



Vol. 9 Issue 2 • March-April 2018
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Parish Council

Kay Jorgensen

A delicious potluck meal preceded the Feb. 4 Annual Meeting. The bulk of the meeting business was reports from various committees on what they did in 2017, much of it information shared during the year through newsletters. Treasurer Townsend Swayze's report follows this column. Mary Fisk was thanked for auditing the church books for last year.

Judie Lewis brought up concerns about the church's ability to attract and engage young people and suggested a youth leader staff position be created. The Parish Council will continue the discussion with Judie at its March 11 meeting. In the meantime, Children's Choir director Janet Zug is recruiting people to be available to help with young ones during worship services.

Rob Howe, Kay Jorgensen and Judy Tucker were reelected to the Parish Council. As part of his report about buildings and grounds Rob told the meeting that, barring unforeseen expenses, the capital fund will be allowed to grow before we undertake any major projects, which would likely be at the Parish House.

He highlighted improvements undertaken last year, from the church painting, new sound system and pew cushions to replacing the Parish House front walk and steps. All of the work was completed except for some electrical work at the church, which was rewired last year.

The capital projects fund got off to a good start with the Feb. 17 Just Desserts evening raising almost \$1,500 (see page 4). The church's next fundraiser is the July 14 Community Yard Sale at which proceeds from church tables and vendor space rentals will go to the capital fund. Storage space is available, so donations of gently used and Christmas table items are welcome anytime.

In the meantime, we offer an antidote to Mud Season — Maple Syrup Season. The Outreach Committee will not be deterred — there will be a Sugar on Snow Party, March 17 at the Town Hall at 7 p.m. The potluck maple fellowship that was last year's stand-in event was so popular we're also doing that again. So, come share and enjoy something maple at fellowship after the Sunday, March 25, worship service.

Ideas are welcome for observations of this year's notable church milestones: the 40th anniversary of The Tunbridge Church's formation, the 50th anniversary of the September Festival of Worship service and the 185th anniversary of the South Tunbridge Methodist Episcopal Church.

Treasurer's Report

Townsend Swayze

2017 was a very active and busy time for church improvements.

In addition to the many support programs, we were able to complete two major projects: the painting of the exterior of the church and the purchase of new pew cushions.

Over the last three years, we have raised \$18,550 for the painting and over \$800 for the cushions. The shortfall in covering for the painting was a little over \$11,000, and for the cushions, the shortfall was a little over \$5,600.

Two very generous bequests covered these shortfalls. Bequests and an anonymous donation also contributed to a new audio system, stove for the Parish House, improved walkway to the Parish house and safer steps.

Looking at the budget numbers for 2018, we show the actuals for 2016 and 2017 [Annual Meeting handout which showed \$93,031 proposed 2018 income and expenses]. The line item under income shows a pause in capital improvements activity. 2018 also shows a more modest expectation of gifts and bequests. The proposed withdrawals from our investments represent about 4.5% of the portfolio. In time it would be good to reduce that to 3.5-4%.

On expenses, we have projected holding them down. The unknown is the costs of a new pastor. For planning purposes we have assumed a mid-range amount. The search committee, however, is not held to this particular number. The other budget expenditures reflect only a very modest increase and some a reduction from the 2017 actuals.

Christian Education

Ben Wolfe

This month we find ourselves in the middle of challenges and transitions. The back roads may be first and foremost in our minds at this point, but the life of our church is going through a period that is no less critical. The challenges we face are not where my prayers are focused, but rather our response as a congregation is what will determine who we will be.

Is Christian Education really important going forward? As I said at the Annual Meeting, the Pastor Search Committee is doing the second most important job in the church; the first most important is our own decision to love each other with the support and urgency that Jesus shows us.

The reason I see Christian Ed as more than a decorative feature of the church that this covers any reflective effort to grow and understand God's loving relationship to us outside of a Sunday service — without learning to nurture this source of our hope and love, we will become a civic institution where people's beliefs become totally private, and we no longer can offer full acceptance of one another even in our midst.

