

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

February 2021 newsletter

Steeple View

West Parish Congregational Church United Church of Christ



Pastor's Perspective

Last weekend, Mary and I went to Mt. Desert Island. We rented a cottage in Seal Harbor through an AirBNB and it was central to all of Acadia National Park. Originally the plan was to do nordic skiing on the Carriage roads of the park which are groomed in the winter. But, because I've had a shoulder injury, we ended up hiking instead. We were able to hike up Cadillac Mountain and around Jordan Pond and Eagle Lake. We also had dinner in Ellsworth with Evan who came over from Orono and spent sometime in Bar Harbor. Mary even went ice skating on "The Tarn," a large pond nestled between mountains.

What struck me about the area was how desolate it was. I've only been to Acadia in the summer so it was amazing how few people were there compared to the tourist season. There were also likely fewer people because of the pandemic. It was so strange to be on top of Cadillac by ourselves when, normally, people drive up it and there's always a crowd at the top. At Jordan Pond we encountered just a few people and could hear the water gurgling under the ice in the quiet. It was a gift to be able to experience the area in this season and not being able to ski didn't matter that much.

At the cottage, there were books about the history of the island. We discovered that the Wabanaki people were there at least 5000 years ago. From the Abbe Museum website: "The Wabanaki have been here,



in their homeland, for thousands of generations. This includes Pesamkuk, this place we now call Mount Desert Island and Frenchman Bay.... In historic times, we, the ckuwaponahkiyik, used this island as a central meeting place to trade, hunt, and fish with one another during the summers. We called the island Pesamkuk, and Bar Harbor itself was known as moneskatik—the Clam Digging Place. The central meeting place on the island was called astuwiku—“it comes together”—and located near modern day Northeast Harbor.”It felt like we were able to get a glimpse of what the island looked like to the first people, before the hordes of people descended and, basically, took over. The tribes were able to adapt and change with the growing popularity of the island and the tourist boom: “One summer, visitors arrived that would change our way of life forever. They brought with them different technologies and philosophies, and we were forced to make a choice: adapt and survive, or resist and perish. We chose to learn from our surroundings and incorporate these new teachings, in order to keep our traditions alive for future generations. We succeeded. We are still here. Our cultures and languages are alive and well.”

Our adult study which just concluded, “Painting the Stars,” has been about how everything, including faith and spirituality, continues to evolve and change. We are called to be open to new growth and change, seeing it as positive and good and trusting in the Source – the One which we (and all living things) come from and the One which we will return to. That’s often hard to do, especially when we’ve been buffeted by the pandemic, social upheaval, and climate change. But change can be good and can lead to healing and new life. There are new opportunities that have arisen from this past year: relationships have been strengthened, we’ve discovered what is most important in our lives, and, hopefully, faith, though challenged, has been forged as well. Jesus, in his journey toward Jerusalem, was buffeted on all sides by persecution and the threat of death.

Yet he continued to preach the kingdom of God, to live out a way of self-sacrifice, and to trust in God’s presence until the very end. Which, as we know, was not the end but only the beginning. We are called to walk that way as well.

On Thursday, March 4th at 6:45 PM on ZOOM, we will begin a 4-part Bible study series on the gospel accounts of Jesus’ passion. We will be discussing the ways the events of Jesus’ last days and death are depicted in the different gospel accounts and how they reflect that particular gospel’s larger themes. If you would like to take part, email me (tleconey68@gmail.com) and I will send you the reading for the week and the ZOOM link. Also, remember that I am available to talk to, either at the church (masked and socially distanced), by phone (935-1035), or on ZOOM.

God be with you in these late winter days, hang in there, and God’s grace and peace to you and your family.

Tim





Christian Education

The families with young children and youth have finished our curriculum called “Compassion with the World.” We looked at Leviticus 25, which focused on Sabbath, Jubilee, healing, rest, renewal, fresh starts, and wholeness. It was a good focus for Epiphany – we learned new songs, planted pea shoots, did yoga, and other activities. These were all good lessons and reminders that when we take care of each other, ourselves, and the earth we are showing compassion to god's world.

