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Pastor's Corner

The Rev. Dr. Jennifer S. Cook

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It is hard to believe that it is almost time for me to say goodbye. In just a few short weeks, Brian and I will be venturing into the unknown years of retirement.

I want to thank all of you for the many ways you allowed me to be your pastor. You have invited me into your lives for family occasions, baptisms, counseling and celebrations of lives well-lived. You have welcomed me into your homes and hearts and entrusted me with many things. As I have mentioned before, it has been not only a joy, but an honor, for me to be in ministry serving God, with you. I will miss all of you deeply.

While I am leaving you, there is one who will never leave. There is one who remains constant, Jesus Christ. He has been here from the beginning and will be with you forever. That is a promise.

Together, in just a few months over two years, we have moved forward in many ways as a church. I trust that together, you will continue to look and move forward with confidence to what God has planned. Trust that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide you through your mission at The Tunbridge Church.

When I leave, our relationship will change. I will no longer be your pastor

and will instead, be a “friend.” This means that I will not be available for counseling, weddings, funerals, baptisms or to fill any other pastoral needs. We can say “hello” at the grocery store, the library or, if we see each other at a restaurant or at the fair.

You will have someone new in church leadership and I encourage you to embrace the next pastor. To help a new minister be fully present, I will also be stepping away from any social media relationships. It has nothing to do with my love or care for you, and everything to do with wanting to lay the best foundation for the new minister of this church.

For me, leaving a pastorate is always difficult. Know that The Tunbridge Church has a special place in my heart and I will keep all of you in my prayers as you step into a wonderful future. And, I ask you to pray for me and my family, as we journey into a new season as well.

It was Jeremiah who wrote to the exiles in Babylon when they were anxious about their unknown future. He left them with these words, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Christmas Blessings,

Jenny

Parish Council

Kay Jorgensen

We wish Pastor Jenny and Brian well as they soon begin the new year as retirees. Her tenure at The Tunbridge Church came during a time of world-wide fear, loss, upset and so many other emotions. There were months when we could not meet in person, but Jenny kept us connected. She wrote weekly emailed worship services and midweek messages complete with prayers, readings, homilies, graphics and YouTube links for music from preludes to postludes.

There were extras including Holy Week meditations, two services for Easter 2020, a Calendar of Kindness list for reverse Advent giving to the food shelf, and a "Call for Prayer" after the Jan. 6, 2021, events.

During these 20 months of the coronavirus we spent many Sundays meeting out of doors. Two Sacred Sound in Worship services with drum circles took place on the Parish House lawn. We held outdoor services at Antique Hill and the fairground Gazebo and in front of the village church during the 2020 Advent season.

The church's Outreach, Funeral Fellowship and Community Food Shelf committees carried on with restrictions as did Jenny as conditions permitted, visiting, calling, mailing and delivering food.

Jenny came to Tunbridge with years of experience in various ministries and institutions from churches and hospitals to chaplaincy and writing. Knowing the plight of small churches, she encouraged us to be creative in making the church known. There were "love" heart-shaped lollipops, popcorn with the invitation to "pop in," and banners hanging from the deck railing.

These are some of the things that come to mind that Jenny initiated that might not have happened without her:

- The painted quilt on the outside of the church

- The town's only 2021 Memorial Day observance, a worship service with an aisle of flags, flag processional and tolling of the church bell as names of those who died were read

- Blessing of the Animals
- Participation in the town's annual parade
- Weekly fellowship after Sunday worship
- Prayer shawls and lap blankets
- New activities, including Care for the Caregivers, a supper for widowers, a men's breakfast, weekly Bible study, a crafts class and support of Women Moving Forward

- Thinking beyond our town, leading to quarterly mission fundraising that began with the current special offering for Afghan resettlement in Vermont

Jenny's weekly worship and the sermon messages showed imagination. There was the Lord's Prayer said in seven languages on Pentecost Sunday; breads from various cultures offered on World Communion Day; roses on All Saints' Day; a Men's Day service highlighting men's hobbies and interests; Holy Humor Sunday; water from the River Jordan for self-baptism; "Happy Birthday" and carol singing by phone.

Jenny also reminded us that the Parish Council has overdue work to do in revising bylaws, writing policies that are the norm in many churches, and taking care of supporting the church and its minister.

It is said that "retirement is a time to enjoy the things you never could before." Jenny and Brian deserve and soon will have work-free weekends. We wish them many years of health and happiness and our thanks for ministering to the church during these challenging times.

Please join us for the Advent and Christmas season services and Jenny's final worship service on Dec. 26.

Advent and Christmas Season

Poinsettia Plants

If you would like to provide a poinsettia plant(s) for the front of the sanctuary please bring it Dec. 5 or 12 for display until Christmas when you can take it home.