I have served as the head of Christian Ed for a while, and I have seen some undeniable challenges as well as some significant successes — usually you need a challenge to really focus enough to generate success! Right now we find ourselves in a tough spot. We completed the Sunday School year last May with me as the only teacher of this august and exciting group.

Given the range of ages, widely fluctuating attendance, and limited time to have Sunday School (20-25 minutes), a group of us found it difficult to do this job in the structure we have been working within. As a single teacher in my situation, it was no longer feasible for me to continue

So what to do? So many things. One challenge presented in making Sunday services "doable" for families with kids is the need for childcare; Janet Zug in particular has been outspoken in her effort to get folks to step forward to help this happen, even if they can only pledge a week here or there. Please heed her call!

From teaching Sunday School here over the last 18 years, I see an opportunity in offering enrichment and engagement for younger members at some focused and planned times outside of Sunday services. It can look like youth group outings, it can be structured activities, group movies, or regular get-togethers in a less formal setting.

There will be an ongoing discussion about how to support our mission to “be the church” in ways that meet the needs of all ages and circumstances within the whole church community. I am certain that any solutions will end up involving you, the reader of this newsletter.

Where am I in all this? I am actually doubling down on my own training and education for church leadership, so while my heart is very enthusiastic, my time is limited. I will support any and all efforts, but I cannot do it alone.

Please consider me “co-chair” looking for any and all support you feel moved to give. I want to encourage you to consider if there is a way you are interested in collaborating on forms of learning and growing together — or just offering something new we haven’t thought of. I am looking forward to hearing what you’re excited to look at, and I will support you as best I can.

What is good for the younger members is good for any of us, too. While Jesus reminds us to become as little children and open ourselves to the Kingdom of God, it certainly takes different forms at times. Currently there is a regular meeting on Sunday afternoons (3:30) at the Parish House to read the Gospel of Mark — to be surprised by it, challenged by it, and respond to it, all while we grow as a group.

No Bible or experience is necessary, and don’t be concerned if you can only make it once in a while, or once ever. We’d love to have you join us. A sit-down

study group like this is just one way we can grow in our understanding and focus on the joy that Jesus offers us in His love.

I have no doubt that a small congregation hungry to draw close to God will be given all we need to change in amazing ways. If we decide to come together to approach Jesus and open ourselves to the Holy Spirit, we will emerge from this mud season of uncertainty as a dynamic and determined church. Let’s do it.

March/April Calendar

Regular Events:

Sunday Service: 10 a.m. Congregational Church, Tunbridge Village
Gospel of Mark Bible study: Sundays, Parish House, 3:30 p.m.
Choir rehearsals: Thursdays, children 6-6:30, adults 7 p.m.
Making Change: Wednesdays, Parish House, 5:30 p.m.
Outreach Committee: second Thursdays, 4:30 p.m., Parish House
Community Food Shelf: Fridays, Parish House, 4-6 p.m.

Special Events:

March 11: Parish Council meeting
March 17: Sugar on Snow, Town Hall, 7 p.m.
March 18: Spring Festival of Worship service
March 25: Maple Potluck Fellowship
April 28 Super Senior Luncheon
April 29 Potluck Fellowship

Holy Week:

March 25: Palm Sunday
March 30: Good Friday and Tenebrae Service, 7:30
April 1: 6 a.m. Easter sunrise service top of Strafford Road followed by Town Hall breakfast; Easter service 10 a.m.

News and Notes

Spring Festival of Worship

The church will hold its first spring Festival of Worship service at 10 a.m. on March 18. For 50 years The Tunbridge Church has offered a musical come-as-you-are service, the Festival of Worship, on the Sunday of the World's Fair.

