

Bartlett Church News

Bartlett Union Congregational Church

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A Note from your Pastor

Susan "Andy" Jepson

Dear Friends,

Recently I've been doing one of my favorite things, refinishing a piece of furniture. This is a particularly enjoyable project, because it's a coffee table my dad made many years ago. He and my mother went to Hawaii and came back with a big rough-cut slab of monkeypod wood. He sanded it smooth and hand rubbed 16 coats of varnish into the grain. It graced living rooms in and around Lansing, Michigan, for years, but by the time I got it, the accumulated dings and scratches of age let in the New Hampshire air and moisture, and it was losing its glow and beauty.

So it's been my winter-into-spring project, a labor of love with a piece of family history. I expected that it would come out looking much my first memories of it, when Dad was working on it. It hasn't. The wood has much more contrast than I remember. Maybe it looks just like it did originally and my memory is wrong, or maybe Dad treated the wood to blend it more with the rest of the furniture. Whatever the reason, it won't look like it did. But I like the new look. So what I'm sealing under my layers of hand-rubbed varnish won't match what my dad did, and that's okay – it's not going in a family museum.

Every piece of wood has its own character. My job is to find and preserve it. To do that means to work slowly enough to get acquainted with the wood, do what I can to show its beauty - and know when I'm finished. Learning leads to mistakes, so I accept the need to go back and do over something I've misjudged or rushed. Trying to do too much at once also is a mistake – like putting on too thick a layer of varnish – and I pay for it by stripping off what I've done and starting it over.

It occurs to me that life's like that. We learn as we go, almost always dealing with a work in progress that becomes ours for a while and then gets passed on. We can't preserve the past exactly as it comes to us no matter how hard we try, nor can we be sure that we know exactly what the past really was. We try to work with the joy and caution of respect, honoring what has gone before, all that has brought it to us and the possibilities of the project itself. We find change *will* happen, new possibilities *will* emerge, and mistakes just get worse unless we tend to them right away.

It's easy to remember that when a project is one of personal importance and we can take time to get it just right, but . . . most of life is not like that. Poor work in wood sometimes can be undone, but in life it leaves scars – and they can't be hidden with a heavy coat of varnish. How good that God loves us through our hasty work and bad varnish jobs, helping us fix what we can, work with what we can't fix and do the same with other people and their well-intentioned work.

Love,

Andy

Happy Birthday

May 3 Robyn Coffield

May 5 Judy Botsford

Happy Anniversary

May 4 Dan & Deb Fitzpatrick

May 14 Charlie and Diane Anderson

May 24 Jim and Jan Clemons

Happy "May Day"

May Day is celebrated on the first day of May. Traditionally this is the day you hang a May basket on your neighbor's door, ring the bell and then run and hide. Does anyone still do this?

Then there is the May-pole -- do you remember ever doing that? We need to bring back some of these old traditions.

Bartlett gets a Clean Sweep~~~~

Judi Coffield



April 10, 2010, gave young and old alike a busy clean-up weekend at Bartlett Union Congregational Church (BUCC). Youth group members Mary & Carter Miller, Judi, Robyn & Christine Coffield, worked hard picking up multiple bags of trash on Albany Avenue and 1 ¼ miles up Bear Notch Road. The BUCC sponsors this section under the Adopt a Road (Highway) program. While the "youngsters" were on the outside, the "oldsters" Greta and Bert George, Andy Jepson and Lee Coffield were hard at work on the inside doing spring cleaning of the church. Many bags of garbage were collected and pews are shining followed by a pizza break for everyone. What a good feeling to work together helping the community - then gather to enjoy discussing the event.

Christian Education

Judi Coffield

Hello from Christian Ed! Spring has sprung, I think! The youth group has been very active not only with meetings but with participation in a number of things. We were so happy we collected & assembled 20 bags for Haiti. The kids need to understand that we can help other people recover from something very difficult like this natural disaster. Also, several kids helped in the clean up of Albany Rd and Bear Notch Rd. We collected many bags of garbage and again, a valuable lesson in helping others and our community. We also recycled some of Mary's pellet bags & made bags that we can use at the grocery store or like Robyn did, for a sleepover bag. A brilliant recycle idea from Mary M! Andy bought the clean up group pizza which was an awesome reward for the hard work. The Easter egg hunt was a success as usual and we had a couple of little visitors too. You know that the kids are growing up when they hide the eggs rather than hunt for them!! I think everyone liked seeing the youth join in with the service on Easter as well. Please keep in mind that we are having a confirmation service on a new date of May 16th. This service is a graduation if you will, for the confirmation class and all support at the church that day is appreciated.

