

## ***Our Mission***

***By God's Grace, West Parish Congregational Church, United Church of Christ,  
is committed to Nurturing and Celebrating God's Love in our lives, in the  
Church Family, in the Community and in the world***

# **March 2022 newsletter Steeple View West Parish Congregational Church United Church of Christ**



## **Pastor's Perspective March, 2022**



The season of Lent, though a little later this year, is almost here. It begins on March 2nd with Ash Wednesday and culminates in Holy Week and Easter, which is on April 17th. Lent is a good time for going deeper in our faith, for self-reflection and asking ourselves the big questions of our faith: What is it I believe, how does it sustain me, and how am I going to put it into practice? Those are very important questions and are similar to the ones Jesus asked as he journeyed in his ministry toward the cross. This season I am reflecting on some big questions in a Maine School of Ministry class called Spiritual Leadership in a Climate Changed World. The class met once already and will meet three more times through the spring. One of the assigned texts is called *Sacred Instructions: Indigenous Wisdom for Living Spirit-Based Change*. I

have really enjoyed the perspective of the author, Sherri Mitchell, who was born and raised on the Penobscot Indian Reservation. Alan Ewing-Merriill, executive director of the Bangor Theological Seminary center, presented at the first session and talked about the core issues that will be discussed. The class itself seeks to ask the following questions of faith/spiritual leaders in their places of ministry:

“What knowledge, skills, mindsets and priorities are needed for effective and faithful ministry in a climate changed world?”

“What are the responses you need to have ready for your community?”

Along with those core questions are some other ones. “What direction should we go...in our individual lives and as a church with this overwhelming topic?” “How do we engage people in churches and communities who don’t see this as a problem?” “How do I help people to see climate change as a moral issue that requires a moral response?” “How do I help myself and others see how we are all interconnected and connected to the earth and all its creatures?”

As I listened to the first session, I thought about some things I hope to take from the class. Some of them are:

- To learn how to speak about climate change in ways that are helpful and lead to change.
- To learn how to preach about it effectively and in ways that present the issue but don’t alienate people.
- To get at the morality of the issue without veering into politics and an emotional response.
- To encourage people in the church who are interested in a Green Church initiative to figure out the direction and purpose for the church and wider community.

The biggest takeaway from the first class was that it is important to address the root causes of climate change. So much of it is caused by selfishness, greed, apathy, and pride. The path forward will require spiritual solutions, along with scientific ones. Science, as Gus Speth, a Yale scientist writes, can only go so far. Climate change requires a cultural and spiritual transformation.

Lent is a good time to look at what is foundational to us and, if needed, make some changes. God be with you in the work of going deeper, finding spiritual practices that will help you with that, and finding support and nurture from others in the church who are on the same path.

*Tim*

## Lenten Adult Study

A Lenten Adult Study on *Church of the Wild: How Nature Invites us into the Sacred*, by Victoria Loorz begins on Thursday, March 10th at 6:45 PM on ZOOM and will take place every Thursday during Lent through April 7th (except March 17th).

Here is a description of the book:

“Like many who feel unfulfilled by traditional faith expression, Victoria Loorz went in search of a spirituality strong enough to reckon with the unraveling of her vocation, identity, and planet, and found herself in the wilderness. With an eco-spiritual lens on biblical narratives and a fresh look at a community larger than our own species, *Church of the Wild* uncovers the wild roots of faith and helps us deepen our commitment to a suffering earth by falling in love with it—and calling it church. Here Loorz helps us connect to a love that literally holds the world together—a love that calls us into communion with all creatures.”

Please note, you will need to purchase the book and it is available through Amazon and other local booksellers.

## Christian Education

Have you brought in your sheep? We began collecting sheep from church and community members as a symbol of our gathering flock - this was in response to a wonderful shadow puppet telling of the parable of the lost sheep (put on by Jim and the children of the WPCC School). There's still time to send us a sheep!



Small numbers of folks have come out to enjoy our Sunday afternoon ice-skating gatherings – small, but happy! It's been a wonderful, safe way for us to gather this time of year. Mary Scanlon and the Bethel Rec Board have installed and are maintaining a community ice rink at the old Ethel Bisbee School grounds.