Organist and Choir Director Judie Lewis initiated this spring musical service, which is scheduled two days before the Vernal Equinox and two weeks before Easter, to celebrate the Christian promise of renewal and rebirth. Singers of all ages and abilities and musicians are invited. Their rehearsals are March 8 and 15 at 6:15 p.m. for the children's choir and 7 p.m. for the adults.

Welcome, Quinton James Putney

Quinton James Putney was born on Jan. 10. Congratulations to parents Diana and Jed and big sister and brother Lorelai and Cameron – and aunt Dawna Neron and cousin Olivia Swayze.

The Rev. Dr. Bamberg's Schedule

The Rev. Dr. Claire Bamberg will lead worship services on March 4 and 11 and on March 30, Good Friday, at 7:30 p.m. She will also lead the April 1 Easter service at 10 a.m. and the worship services on April 8 and 22.

Funeral Fellowship

The Funeral Fellowship Committee provided refreshments after the Feb. 3 Celebration of Life Service held at the church for Floyd McPhetres.

Thank You

Jessie Tucker's children — Ben, Judy and Marilyn — recognized what would have been their mother's 90th birthday on Jan. 26 by donating a pew cushion. A native of Tunbridge, Jessie married Robert Tucker in 1949 and lived on their dairy farm south of the village until her death at age 83 in 2011.

Thanks to everyone who donated items for residents of the Vermont Veterans' Home and a transition home. Elaine Howe made sure that the donations got to Lorraine Withington who arranged for them to be taken to Bennington.

Church attendees delivered some 20 containers with desserts, cookies and chocolate treats to senior residents after the Feb. 18 worship service. Sue Barnaby packaged the treats and organized deliveries. The night before, the Just Desserts evening filled the Town Hall as people came to enjoy music by George White and Rachel Clark and Nancy Taube and David Indenbaum.

The evening was successful thanks to donors of auction items and services and more than two dozen bakers who provided treats from pig picking cake and cream pies to meringues, lady finger cake and whoopie pies. Four special cakes were featured in a mini auction. The silent auction items included donations from Anichini, Boardway & Cilley, Hoyt Bingham, Helen Heslop, Rob Howe, Kay Jorgensen, Marybeth Lang, Saap Restaurant, Saturday Sewing Circle, Union Agricultural Society and Sue Howe Wood.

The set-up crew, under Nancy Howe's direction, included young volunteers who carried and climbed the ladder and hung decorations — Isabella Amodeo, Margot Frost and Marguerite Souigny. Nancy brought all of the hall and table decorations, Elaine Howe solicited dessert donations, Rob Howe was in charge of entertainment and Kay Jorgensen handled the silent auction. Margaret Rogers and Nancy Chapman joined them for set up and clean up. Saturday night Nancy and Margaret had help in the kitchen from Isabella as desserts were cut and served upstairs where Nancy Howe, Jacque Norris and Judy Tucker worked at the dessert table.

Youth News

The Children's Choir made its debut at the Jan. 28 worship service. Director Janet Zug played the guitar while assistant director Margot Frost directed the children who clapped and made noises with percussion instruments as they sang the Call to Worship, Anthem and Benediction Response.

The choir also provided music for the Feb. 25 worship service. The choir members are Miles and Rowan Lawrence, Cameron and Lorelai Putney, Isabella and Owen Weed and Laila Zug.

Olivia Swayze appeared in Northern Stage's "Only Yesterday" in White River Junction. She portrayed a fan in the world premiere play about the night that Beatles John Lennon and Paul McCartney shared a motel room in Key West, Fla., grounded by a hurricane and unable to get to a concert. Olivia and the three cast members also gave a reading of the play in New York.

Josh Amodeo was a member of The Sharon Academy's first boys basketball team to be undefeated in the regular season with a 20-0 record. According to the Valley News Josh scored 15 points in the final game and was honored, along with other seniors, that evening. At presstime the TSA Phoenix team was awaiting the VPA Division IV postseason tourney schedule.

Birthdays

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
11 – Alec Frost
13 – 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