty
Judy Tucker
Ben Wolfe