We continue using our Sunday school curriculum, called Celebrate Wonder. Our latest stories have been of Jesus' healings.



We are approaching the season of Lent, and will offer opportunities for our families to engage in simple Lenten practices at home. The three pillars of Lent are prayer, fasting, and alms-giving. We will be focusing on prayer (with simple prayers that can be used either before bed/dinner or weekly), and alms-giving (by collecting items weekly to donate to the Bethel Food Pantry).

We will be working on finding creative ways to experience some other parables as well, and bring them into the community. If you would like to help get involved with exploring the Parables in a hands-on fashion contact Patricia. ([pboylewright@gmail.com](mailto:pboylewright@gmail.com)). We like to work intergenerationally so if you are inspired by the parable, young and old, we would love your participation.

Blessings to you all,  
Patricia and the CE Committee

## WPCC School

A huge thank you to: Deb Lewis, Jane Chandler, Jim Chandler, and Sharon Lyon for stepping in to teach the children in my absence. The children and I greatly appreciate your efforts. I had wonderful feedback from Lucy and Will on these adventures!

For art, the children are painting using different mediums and exploring their artistic style. Students study the works of varying artists and then use the work to influence their own creativity. Lucy is working predominantly on abstract and modern art. Will is discovering how to incorporate more detail into larger works.

Science is continuing with environmental studies. Students looked at more systems and drew concept maps. They studied animal adaptation and the environment, food webs, ecosystems, animal group behavior and animal & plant life cycles. Jim and Jane took the children to the Gem Museum and focused on the dioramas. The kids have started studying biomes and are creating a diorama.

Sharon continued literature circle. She discusses the emotional and moral issues surrounding the characters. Sharon points out our vocabulary words and her life experience stories are a treasure!

Lucy is reading *Kaya* from the American girl series to learn of a female perspective of native people. Will is reading the *Who Was* and *You Wouldn't Want* series focusing around the Boston Tea Party and American colonists. Both have writing assignments that correlate. We continue with grade level grammar and spelling. We are continuing with Beast Academy grade level math.



We are welcoming new students and our new teacher next week. We are looking forward to mentoring younger students and having Ms. Deb Richmond with us...spread the word...we can now accommodate grades K-5! Look for Earth Day festivities in April.

Jenn Doyle



## Pilgrim Lodge

Good news from the conference. The PL Search Committee has called a new Pilgrim Lodge director, Liz Charles McGough. Liz has a long history at Pilgrim Lodge, as camper, counselor, staff member, and dean. She believes in the transformational power of exploring faith in nature and in community with others.

She lives in Gardner with her husband Cullen and her two children, Benjamin and Nathaniel.

## Flower List

Thank you, Susan, for organizing the list of people to place the flowers in the sanctuary each Sunday, helping to beautify our church. You have helped all of us see the beauty shared by others. There are more opportunities to sign up for other weeks. Please let Susan Herlihy know if you would like to share something for the sanctuary.

March 6 – Communion

March 13 – Art and Ellen Marshall

March 29 – Steve Lovejoy in memory of Louise and her birthday

March 27 – Diane Dupuis

## Birthdays and Anniversaries in March

March 3– Ivan and Susan Cooper

March 3 – Colburn Strugatskiv

March 5 – Marta Opie

March 12 – Baylee Dunham

March 14 – Maryjane Shiverick

March 18 – Will Doyle

March 24 – Martha Whittington

March 30 – Christine Trefethen

March 31 – Susan Herlihy

## Calendar for March

Conco Craftsmen meet every Monday at 9 AM and Bob Iles' home on Paradise

Prayer Group meets every Tuesday at 8:45 AM on ZOOM

Tuesday, March 1 – Book Group at 7 PM via ZOOM

Wednesday, March 2 - Men's Breakfast at Church and on ZOOM at 8 AM

**Ash Wednesday**, Service on ZOOM at 7 PM (link to be provided),  
please use ashes from home (Ash substitutes can include soot from a candle or  
fireplace, flour, chalk, eye shadow, potting soil, anything with a powdery texture)

Thursday, March 3 - Church Council meets at 6:45 PM on ZOOM

Sunday, March 6 - Pre-recorded worship on YouTube (use link or go to church website),

