

The Hilltops

Monthly Newsletter | November 2018

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

Editors - 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.

Pastor - Christopher Jones
Church Secretary - Krissy Miner
Financial Secretary - Jean Whitman
Church Treasurer - Lynne Connors

Church Council:

Chair: Jeff Rice 978-300-5150
Trustees Chair: Rick Oakley 978-821-0830
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SPRC Chair: Open
Stewardship: Open
Worship Ministry:
 Jean Whitman 978-597-2511
Community Outreach Ministry:
 Jeff Rice 978- 300-5150
Spiritual Formation Ministry:
 Brenda Bennett 802-318-7563
Youth Ministry:
 Linda Jones 978-877-1923

Membership Committee: Lynne Connors, Linda Jones, Brenda Bennett, Louise Thorpe, Rick Oakley and Shirley Hult

Nominating Committee: Chris Silver, Rick Oakley, Brenda Bennett, Lynn Grimes

SPRC: Chair - Open; Committee Members: Margie Wilson, Lynn Grimes and Chris Silver

Trustees: Chair - Rick Oakley; Treasurer - Marcia Scofield; Secretary - Krissy Miner; Committee Members: Al Higgins, Al Harris, Shirley Hult



Which Old Testament prophet had the most to say about the birth of Christ?

(November's question: God sent the Angel Gabriel to what town in Galilee, to announce to the Virgin Mary that she would give birth to a son and she was to call him Jesus? Answer is Nazareth.)



Scott Williams, Dec 4
Bob Newton, Dec 4
Judy Bureau, Dec 4
Neena Williams, Dec 6
Leslie Rice, Dec 14
Louise Thorpe, Dec 16
Sean Hayward, Dec 19
Chloe Miner, Dec 21
Christine Silver, Dec 21
Terry Newton, Dec 27
Al Harris, Dec 30

Anniversary:

John & Susan Siart, Dec 11

"Be the reason someone smiles today."





As we head into the seasons of gratefulness and anticipation of the coming of Christ, my mind is frequently turning to the topic of forgiveness. Perhaps it is a combination of the Christmas season and the recent election cycle. It seems that the nation is having a forgiveness problem. Forgiveness is of course a major theme of scripture as a whole, and of the New Testament in particular. Every act of Jesus, it might be argued, is an act of forgiveness. Among his last words on the cross are: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." We offer and obtain forgiveness in the *Lord's Prayer*. In the litany of communion, we are renewed as a forgiven people. Forgiveness is a major theme of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus practically extends forgiveness to infinity when he answers Peter in Mathew 18:21-22 that forgiveness must be extravagantly offered not seven but seventy-seven times. It is worth noting that Jesus' disciples before Pentecost are consistently unable to: "repent and believe in the Good News." In Luke 9, two disciples come back from a town that has refused them hospitality and ask Jesus, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" Jesus rebukes them and says, "You do not know what manner of Spirit you are!" Our spirits were made for forgiveness. Why then is it so hard to forgive? I have spoken to thousands of people over the years in my work with wounded people, I have looked at my own heart, and I have found that one of the reasons we find it so difficult to forgive is that if we forgive, we feel as though we are in some way saying that what has been done to us is of diminished consequence. In the act of forgiving, we fear that we deny the hurt that has been done. A wrong done to us is a poison that can continue to cause harm. Jesus asks, begs, commands, models, entreats us to forgive. Why? So that the poison can be extracted. In forgiving, we heal. In my life, there have been hurts that I could not forgive. I have been able to forgive through the action of grace. Christians are called to forgiveness, it is essential to the practice of Christianity. I hope we will be better able to listen to the "better angels of our nature" as Lincoln said during another trying time. I pray that grace descends in my heart, in

yours, and in all those who are now walking wounded. May we remember what manner of Spirit we are.

