

The Barnet Messenger

A Newsletter from the Barnet Presbyterian Church



November 2019

Volume 19, Issue 4

Hope gives wings to our dreams...
Faith gives them flight

Pastor's Corner Rev Howard Gaston

So as I have been reflecting on the years that I have been here, I realized that while I believe I have contributed to the life and faith of the church, you as a church have done the same for me. I have grown during these years in my faith. So I thought that would be a great way to say good bye to you. So here are some of the things I have learned over the past 10 years.

That a diverse church can function well together. The church here is a very diverse church theologically and spiritually. For most churches this is a major point of conflict. You would not believe the stories I have heard about churches that are as mixed as we are. But PC of Barnet is a place where you set aside your differences for the mission of this church and for Christ. You still hold true to what you believe but are willing to work with others. This is the way I think the church should be working locally as well as nationally. So thank you for living this out with me.

I have also learned to not like the New England Patriots any better over the years.

This church has a great and wonderful sense of humor. When I interview with the COM before coming here, I was told that New Englanders have a unique sense of humor and that you don't voice it loudly. I don't know

where the guy was from but it was not from here. I literally remembering my first sermon with you, and telling a joke and the uproarious laughter the came from the congregation. Your humor during worship and meetings and even doing the dishes has been a breath of fresh air and it reflects of our love for each other and our faith.

On the face of things, one might think that this church does not do a great deal outside of worship on Sunday. But I have learned that there is a great deal of "Silent Ministry" going on here. So many of you live a life of service that is quietly done day after day. Some of you visit and support folks with food and conversations. Some are ready to lend a hand in a crisis or just help in moving something. Others get involve in the community in committees and government and volunteer at school and others give extra time and effort to your work that is not required. All of these simple acts of charity I believe has given us a good reputation as people of faith here.

I have learned that sound systems will go wrong at the most inopportune times. It seldom matters how much time we put into making sure that sound and video things were ready - there were gremlins that seemed to show up in our Audio Visual system. Thanks to John Heartson for putting up with them.

This church, I have learned like so many, is changing in the face of a changing culture around us. One big example for me was those who attend our church. Years ago people made church attendance a habit but we are seeing more and more people who love this church and support it's ministries but who do it in a sporadic

method. They might be here once a month or a couple times a year, but they still feel that they are part of this community. This is one area that we need to understand how we can best minister to them as well.

While I have always been a pastor who loves being a part of the community, in Barnet I learned that this really is true and expected. I never was just the Pastor at PC of Barnet but for the whole community. People looked for that support. I have been ready to have very private and imitate conversations while subbing at school or stopping at the store or even running down the road. As Paul said, I needed to be one who was ready in season and out of season to answer for my faith. I enjoyed having that relationship with the whole community.

While I love the winters in Vermont, I have also learned that having snow on the ground for 8 months does wear thin on one's soul. But I will truly miss those amazing winter mornings of bright blue skies and white snow.

Again I am filled with gratitude for the time and ministry that I and my family have had these years and wish you well in the years to come.

Deacon's Message

Wow—this year went by fast! Already we are planning our Angel Tree project!

We thank all for your support and help throughout the year, bringing in snacks for coffee hour, doing dishes after and being there for us when we ask for help throughout 2019.

We want to say a fond farewell to Pastor Howard and his family. It has been a great experience to have him as our Pastor, and wish him the best in his new church home. We will keep you and your family in our prayers!

Our Deacon group meets monthly to address the needs of our church family, and if you would like to join us, or have a concern, please let us know!

Thoughts on Change Celina Wright

It is always a difficult time for a Church to change

Pastors. We often feel uncertain or unsteady. This is a time for turning to God and looking to each other. And there is some comfort if we remember our shared history and other times we have negotiated this process.

Personally, this is the fourth time I have seen a Pastor leave since I started attending this Church. Each time of change was difficult, but always doable as we worked together to find a new leader. Each new Pastor brought different ideas that improved my relationship with Father, Son and Holy Ghost. I daresay that each new Pastor also bettered the Church.

So, let us move into the future with hope, grace and the knowledge that God is with us, knowing "You go nowhere by accident. Wherever you go, God is sending you there. Wherever you are, God has put you there. He has a purpose in your being there. Christ, who indwells in you, has something He wants to do through you, wherever you are. Believe this, and go in His grace, and love and power."

(Rev. Dr. Richard C. Halverson's Benediction, U.S. Senate Chaplain from 1981 to 1994)

Transience as a State of Grace

In the last newsletter, I printed an essay from Diane Moore about change. Here is another one. I showed this to Howard and he said that it's not the same as Presbyterian belief, but good advice anyway. Excerpted from "Transience as a State of Grace", by Diana Moore, Interfaith Minister.