Communion/Prayers/Fellowship time at 10:45 AM on ZOOM

Coffee order due

Tuesday, March 8 - Trustees at 6:30 PM on ZOOM

Wednesday, March 9 - World Service Committee at 3 PM on ZOOM

Thursday, March 10 - Lenten Adult Study on *Church of the Wild* at 6:45 PM on ZOOM

Sunday, March 13 - Worship at 10 AM (tbd whether pre-recorded, or in person and streaming)

Tuesday, March 15 - Thurs., March 17 - Rev. Tim on vacation

Sunday, March 20 - Worship at 10 AM (tbd whether pre-recorded, or in person and streaming)

Tuesday, March 22 - Deacons at 10 AM on ZOOM

Music Committee at 5 PM on ZOOM

Wednesday, March 23 - Christian Education at 6:45 PM on ZOOM

Thursday, March 24 - Lenten Adult Study on *Church of the Wild* at 6:45 PM on ZOOM

Sunday, March 27 - Worship at 10 AM (tbd whether pre-recorded, or in person and streaming)

Thursday, March 31st: Lenten Adult Study on *Church of the Wild* at 6:45 PM on ZOOM

## One Great Hour of Sharing is March Love Bowl

We give to the least of my neighbors

Matthew 9:42

“You can be sure that whoever gives even a drink of cold water to the least of these my followers because they are my followers will certainly receive a reward.” One Great Hour of Sharing takes our donations and gives to the least every day around the world.



Through One Great Hour of Sharing, lives are literally changed daily. Your support provides clean water, food, medicines, shelter, healthcare, education and so much more. One recent focus is working with refugees fleeing dangerous situations like Afghanistan.

Our church is collecting donations throughout Lent to support the ongoing work of Church World Service through One Great Hour of Sharing. The Love Bowl for the month of March supports this international work of our conference. Please give generously.

## From the Deacons

A brief outline of Lenten & Easter plans was discussed at the February Deacon's meeting. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 2 at 7 p.m. on ZOOM. Tim is planning on having a Lenten study Thursday evenings on ZOOM. A Tenebrae service will be held on Maundy Thursday, April 14. On Easter, April 17, the day will begin with our traditional sunrise service outside on Paradise Road. More details to come.

At the Council meeting on March 3, the decision as to going back to in person worship will be made. The prerecorded service will continue through March 6.

## Coin Collection

Ted and Linda Davis call this coin collection the wannabe Mayflower basket. Ted and Linda shared this story. *"Our coin collecting bank for 2022 is a wannabe Mayflower basket. How many of you remember the days of Maybaskets in the spring? The tradition as I remember it, and I understand that there are many variations, was to decorate a basket (oatmeal boxes, crepe paper, etc.). You then fill it with penny candy and/or flowers. With a group of friends at dusk, you sneak up to the house of the recipient, knock on the door and yell "May basket". They are supposed to chase and catch you and then share the candy with you."*



Have your coin banks ready. The annual Lenten Coin Collection begins March 2 through Easter. You are encouraged to get out your favorite piggy bank or make a new one in which to put your extra pennies & loose change. The coins will be used for the ongoing mission of the church. The final collection will be April 24. Please take a photo of your bank and send it to Peggy. [peggywight65@gmail.com](mailto:peggywight65@gmail.com)

## Coffee Order due

Jane is taking orders for Equal Exchange Coffee, chocolate, cocoa, and tea this month. The order is due Sunday, March 6.

Send her an email with the type of coffee you want and she will send you a price. Prices have increased, so be sure to check the amount.

March is the last month to order chocolate. It isn't shipped in the warmer months. [jane.h.chandler@gmail.com](mailto:jane.h.chandler@gmail.com).



## Book Group this Tuesday

Book Group will meet Tuesday, March 1 7 p.m. to discuss *Northern Spy* by Flynn Berry. For now the March meeting will be by Zoom.

The next books are: April 5 - *Enter the Aardvark* by Jessica Anthony

May 3 - *The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah

June 7 - *The Sentence* by Louise Eldrich

July 5 - *The Things we Lost to the Water* by Eric Nguyen.

Any are welcome to the monthly book discussions. Contact Jane Chandler for a ZOOM link.