

The Hilltops

Monthly Newsletter | March 2019

Published by New Beginnings United Methodist Church
serving Pepperell, Townsend, and the surrounding communities.

Editors – Krissy Miner, Brenda Bennett, & Lynne Connors



New Beginnings

United Methodist Church

We are followers of Jesus, who tend God's garden, serving the mind, body and spirit of all God's children.

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Community Outreach Ministry:
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Spiritual Formation Ministry:
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In which book of the bible is this verse found:
"Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it."

(February's question: What does Paul say may "abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgement?"
Answer: Love.)



Sally Provencher, Mar 13
Peter Poehler, Mar 15
Rev. Joan-Anne Westfall, Mar 21
Tom Giardinella, Mar 26

Traditional Celtic Prayer

*May the Christ who walks on wounded feet
walk beside you on the road.
May the Christ who serves with wounded hands,
stretch out your hands to serve.
May the Christ who loves with wounded heart,
open your hearts to love.
May you see the face of Christ in everyone you
meet,
and may everyone you meet see the face of
Christ in you.*





Three Small Meditations

1. Playing with Evelyn

I have a granddaughter who has recently learned to walk. She has that charming halting, waddling gait of one who has not yet mastered a fundamental skill, but who takes great joy in it nonetheless. Though she may cry when she falls, she is not self-conscious when she fails. The marvelous thing about little children is that their world can crumble in an instant but be as quickly regained. In Andrew Murray's essay, "Absolute Surrender" he writes: "Fall down and when you are utterly helpless, God will come to work in you, not only to will, but also to do." I had to learn a very hard lesson in my middle years. I am helpless without God. My granddaughter is helpless without loving adults. The act of parenting is bricklaying. Each moment of care: a hug, a meal, a song, a wipe of a tear, a bath, is a brick that is laid upon a foundation upon which a life is built. Evelyn trusts me and the rest of her family to love her and provide a garden where she can grow inch by inch as the song says. Jesus makes it clear in Matthew 18:3 that unless I come like Evelyn, I cannot enter the kingdom. In my walk with God, I have to walk like Evelyn, in faith and assurance that when I fall, I will be picked up.

2. Checking in with the ER

From Monday through Friday I work as an emergency services clinician. A good bit of my work is done from the emergency room of a rural hospital. My first task in the morning is to go to the ER to see if a patient needs to be seen. If there is a person to be seen, I get summary of what brought them to the ER, I then go see that person, and then report back my findings. I have been doing this work for fourteen years and I have come to know the nurses, doctors, support and security people well in this setting. Over the years I have developed relationships with many there such that they have trusted me with their

personal trials. There is one doctor that I have trouble with. He is fond of left-handed compliments, often makes unreasonable requests, and frequently shows that he has little knowledge of what I do. How am I as a Christian supposed to interact with this martinet? Most of the action of Christianity is in the small parts of our life. Warren writes that: "Biblically, there is no divide between radical and ordinary." We are called to be radical in the everyday. Two of the most radical acts of Jesus was stepping into the Jordan to be baptized and washing the feet of the disciples before the last supper. In Mark, the first act of most powerful figure humanity has touched submitted to human authority. The Son of God humbled himself before the companions who would shortly desert him. These radical ordinary acts of bathing changed the world. I can make my world better by following Jesus' example of submission. I know that I have more experience and knowledge about my subject than that Dr. will ever dream of, but when he makes an eyepopping request or says somethings mouth gapingly inane, I mildly obey. I have practiced this attitude of submission for several weeks and have found that more and more I am getting my way and that my voice is being heard. Funny how that works.

3. Shoveling the Driveway

I grew up in a place that never had more than six inches of snow at one time, and that was an extreme rarity. In Townsend Massachusetts, two miles from the New Hampshire border, six inches is a light dusting. I don't like to shovel snow. We have tried other methods than the shovel and the back. We have had two used snowblowers and both quickly broke down in harsh New England winters. We paid a guy to use his truck with a blade attachment to move the snow off our driveway for two years and that was heaven. We finally bought a new snowblower which was a substantial investment. Unfortunately, weather does not play to the tune of human wants or timetables. A few weeks ago, I woke up to eight inches of wet snow, and my snowblower was out of gas. I had to get to work and I had to shovel. Each shovel of that snow weighed fifty pounds. In times past, I

would have been miserable and envious of my next-door neighbor's state-of-the-art snow throwing beast of a machine. In "Love Takes Practice," Smith reminds us that we are not primarily thinking agents or believing animals, but rather desiring agents with a orientation to the ultimate, to a vision of the kingdom." When I was out there shoveling, I was certainly a desiring agent but I was not at first oriented to the kingdom. I was oriented to feeling put upon and miserable. Then I remembered to be grateful. I had a job to go to, a house to come out of, and the health to do the work. The human mind is prone to go toward the negative. That is where my mind was. I took a moment to calm and recall Philippians 4:8: "Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." In those moments of clearing the driveway were all of those things. I just have to pause, repent, reorient, and do the work. It is in moving into these mundane challenges that most of our walk on the Way is taken up with. If I meet these small challenges well, I will be better prepared for the inevitable time when bigger challenges arise.