A form will be on the vestibule table if you would like to share the names of those you are remembering or honoring with your plant(s). They will be published the week of Dec. 19.



Afghan Refugee Support

Vermont is in the midst of welcoming 130 people from Afghanistan. Single refugees, couples and families with children are being placed in Chittenden County, central Vermont and the Rutland region.

The Vermont branch of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI Vermont) has Pashto and Dari interpreters on staff and is recruiting Pashto, Dari and Farsi interpreters and host families and volunteers. The Tunbridge Church has been accepting donations since October. At the end of December the Parish Council will add to the \$481 raised as of Nov. 27 and send it to USCRI Vermont.

Worship Services & Events

Shorter 10 a.m. indoor worship services continue with mask wearing. You are invited to light a votive candle(s) on the table before the service. Nan Frost is the season's musician. Shirley Boles is the greeter and fellowship host.

in·tinc·tion /in'tiNG(k)SHən/

Noun: *intinction*

The action of dipping the bread in the wine at a Eucharist so that a communicant receives both together.

Origin

Mid-16th century: from late Latin *intinctio(n-)*, from Latin *intingere*, from *in-* 'into' + *tingere* 'dip'. The word originally denoted the general action of dipping, especially into something colored; compare with *tinge*. The current sense dates from the late 19th century.

On Dec. 5, we will be celebrating Holy Communion. Due to COVID, we haven't done this in a long time. It will be my last "holy meal" with all of you. At this time in the service, you will be invited to come forward to take the host and, if you wish, dip it into the cup, eat it and return to your seat. Please note that this is not the same as "common cup."

This is a very personal way to take communion and I have heard that it has changed lives. I hope it will be meaningful to you. If you stay in your seat and would like Communion, I will serve you there if you prefer.

If there are concerns about cleanliness and serving this way, please take the bread and carefully dip it into the juice in the cup without dipping your fingers into it. Or, if you are uncomfortable, simply take the bread. The pieces are larger cubes of a dense bread that will not be as fragile as other types.

Since we are having fellowship time with unpackaged "goodies" and we have had a potluck, I think we will be safe participating in Communion this way.

I look forward to sharing this final meal with you. During Communion, a song entitled *At This Table* will be played. If you like, cut and paste the website below for a preview.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acRAIkV7QDc>

Blessing the space between us,

Jenny

Dec. 5, Community Carol Sing, 3 p.m.
"Christmas Carols and Candy"
Community Carol Sing with refreshments around a candy theme.

Dec. 12, Caroling after church
Caroling and poinsettia delivery to seniors after morning worship

Dec. 19, Dedication, Phone Caroling
Dedication of sanctuary lights in memory of Barbara Howe and caroling by cell phone to friends during the 10 a.m. service.

Dec. 21, Service of Light
Solstice service of reflection on the "longest night" in the church, 7 p.m.

Dec. 24, Christmas Eve
7 p.m. candlelight service

Dec. 26, Morning after Christmas
Dress casually for carols, gifts and refreshments

News & Notes

Thanksgiving Bags

Thanksgiving bags were delivered to more than 60 people (including couples). We appreciate everyone whose donations helped pay for the fruit, cheese, crackers and other purchases and the many bakers who made muffins and cookies.

Elaine Howe organized, shopped and scheduled, making for a smooth operation as she and five volunteers packaged foods and filled the bags which included a Thanks-giving greeting and a nametag. Elsie Farnham came over from Morgan Orchards in Randolph Center to address Thanksgiving cards to distant church friends, something she has done for many years.

Thanks to the following people who packaged, packed and delivered bags: Shirley Boles, Betty Brown, Nancy and Randy Chapman, Mary Fisk, Ellen Hosford, Alan and Pat Howe, Elaine Howe, Kay Jorgensen, Donna Nelson,

Dawna Neron, Margaret Rogers and Judy Tucker.

Community Food Shelf Garden

The first season of the vegetable garden on the Parish House lawn was a big success. Thanks to Gardener's Supply, Jerilyn Zaroogian, Peter Guy and other volunteers the raised beds overflowed with vegetables and herbs. Due to the crazy weather, carrots, parsley, leeks and other crops were still growing in mid-November.

The garden's bounty was for the picking or taking from boxes in the creche which gardeners and the food shelf added to. Many people gave and took fresh veggies.

Funeral Fellowship

Funeral fellowship was held at the Town Hall after the burial service for Pennie Chapman who died Oct. 29. Due to COVID resurgence, refreshments were restricted to bottled water and bagged cookies. Shirley Boles, Mary Fisk, Margaret Rogers and Judy Tucker handled fellowship.