We live in a transient world of continual change. Change is the nature of this Earth, as we see by the rising and setting of the sun each day, by the cycle of the ocean's tides, and by the ticking of the clock. Nothing stays the same. Even we humans are changing each and every moment so slowly that we are unaware. Many of our body's cells are regenerating every few years, more or less, so that we truly are not the same person we were 5 years ago. Transience, impermanence, is a part of life on this planet. Sometimes brevity is welcomed, as with an unhealthy relationship or a job that we do not like. Sometimes connections with people and things are fleeting and that is the natural order of those specific events. And sometimes the evanescence of a moment is most magical due to the impermanence of it being just that – a moment.

Could there be grace in the midst of unplanned transience? What would that look like? The thought may tug on our hearts' remembrances of times when we have felt the rug being pulled out from under us. Most of us have experienced some kind of unplanned, dramatic change in our lives, be it the death of a loved one, having to move to a new location, a new sibling when we were young, an elopement in our family, or some other major life event that we did not expect.

How does one find grace in what does not last? How does one find peace in the midst of unpredictability? How does one find serenity when fear niggles in on our thoughts? We breathe. We practice acceptance. We offer gratitude for what is. We pay attention to love. We place our focus on this moment. If this moment is challenging, we place our focus on the breath, or on our loved one's breath. If our fears attempt to envelope us, we place our attention on one joyful thought. We can take a walk in nature; notice the small critters, the birds, the breeze, the sparkle of diamonds in the snow.... We can listen to soothing music. We can sing. We can create rituals to grieve what was and help us enter changing times. We can paint. We can write. We can love. We can be grateful for each hand that we hold. We can pray. We can always pray, no matter where we are or what the circumstances, we can turn over our worries, fears and concerns to the Spirit of All That Is.

As we enter this month of our America's Thanksgiving, I invite us all to remember where we can find grace in our own lives. Where is the loveliness? Where are the blessings? Where are we grateful? What do we continue to pray for and what prayers have been answered? These are the places where we can find Grace amidst our own feelings and fears of the transience of life on this planet.

As we reflect on this time together, let us offer our thanks for all that is. Let us offer our gratitude for the hand that we hold, for the beautiful music that we share, and for the abundant blessings of breath, of love and of life. May it be so. May it be so. And so it is. Blessed Be. Amen. Namaste.

The Angel Tree

In November and December we will be busy with our next project – The Angel Tree! Our church family has supported this project for many years and we will

do so again. We would like to share the information received this year from Sue Russell at the Reentry Program and Community Development Coordinator Community Restorative Justice Center, Inc. and we would like to share this information with our church family.

How the Angel Tree Works Sue Russell

Names are solicited from case managers for the Reach Up program, which is a program for families living at or below the poverty level. For example, a family of three might be receiving only \$600 per month assistance to help with all housing and non-food needs for the month.

Case workers only submit names for clients who live in Barnet or towns that touch Barnet and for whom no other program or holiday assistance is provided. On some years, if there are no families from those towns being served by Reach Up, we have sought the congregation's permission to submit names of clients living in other towns but who are ineligible for help from other organizations. For example, the Santa Fund only helps for children under a certain age (I think it is 13?) but the family or single parent might have a 15 or 16 year old with need.

We ask the case workers to submit only three requests per person in the family and to look at need first. We tell them not to ask for things like expensive gaming systems. We suggest that they should request items that are no more than \$20 but sometimes the child might be seeking bedding, for example, and that can run more. In that case, I believe that congregants might have combined their efforts to purchase an item.

Often, the parents will not request anything for themselves but the case workers will include a need for the parent, such as a gas card to help the family get to appointments or work or to get an interview outfit.

When gift cards are requested, the case workers typically hold onto those and will go shopping with the individual to assure that they are being used for the intended gift item. This does not happen in all cases so where the case worker knows the client well and knows that they would not misuse the card, those are given directly to the family.

Most families are thoughtful about what they request and often they are embarrassed or ashamed of asking.

We always ask the family to write some sort of thank you card or letter back to the church and I try to get those right away but sometimes they take time to come in.

There have been a couple of years when we sent all the

requests to the church and then the church asked for more requests because there were not enough to go around to all the congregants. In those instances I had asked if I could submit for an individual I was working with who wasn't part of a family group. Individuals are not served by any holiday help program but that does not negate the fact that they have need. Often, they have more need and fewer resources.

We submit a brief bit of information about the families when sending in the requests to give an idea of what goals the family (or individual) has.

Reminders

1. Cares and Concerns—Now that our morning worship is “live” on Facebook please remember to hold the microphone close to your lips—rather like a megaphone. This way the prayer request or thanks for answered prayers will be heard clearly by those who attend via computer. Or, if you prefer, have the usher hold it for you.