God Bless,

Chris



Debbie Alger; Lily Andreasen; Kathryn Bruen (Louise's sister, stroke); Judy Bureau; Patrick and Collette Burns; Betty Conley; Ralph Cusano (cancer); David Dearborn; 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; Kelly Parker; 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 Wayne (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.





NOVEMBER COMMUNITY SUPPER AND HOLIDAY FAIR

It was a very busy week before Thanksgiving at the Church! Our roast beef dinner was a success with many guests attending, and while that was going on, our preparations for the Holiday Fair, 2 days later, were at full speed! If you haven't been involved with the supper or fair before, and have thought about it, please consider donating time to either, or both. We always welcome helping hands! Although it can be a lot of work, it has been one of the most rewarding and spiritually uplifting experiences for those who donate time for these events. Thanks to everyone who, baked, crafted, set-up, cleaned up, shopped and served.

JANUARY COMMUNITY SUPPER

Our next Community Supper will be held on December 12th, Wednesday evening, 4 - 6 p.m. Menu is not complete at this time, but you can count on a good hot supper on a cold winter's night! Take Outs are always available, but if you know of someone who can't get out for dinner, we can deliver if we know ahead of time. Please join us for a great community get-together and tasty meal.

WHO WAS JOHN WESLEY?

Did you know John Wesley had serious doubts about his faith? Questioning one's faith should not be disparaged. Doubts are essential to making any belief system your own. They do not mean that you will let it go. In fact, even as Wesley struggled with deep doubts about faith, he followed the wise instruction of a mentor who told him to "preach faith 'til you have it; and then, because you have it, you will preach faith." Even as we struggle, we can maintain our hold on the truths we question until we can settle all of our doubts. (Written by Jeremy Steele @ United Methodist Communications.)

DAILY DEVOTIONS by Brenda Bennett

Daily Devotionals, "Jesus Calling" by Sarah Young

As promised, my other daily devotional is "Jesus Calling" by Sarah Young. I first heard about this devotional while working at an Emmaus Walk. When I read it, I found the everyday language less challenging and it gave me more time to concentrate totally on the message. Sarah Young is a life-long missionary. She found her relationship with God deepened during two specific experiences in nature...not just everyday nature but stunning, breath-taking nature. She got the basis of her approach to this book after reading " 'God Calling', a devotional book written by two anonymous 'listeners.' "

She wondered if she could "receive messages during my times of communing with God. My journaling had changed from monologue to dialogue." Sarah suggests, "These messages are meant to be read slowly, preferably in a quiet place. I invite you to keep a journal to record any thoughts or impressions you receive as you wait in His Presence." I suggest you minimally ready with a highlighter in your hand.

I am including the message for December 30th for your perusal:

"I AM LEADING YOU along a way that is uniquely right for you. The closer to Me you grow, the more fully you become your true self—the one I designed you to be. Because you are one of a kind, the path you are traveling with Me diverges increasingly from that of other people. However, in My mysterious wisdom and ways, I enable you to follow this solitary path while saying in close contact with others. In fact, the more completely you devote yourself to Me, the more freely you can love people.

Marvel at the beauty of a life intertwined with My Presence. Rejoice as we journey together in intimate communion. Enjoy the adventure of finding yourself though losing yourself in Me.'

3 Corinthians 6:27; Ephesians 2:10; 1 John 4:7-8; John 15:4.

If you get this devotional, let me know how you like it!

CHRISTMAS BIBLE READING PLAN

Start reading December 1st.