On Oct. 2 a memorial service was held at The Tunbridge Church for Alec Frost who died Oct. 8, 2020. Family and friends, many from his home state of Connecticut, were served refreshments by Shirley Boles, Elaine Howe and Nancy Howe at Town Hall.

Senior Meal Delivery

In lieu of an October sit-down lunch at the Town Hall, the Outreach Committee prepared and delivered a beef stew meal with rolls, apple crisp and Halloween candy.

Nancy Chapman, Mary Fisk, Elaine Howe, Nancy Howe, Kay Jorgensen, Dawna Neron, Jean Parker, Margaret Rogers, Nancy Rogers, Sue Rogers and Judy Tucker were the volunteers who prepared and/or delivered the food.

Dedications

During the Dec. 19 worship service we will dedicate new light fixtures in the sanctuary, including over the choir loft

and pulpit, which were made possible with donations in memory of Barbara Howe. The work, which was done in 2020 when the church was closed, included LED bulbs, new wiring and dimmer switches.

At the Nov. 14 service Pastor Jenny dedicated the quilt hanging behind the pulpit, new lap blankets donated by the Saturday Sewing Circle for use during church and prayer shawls. The quilt top was created by Nancy Chapman's maternal great-grandmother, Lizzie Lang. Made of Depression-era fabrics, it is often called a Dresden Plate design, symbolizing "We are many, we are different, we are one." With Nancy Howe's help and advice, the quilt was trimmed, backed and hung.

Sewing Circle members Bunchie Angell, Nancy Chapman, Elaine Howe and Nancy Howe made washable lap blankets now displayed on the back of pews. Anyone who feels a chill is invited to use one during a service.

Before dedicating six colorful prayer shawls made by Nancy Chapman and Elaine Howe, Pastor Jenny gave some history of the prayer shawl ministry that began 23 years ago. The shawls "wrap, enfold, comfort, cover, give solace, mother, hug, shelter and beautify." Suggested recipients include those undergoing medical procedures, needing comfort in time of loss or stress, new baby, recovery from illness, birthdays, anniversaries and ceremonies.

During the summer the painted quilt that Bunchie Angell designed and painted was dedicated. Two sturdy maple holders that Warren Baldwin crafted for the sanctuary flags were dedicated in October.

Thank You To . . .

Clothing Donors — thanks to all who gave winter clothing to the Orange County Sheriff's Annual Winter Clothing Drive. Bags of jackets and outerwear collected at the church will be

taken to the Sheriff's office this week for distribution during the next two weeks.

Nan Frost — she is providing the church music during the Advent and Christmas season.

Brian Cook — he took over the recording treasurer job that Elsie Farnham did for years before her retirement. He has made bank deposits and kept track of donations for year-end reports.

Judy Tucker — picks up bulk produce in Randolph and delivers it to seniors in town through the Vermont Foodbank's VeggieVanGo program, usually accompanied by helpers Shirley Boles and Joyce Miller.

Nancy Rogers — she initiated the Women Moving Forward lunches, which now are monthly at the Parish House. Soup and chili will be provided for the Dec. 16 noon meeting. Please bring about 3 dozen cookies for a swap and sampling.

Liz and Vinnie White — have been leading a Bible Study class at the Parish House on Wednesdays, now at 4 p.m. since the days are shorter. New attendees are welcome at any time.

Tunbridge Grange — a raffle for our Community Food Shelf was featured at the recent holiday craft fair. Donated foods for a free raffle ticket filled six bags that were delivered to the Food Shelf.

Linda Lazaroff — led a Parish House class in which she taught how to make the unique three-dimensional cards that are one of her craft specialties.

Baxter Doty — all summer and fall he trailered his lawn tractor to Tunbridge Village, where he mowed next to the church and around the Parish House, and to South Tunbridge, where he did the large lawn at the Methodist Church and Community House. The South Tunbridge lawns looked great when the Efficiency Vermont ad promoting electric vehicles was filmed there.

Cheryl Densmore — a church neighbor and Shirley Boles's daughter, Cheryl mowed the North Tunbridge Baptist Church lawn.

Lenora Kimball — she again tended the flower bed in front of the Parish House, weeding, mulching, planting and pruning and keeping it beautiful.

Scott Terami — raked and carted away mountains of leaves that fell from the large maple on the Parish House lawn.

Birthdays

December

12 – Felicity Swayze
23 – Patty Swahn
27 – Mary Fisk
30 – Matt Zaroogian

January

01 – Kre Zaroogian
05 – Judie Lewis
07 – Cameron Putney
10 – Quinton Putney
15 – Dawna Neron
16 – Wright Frost
17 – Maggie Serviss
28 – Carley Howe
 – Lorraine Withington
30 – Margaret Rogers

Anniversaries

December

22 – Don & Judy Hilts

Decorating the Sanctuary

Sunday, Nov. 28