2. TABS Project—We are still collecting pull tabs from tin cans for the Shriner's Hospital. There is a bucket in the entryway where you may leave your contributions at any time.

3. The Food Shelf—There is a box in the entryway for donations to the local food banks. You may drop off items throughout the month. Remember, not everyone is as fortunate as we are!

4. Coffee, Crafts and Conversation—meets from 2 pm – 4 pm in the dining room on the first and third Wednesdays. This is a good time for our women friends to gather and enjoy each other's company. We welcome all women from the church to join us when they can!

A “Found” Poem

On the banks of River Smile
by I.J. Bartlett

There's a town called Don't-You-Worry,
On the banks of River Smile;
Where the Cheer-Up and Be-Happy
Blossom sweetly all the while.
Where the Never-Give-Up and Patience
Point their faces to the sky.

In the valley of Contentment,
In the province of I-Will,
You will find this lovely city,

At the foot of No-Fret Hill.
There are thoroughfares delightful
In this very charming town,
And on every hand are shade trees
Named the Very-Seldom-Frown.

Rustic benches quite enticing
You'll find scattered here and there;
And to each a vine is clinging
Called the Frequent-Earnest-Prayer.
Everybody there is happy
And is singing all the while,
In the town of Don't-You-Worry,
On the banks of River Smile.

The above poem was found hand-written in a book at The Olde Church Store. With a little research this is what was found about the author.

John Bartlett (1784–1849) was a minister and co-founder of McLean Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital, two of the first hospitals in the United States.

John Bartlett was born in Concord, Massachusetts in 1784 as the fourth of twelve children and as a youth was greatly influenced by his local pastor, Dr. Ripley. After working with a relative in commerce in Maine, Bartlett returned to Massachusetts and graduated from Harvard College in 1805. Bartlett then studied theology for two years in Cambridge and then became chaplain of the Boston Almshouse, which cared for poor residents of Boston. Bartlett remained as a chaplain from 1807 to 1811 and during this period studied theology further under William Ellery Channing. Bartlett also studied medicine, although he never intended to be practicing physician, but thought the education useful in his work with the impoverished. After observing the conditions of the poor at the Almshouse, Bartlett visited the hospitals in New York and Philadelphia and researched the newest medical methods. Bartlett then organized two meetings of prominent physicians and wealthy benefactors, one meeting resulted in the founding of McLean Insane Hospital and the other resulted in the creation of Massachusetts General Hospital. In 1811 Bartlett was ordained as pastor of the Second Congregational Church in Marblehead, Massachusetts, where he held to a Unitarian theology. Also in 1811, Bartlett married, Rebecca Dublois, daughter of George and Sarah Dublois, and they eventually had six children together. He was an active member of the Marblehead Humane Society and Freemasons. Bartlett died in 1849 at age sixty-five after several personal tragedies.

European Coffee Hour

On October 4 we were blessed with a crisp but comfortable day for the foliage viewers in Barnet.

The hot beverages were consumed by a much larger margin on a day like that. We served ninety people an array of stuffed finger rolls, open sandwiches, biscuits, vegetables, many desserts for the sweet tooth and a fresh fruit tray. Top that off with coffee, tea, mulled cider, punch, hot chocolate, milk and water—do you need more? Our guests seemed happy, content and did a lot of visiting.

We were fortunate to have Valerie and her crew do a beautiful job of decorating. The helpers she sent from Barnet School were most helpful and courteous—what a joy for everyone.

We had a crew of twenty-two people working Thursday late afternoon and all day Friday to pull this off. The crew, from 3 and 4 years of age to people in their 80's, all doing a little or a lot—every bit helped.

Thank you to all the workers, bakers and people who supported us to pay for supplies and especially your prayers. The European Hour was a success because of YOU!

Don't forget, we still have some cookbooks for sale, if you know anyone who would like one or two!

Trip to Iceland Continued from last newsletter Dennis Kauppila

At this small hotel, they had converted a hay barn into the dining room/reception area. And sheep sheds into a greenhouse, built in pool, and hot tub. They had a large concrete tank in which they raised trout for their menu.

The hotel was the only year-round residence on this fjord. The fjord was about 8 miles long, and there were a couple of other houses on it, that were used only in the summer. We went horseback riding from this same hotel. The hotel was located about a mile up a river, off the fjord. This kept them out of the worst of the wind, and gave them a nice southern exposure. The day we left this hotel, we saw the glacier on the other side of the larger fjord. On the day we left, we saw 14 fjords.

There was a nice 'hot pot' on the other side of the fjord from the hotel. It was a concrete tank, maybe 6 by 12 feet, and 4 feet deep. It was between the road and the fjord, with a small block building to change your clothes. There were 2 black plastic pipes coming from the mountain. One was hot water, and the other was cold.