CHRIST IS COMING

Day 1: Isaiah 9:2-7 Day 2: Isaiah 11:1-5
Day 3: Isaiah 7:10-14 Day 4: Micah 5:1-5
Day 5: 2 Samuel 7:12-16

CHRIST IS HERE

Day 6: Luke 1:26-33 Day 7: Luke 1: 34-38
Day 8: Luke 1:46-55 Day 9: Matthew 1:18-25
Day 10: Luke 2:1-7 Day 11: Luke 2:8-12
Day 12: Luke 2:13-20 Day 13: Matthew 1:1-16

CHRIST WILL GIVE

Day 14: Romans 6:20-23 Day 15: Galatians 4:1-7
Day 16: 1 Timothy 1:15-17 Day 17: Titus 3:3-7
Day 18: Philippians 2:6-8

CHRIST WILL RETURN

Day 19: John 14: 1-6 Day 20: Daniel 7:13-14
Day 21: Revel. 1:4-7 Day 22: Revel. 3:20-22
Day 23: Revel. 22:12-13 Day 24: Revel. 22:16-17
Day 25: Revelation 22:20



TEO UPDATE

As we enter into this hectic holiday season, let us not forget those who are still in need of food items, clothing, and gifts for their children. Giving food items, paper products, and clean reusable clothing to Townsend Ecumenical Outreach, is just one of the ways we can give to those in need. To give a gift to a child, there will be some envelopes displayed in the front hall, with either boy or girl written on it and their age. Inside is a request for a gift of toy or clothing wanted by the child. Please let us do our part, as we have in the past, to make sure these children have gifts this Christmas. Thank you.

The following was taken from "God is in the Small Stuff" by Bruce & Stan

Understand the Nature of God

Who is God? Is he a mystery to you? Do you want to know Him better? Maybe you wonder if God even exists? That's okay. People have wondered about God for as long as, well, for as long as there have been people. They wonder if He's really out there. They wonder if He made the world and everything in it. And if He did, they wonder if God still cares about what's going on.


Perhaps you've gotten past all of those questions. You definitely believe in God, but you don't know Him. You don't understand His nature--in other words, His personality. You aren't alone. For many people--even those who claim to be religious--the nature of God is a mystery. It's like God is behind some dark cloud, occasionally speaking in a deep voice to prophets and such (you know, like He spoke Charleton Heston in the *The Ten Commandments*). Other people think God wants to prevent them from having a good time. If they get close to God, they're afraid they'll have to give up their freedom.

While it's true there are things about God we'll never know (after all, He is God), there are many things we can know. For example, when we look at our universe--whether it's through a microscope, a telescope, or the naked eye--we observe incredible design and order and beauty. That means the Designer (that would be God) must be a being of design and order and beauty. And He must be pretty powerful.

When we look at ourselves and see that we all have some idea about God (even when you deny God exists, you have to think about Him), that means the Creator (God again) put that idea in us. Yet God is more than an idea. He is more than a symbol for good or an impersonal "higher being." God is a very real spirit Being who has always existed in the past, who exists now, and will always exist in the future. God is personal. God is involved in the world. And God has revealed His nature to us. All we have to do is stop, look, and listen.



2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2 9am Casual Service; 10:30am Trad. Service; 11:30am Council Meeting; 3pm Charge Conference	3 10am-12pm Wesley Group at Pepperell Church	4	5 2:30pm Women's Bible Study at Elaine Aho's	6	7	8
9 9:00am Casual Service 10:00am Coffee & Fellowship; 10:30am Traditional Service	10 10am-12pm Wesley Group at Pepperell Church	11	12 4:00-6:00pm Community Supper	13	14	15 Newsletter Articles Due
16 9am Casual Service; 10am Coffee & Fellowship; 10:30am Trad. Service; 11:30am Council Meeting	17 10am-12pm Wesley Group at Pepperell Church	18	19 12:30pm Women's Bible Study at Elaine Aho's	20	21	22 10am-12pm Bring Poinsettias to church
23 9am Casual Service; 10am Coffee & Fellowship; 10:30am Trad. Service	24 10am-12pm Wesley Group at Pepperell Church 7:00pm Christmas Eve Service	25 December 	26 12:30pm Women's Bible Study at Elaine Aho's	27	28	29
30 9am Casual Service; 10am Coffee & Fellowship; 10:30am Trad. Service ; 11:30am Positive Pot Luck	31					



Worship Times:

9:00am Casual Service
10:30am Traditional

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