Yours in Christ,

Chris Jones



Debbie Alger; Lily Andreasen; Kathryn Bruen (Louise's sister, stroke); Judy Bureau; Patrick and Collette Burns; Betty Conley; Ralph Cusano (cancer); David Dearborn; Alberta Dearborn's family (loss of her brother); Mary Ann DiStefano (The Poehler's dear friend, ovarian cancer); Gale Durno; Philip Durno (cancer); Keith Edmonds (cancer & heart problems); Emma Ermel; Marcus Ermel; Delaney Fallon; Bill and Gail Felton (homebound); Sandy Freeman; Donna

Gallagher (brain injury); Andrew Garbino; Shirley Gibson & family; Steven (Ann Goebel's brother, cancer); Merle Grant; Jimmy Harnish (cancer); Kathy Harris; Lucky & Penny Howie; Michele Kelley; Jean Krikorian; Dondi LaRue; Tommy Maciorowski; Joan McCorquodale; Chloe Miner; Herman Miner; Dick & Judie Moore; Bob & Terry Newton; Lance Osborne; Debby Parker; Prayers for the O'Brien & Parker families; Wallace Powers (cancer); Sally Provencher (cancer); Terry Quinn; Bradley Raymond (seizures); Leslie Rice; Gloria Roddy (multiple myeloma); Peter Sheldon; Rita Signoretti (Krissy's mom); Richard Simmons; Al St. Croix (cancer); Louise Thorpe; Patty Thorpe (MS and graves disease); Jimmy Tompkinson; Christine & Roy Walker; Don Waye (cancer); Rev. Joan-Anne Westfall; Emma Whitman; Sheila Wick; Nevaeh Wilder (cancer); Edward (Margie Wilson's brother, cancer); Robert Withee; Bonnie Wozniak; the victims of natural disasters all over the world; all those unemployed.



March Community Supper

Join us on Wednesday, March 13th from 4-6pm for our free community supper featuring Irish Beef Stew with colcannon, roasted vegetables, Barmbrack bread, and dinner rolls. Organist Liz Cataldo will be playing Irish songs on the piano.

God is in the Small Stuff

By: Bruce & Stan

Submitted by Brenda Bennett

Chapter Three

Realize That God Loves You

Love is a powerful emotion, perhaps the strongest of human emotions. People will go to great lengths to express love, and they will do

almost anything to get love. So if love is in such demand, why does it seem in such short supply? To paraphrase the song, "Why is love the only thing that there's just too little of?"

The problem with human love is that it's usually self-centered. Much of the so-called love we feel could be summarized by the phrase, "What's in it for me?" We may think we love someone, but in reality we may simply love what he or she does for us.

That great writer C. S. Lewis identified four different kinds of love, all but one of which are basically self-centered. First there's affection, which is the kind of love we can have for something other than people, such as a dog or a home or a car. Then there's *friendship*, a valuable love in the sense that it's the basis of most human relationships. And there's *erotic* love which is beautiful between a husband and wife but a mess outside of married love. All of these are wonderful and necessary loves, but each of them depends on the object of our affection for complete fulfillment.

The only love that is completely other-centered is called *agape* love. This is love of the highest order. It's what Lewis called "Divine Gift-Love." When we love with *agape* love we desire the best for the people we love. We are even able to love those who are unlovable.

We are capable of *agape* love only to the extent that we give the details of our lives over to God and allow Him to work in us. But even before that can happen, we must realize that God loves us, and that He can only love us with this kind of love. God's love is never self-centered, and God's love is always sacrificial. While we were enemies of God, He loved us. When we ran from God, He loved us. And He loved us so much that He sacrificed the Son He loved most so that we could experience eternal life.

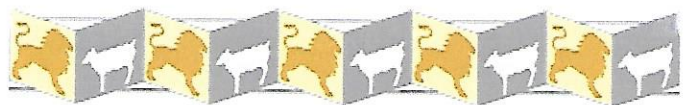
Love is the essence of God. Love is what motivates Him to do what He does for us—down to the last detail—even when we don't love Him in return. Knowing that should give tremendous meaning to our lives.

... In The Small Stuff

- Whenever you feel insignificant, remember how important you are to God.
- We love God because we know who He is. God loves us despite who we are.
- Love yourself as the unique individual God created you to be—nothing more nothing less.
- Unconditional love comes only from our Heavenly Father.
- God does not help us because we deserve it; He helps us because He loves us.
- Find your self-worth in God's unconditional love for you, not your accomplishments.
- The love of God has no limits.
- The reason we can love God is because He loved us first.
- God's unconditional love for us should motivate us to love others unconditionally.
- Never confuse love with lust.
- Love isn't an option. We are commanded by God to love others.
- Loving God is the greatest thing you can do.

"Our last five minutes on earth are running out. We can spend those minutes in meanness, exclusivity, and self-righteous disparagement of those who are different from us, or we can spend them consciously embracing every glowing soul who wanders within our reach – those who, without our caring, would find the vibrant, exhilarating path of life just another sad and forsaken road." - Alice Walker

Source: *Anything We Love Can Be Saved*



MARCH

2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3 9:30am Choir practice 11:30am Church Council	4 10am-12pm Wesley Group	5	6 12:30pm Women's Bible Study at Elaine Aho's	7	8	9
10 9:30am Choir practice Daylight Savings Time Begins	11 10am-12pm Wesley Group	12	13 4:00-6:00pm Community Supper	14	15 Newsletter Articles Due	16
17 9:30am Choir practice 11:30am Church Council	18 10am-12pm Wesley Group	19	20 12:30pm Women's Bible Study at Elaine Aho's	21	22	23
24 9:30am Choir practice	25 10am-12pm Wesley Group	26	27 12:30pm Women's Bible Study at Elaine Aho's	28	29	30
31 11:30am Positive Pot Luck						



Worship Times:

9:00am Casual Service with coffee & fellowship
10:30am Traditional Service

Meetings and Social Events:

11:30am Church Council (1st and 3rd Sunday)
11:30am Positive Pot Luck (Last Sunday)

To learn more, visit

www.newbeginningsumcma.org