In closing, I feel like the Visioning meetings were most definitely Christian Education at its finest! I thought Rev. Donald Derse and Rob Owen did a terrific job at all 3 sessions! Thank you so much!!

May 2010 Scripture Readings and Sermon Titles

May 2 Fifth Sunday of Easter

*Acts 11:1-18
Revelation 21:1-6
John 13:31-35

Sermon: "What God has made clean . . ."

May 9 Sixth Sunday of Easter, Mother's Day

Acts 16:9-15
*Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5
John 14:23-29 or John 5:1-9

Sermon: ". . . and they will reign forever and ever."

May 16 Seventh Sunday of Easter

Acts 16:16-34
Revelation 22:12 . . . 21

*John 17:20-26

Sermon ". . . that they may all be one."

May 23 Pentecost

*Acts 2:1-21
*Romans 8:14-17
*John 14:8...27

Sermon: ". . . in those days I will pour out my Spirit; . . ."

May 30 Trinity Sunday, Memorial Day Weekend

*Proverbs 81-4, 22-31
Romans 5:1-5
*John 16:12-15

Sermon: ". . . will speak whatever s/he hears."

Visioning Meetings

Rob Owen

The three visioning meetings held in March and early April brought fifteen to twenty church members and friends together at each meeting. Some participants were able to attend all three and others attended when they could so about twenty people total were involved in the process. Rev Don Derse was facilitator for all three. Rather than strictly following the standard visioning process procedure, Dr Derse guided our discussions with observations and "food for thought" in a way that focused on discussion topics we needed to discuss.

The first meeting was about the history of our church. Events in our church's past and town and national history were posted on a time line. Through that process we developed six statements about our church. These were:

- 1. Caring people (small size allows everyone to know everyone).**
- 2. Children are welcome – we have youth activities**
- 3. The church is Centrally located and easy to walk to for people in the community.**
- 4. Music has always been an important part of the church**
- 5. Great food**
- 6. Our church has persevered in adversity – God's word is alive, shared, and lived by the congregation.**

The second meeting focused on core values of our church. Participants told why they came to Bartlett Church, what we tell others about our church, what we like about this church, and what bothers or concerns us about the church. A major part of the discussion was about concerns which included low membership and recent loss of members, the need for communication, and the effects of child abuse in the Catholic Church on all churches.

The third meeting focused on present and future. What issues do we face today that are most important, what things should we do to help our church to survive and thrive, and is there anything we have missed in our previous meetings that needs to be recognized and discussed?

Vision - Continued

What's next? The notes from the three meetings are copied and available with the newsletters (notes will not be mailed unless requested (call Rob Owen 986-0235)). The visioning task force will be meeting and present a report and recommendations to the Prudential Committee at the May meeting.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED – for important, manageable tasks

***Newsletter Mailing* – last Sunday of month: Help folks remember newsletters, then stamp and mail ones not picked up**

***Bulletin Sorting* – weekly: Remove and discard day's order of worship; keep covers and Communion inserts for re-use**

***Sanctuary Clean-Up* – weekly: Clean pews – put hymnals, Bibles, etc in holders, collect old bulletins for sorting**

***Hall Clean-Up* – as needed: Keep hall neat and orderly, report need for repair, gather “left” items, discard out-dated materials**

***Worship Set-Up* – once a month: Help set up downstairs worship (first Sunday of month) by arranging chairs, altar, hymnals, Bibles**

***Worship Clean-Up* – once a month: Help undo worship area after downstairs worship by moving chairs, altar, hymnals, etc.**

***Bulletin Board* – occasional: Adopt a bulletin board to keep neat, up-to-date, re-decorated by season or special event**

***Library* – as needed: Set up check-out use system, keep shelves neat, sorted, up-to-date, suggest new purchases, discard old stuff.**

***Hall Decoration* – occasional: Change or refresh flowers, posters, pictures, table displays by season or special event**

***Special Displays* – as inspired: Choose a theme related to church, faith, area, season, event, and display, decorate, educate, delight, share!**

Think Spring - flowers and green grass!