In 2010 a road was rerouted to around an 'unlucky' spot known for quite a few accidents. It was a place where the 'hidden people' were thought to live. Once the road was moved, the accidents stopped. There are stories in Iceland about several types of 'hidden people' including elves and trolls.

We were in Iceland for 2 weeks. We stayed in the capital, Reykjavik, for 2 days. One day we walked around and went to a couple of museums, the second day we took a full-day bus tour of the Golden Circle. There were only about 6 people on the tour, and the bus driver had his 2 sons, age 5 and 8, along for the day. One stop was to a large waterfall; then Geysir (all geysers in the world are named after this one!); the farm that makes their own ice-cream; and Thingvellir National Park. The park is in a 'rift valley,' where the North American plate and the European plate are moving away from each other, roughly an inch a year. Now the plates are about 6 miles apart, one side of the rift appears as a rock wall about 30 feet high. This is where the Icelandic parliament, the Thing, met at midsummer for over 1,000 years.

Then we picked up our car for 11 days of touring in the south, up along the west, then the northwestern parts of the island. We drove about 1300 miles, three of us signed up as drivers.

Rick had found an organization, Hey Iceland, a farmer-owned bed and breakfast cooperative. We contacted them about where we were interested in going. They gave us possibilities of where to stay, and what to do. They knew how long it would take to get from point A to point B. They made all of the reservations, and we rented our car through them too. We stayed at bed and breakfasts owned by coop members. Four were operating farms (one sheep, one dairy, one horse, one horse and dairy), a couple had been farms up until recently. At one place we were in a nicely rebuilt sheep barn, two were like small motels, one had been built as a school for boys in 1912, and one was set up like dorm rooms with a common kitchen. So, there was an interesting variety.

There was some 'interstate' highway near Reykjavik.

Otherwise the main road was 2-lanes, quite often without a shoulder. Like here, there were quite a few unpaved roads. And some roads over the mountains (with no trees- and sometimes with no vegetation at all) had only one lane, with pull-offs every so often, to let the car go by. One tunnel we were in was several miles long, one lane, with pull-offs, cars going east yielded to cars going west. Some of the bridges on the main road were one-lane wide, because when the volcano melted the ice, they knew the bridge would be lost in the flood.

Our list of high points included: Kayaking on a fjord, we saw seals and puffins, Horseback riding- crossing a small river and riding on a beach, Hot pots (hot springs), Guided walk on a glacier, Waterfalls- so many beautiful waterfalls (those glaciers melt and their water goes downhill), Mountains- lots of different types, areas looked a lot like the western US, Three hour drive over the mountains on a one-lane road. Similar to the area in Iceland where NASA will be practicing for a landing on Mars, Hiking on various terrains, An odd thing was how many buildings had siding of painted corrugated steel panels.

Food: Varied and delicious, usually there was a breakfast buffet. Some of the farm B+Bs provided dinners. They were good, with fish and lamb, sometimes beef. Skyr- a yogurt-like product with different flavors. Licorice- many different kinds. Happy Marriage Cake- a simple cake that kids learn to bake in elementary school with oatmeal, brown sugar, and rhubarb. Good local beers and good local ice cream. Smoked lamb. We had fun picnic lunches on most days: bread, cheese, smoked meat, fruit. We did not expect such a varied landscape- mountains, and plains, and big beaches. Lots of waterfalls and beautiful farms. In places it looked a lot like Hawaii- the lava fields, there were no palm trees in Iceland. Iceland is 2/3 tundra: hardly any trees at all- a few in

the city, but in rural area there were stunted birches that got maybe 5 feet tall, depending on the soil and the wind.

Joys and Concerns

Joys: a wonderful community send off for Howard and Donna, Claudia and girls are visiting family in Portugal
Health concerns: Marlisa's brother, John
Other concerns: family of Clint Duncan, transition of this Church, closing of Roy family farm

Upcoming Events

Dec 1 at 5:00 pm Memory Tree Lighting, Potluck Dinner and Carol sing.

Dec 24 at 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service at Barnet Center Church

Dec 29 reading of Memory Tree names during Church Service, 10:00 am, West Barnet

The Church is making plans for a slightly different Memory Tree Lighting. We will have a community potluck supper, followed by a Carol Sing led by Steve Wright, then a short Memorial Service.

If you have anyone from the Barnet Area you would like to have remembered at this event, please contact the Session.

The Danville Senior Meal Site will hold a Community Thanksgiving at 12:30 on Thanksgiving Day at the Methodist Church on the Green in Danville. All are welcome; please RSVP Karen at 745-8520. The organizers would welcome pies beforehand.

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