We have started an exciting new activity involving the whole church – pen pals! The children miss seeing the adults of the church – just as much as you all miss seeing the children. So, we are pairing up all the children and adults who want to take part – sharing letters or cards, photos of a pet or plant, a brief note or video about something you did today. If you'd like to take part, let me know!

As always, if there is any way that you'd like to help with Christian Education, shoot me an email at PboyleWight@gmail.com with your thoughts or ideas.

May the peace of Christ be with each and every one of you, this day, and every day.

~ Patricia

Coin Collection April 11

During Lent the Deacons ask folks to make a point of collecting coins. In non-Covid times there would be a coin rolling party the Sunday after Easter. The [hoto is 2019. This year we will plan a virtual celebration. The money supports the ongoing mission of the church.

Let's add a bit of fun to this annual tradition. Create and decorate your own bank. Use your imagination. Recycle something, build it, decorate it simply or wildly. When your bank is finished, take a photo of it and send it to Peggy Wight peggywight65@gmail.com Some of you may already have a special bank. Please take a photo of it and send it to Peggy. Perhaps you could include a sentence or two about your bank and why it is special.



Dates for March

Monday, March 1 - CE Committee on Zoom, 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday, March 2 - Prayer Group, Zoom 8:45 a.m.
Tuesday, March 2 – Book group 7 p.m. on Zoom
Wednesday, March 3 - Men’s Breakfast at the Church and on Zoom at 8 a.m.
Thursday, March 4 - Lenten Study on Jesus’ Passion Accounts in Gospels # 1 (Mark),
6:45 p.m. on Zoom
Sunday, March 7 - Worship on You Tube (email link or Church Facebook page),
Communion and Prayers at 10:45 AM on ZOOM followed by Fellowship time
Oxford-Union Association gathering for music, prayer and socializing 4 p.m. by Zoom.
Tuesday, March 9 - Prayer Group, 8:45 a.m. on Zoom,
Trustees at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom
Wednesday, March 10 - World Service Committee at 3 p.m. on Zoom
Music Committee at 4 p.m. on Zoom,
Church Council at 6:45 p.m. on Zoom
Thursday, March 11 - Pastoral Relations Committee, 10 a.m. at church
Lenten Study on Jesus’ Passion Accounts in Gospels # 2 (Matthew), 6:45 p.m. Zoom
Sunday, March 14 - Worship on You Tube (email link or Church Facebook page),
Prayers at 10:45 AM on Zoom followed by Fellowship time
Daylight Saving Time
Tuesday, March 16 - Prayer Group, 8:45 a.m. on Zoom
Deacons at 10 a.m on Zoom
Thursday, March 18 - Lenten Study on Jesus’ Passion Accounts in Gospels # 3 (Luke), 6:45 p.m.
Sunday, March 21 - Worship on You Tube (email link or Church Facebook page),
Prayers at 10:45 a.m. on Zoom followed by Fellowship time
Tuesday, March 23 - Prayer Group, 8:45 AM on Zoom
Thursday, March 25 - Lenten Study on Jesus’ Passion Accounts in Gospels # 4 (John), 6:45 p.m.
Sunday, March 28 - Palm/Passion Sunday, Worship on You Tube (email link or Church
Facebook page), Prayers at 10:45 a.m. on Zoom followed by Fellowship time
Tuesday, March 30 - Prayer Group, 8:45 AM on Zoom
Wednesday, March 31 - American Red Cross Blood Drive at Church, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Thanks from Zambia

The following is a note from Dickson Ngoma in Zambia. At the last minute the sponsorship for two high school students in his village did not come through. Natasha and Andrew, both 17 years old, were able, through the generosity of our congregation, to continue with their education. Students in Zambia as in other African countries need to pay a tuition and purchase uniforms and books in order to attend school.

Thanks from Zambia

Greetings to West Parish Congregational Church UCC, Bethel, Maine, USA in the name of Lord Jesus Christ, I am writing on the behalf the Nsefu water projects team. We thank you for your love and kindness to support our two children for their higher school studies. We received the donation. May almighty bless you all it's my humble pray to almighty God to bless your health that you live long so that you May help a lot of souls, we are so humbled. May you continue with the good spirits toward our community.



O-U Association gathering

We Are One in the Spirit. Save Sunday, March 7 at 4 p.m. for a Virtual sharing and reunion of the Oxford Union Association.

Oxford Union Association is made up of all the UCC churches in Oxford County. The delegates usually meet twice a year. Patricia Boyle-Wight and Jane Chandler are delegates from our church. Peggy Wight is the Association treasurer. Steve Wight is the representative from the Board of Directors. Tim LeConey is chair of the Church and Ministry Committee. We are well represented.

In order to rekindle bonds between the members in the UCC churches, it was decided to have a two-part Zoom. Beginning at 4 p.m. on Sunday, March 7 there will be a time of reading, prayers, and music. For 30-45 minutes you will be blessed with great music from several churches, including ours. Fellowship time will follow allowing time to greet friends and make new ones.

This is to have a fun time together and share what we have done to stay afloat and endure this shared pandemic.

Please respond to Lisa Burger, moderator, to get a Zoom link. lburger@bridgtonucc.org

[We are One in the Spirit...Love One Another](#)

Love Bowl for March is

One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. The theme this year is **Let Love Flow**. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put you in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. You meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

Congo Crafters

The Congo Crafters had taken a short break due to the pandemic. They finished 5 of 9 bookshelves for the Bethel Library. These cases are to display books at their summer outside booksale. In the winter they are used to store books in the Behtel Historical Society's barn basement. They will also use them upstairs in the library building. The wood was all donated so there is very little cost for the project.

The library thanked the craftsmen with hats. Jim Chandler is modeling one of the hats.



Deacon's Report

For 2021 Linda Davis, Diane York, and Peggy Wight will share the position of chair. Linda Gamble will continue as Scribe. Melinda Remington will take over as note writer.

Lent and Easter events were discussed. A meditative Ash Wednesday service was held on Zoom. On Maundy Thursday, April 1, there will be a Tenebrae Service at 7 p.m. via Zoom. There are plans for an Easter Sunrise service at the top of Paradise, using COVID precautions. The regular Easter morning service will be online. As we will not be gathering for worship in person, we will not sponsor the ordering of traditional Easter flowers.



Coin Collection Sunday will be April 11.

Covid has made it more difficult to keep connected with out members, especially with those who may need a special word of support from the church family. If you know someone who appreciate their spirit being lifted with a note, please contact Melinda Remington at melindaremington@yahoo.com

Birthdays and Anniversaries for March

March 3 – Ivan and Susan Cooper

March 18 – Will Doyle

March 5 – Marta Opie

March 24 – Martha Whittington

March 12 – Baylee Dunham

March 30 – Christine Trefethen

March 14 – Maryjane Shiverick

March 31 – Susan Herlihy

Flowers for church

Please have two arrangements at the church prior to Tim's recording of the service, usually by Saturday morning.

March 7 - Marvin Ouwinga in memory of Tineke

March 14 Art & Ellen Marshall

March 21 Steve Lovejoy in memory of Louise's birthday

March 28 Diane Dupuis

Book group March 2

Book group will meet Tuesday, March 2 at 7 p.m. via Zoom. This month we will discuss *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* by Kim Michele Richardson.

To look ahead, we'll read *Storm Beyond the Tides* by Jonathan Cullen for April 6. We'll read *Dearly Beloved a Novel* by Cara Wall for May 4. And we'll read *Home Going* by Yaa Gyasi for June 1.

Anyone with an interest in reading and discussing books is welcome to come. Just request a Zoom link from Jane Chandler or go to the church web site and click on that link.

Equal Exchange Coffee order due March 14

This month will be the last order for chocolate for about 6 months. Equal Exchange doesn't ship the chocolate in the warmer months. Every cup of coffee is a cup of justice, eliminating the middle man and large markups by large coffee distributors.

Please let Jane Chandler know of your coffee wishes. Go to the site <https://equalexchange.coop/> for a full list of items. She will get back to you with the cost. Orders are due Sunday, March 14.

Steeple News – edited by Jane Chandler

If you have items for the WPCC newsletter, please email Jane Chandler at jane.h.chandler@gmail.com