

The Barnet Messenger

A Newsletter from the Barnet Presbyterian Church



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

Pastor's Corner
Pastor Bob Rochelle

pb's pen

Grace and peace to you, in the strong name of Christ Jesus.

It's autumn, for sure, yet 'hanging' with us as some trees yet have their leaves and the temps continue to hover noticeably above the freezing mark. Walks outdoors have yet to suggest our winter parkas-hats-gloves. The lawn furniture is put up and flower pots put away. Snow blowers have had their oil changed and proper functioning checked. Bird feeders are beginning to get seeded, and taken in at night (those bears, you know!), even as the chickadees, cardinals, blue jays and other avians begin gracing our yards. Seasons change. And yes, the pandemic continues, the expected autumn-winter spiking making itself felt as flu season is upon us and we're more indoors than out.

The 'regular' patterns of life are evident reminders that everything familiar and reassuring has not left us. The unwelcome challenge of masking-distancing-washing (20+ seconds, singing *Jesus loves me* all the way through) frequently, is doable. Likeable is not required with this new discipline, except as we remind ourselves of its importance... of it being our way of taking care of each other, helping contain the virus' spread. And, for what it *is* worth – we are more adaptable than we sometimes credit ourselves being. My 'visiting' with many of you, whom I've yet to meet face-to-face, underscores how resilient a species we truly are. Our capacity to connect, to relate, to encourage and inspire has *not* been lost/impaired in the least.

As the church year draws to a close and a new church year approaches with Advent and Christmas, along with the COVID restrictions we're enduring, the above reflections are a reminder to me: *different* does not mean *absent*. God has not left us. Christ is as present and encouraging as ever... expecting us to take our discipleship as seriously as ever. Let us stay well, safe and ever in one peace – *pb*

Deacon's Message

The Deacons had no meetings during the summer months but did gather in October and are planning their activities for November and December, hoping to keep our traditions intact. There will be more information on this as the time nears. If you are aware of any needs in the congregation that the group can help with please let us know.

Our congregation has been following the recommended measures for weekly worship services and it has been a successful attempt thus far. It is wonderful to be able to watch our services on the computer if we are not able to attend in person. We are so fortunate and thankful to have John Heartson, a talented sound/recording engineer in our church family, to have Amanda Cashin playing familiar hymns prior to the start of our worship and to have Pastor Bob sharing great messages.

We have not been able to have our coffee fellowship in the dining room after services, but in the fresh air and with our masks we are chatting quite a bit outside! We are so used to having things as we have always had them—this has been quite a learning experience for all! But—this too shall pass.

Memories and recent Church history

At the service in September when the Congregation voted on the Pastor Nominating Committee, Pastor Bob asked for memories and comments on our Church. The following is transcribed from that conversation:

❖ *Tom & Fran Flanagan* – We began attending in 2004. On January 16, 2005, Rev John

Sanderson could hardly walk to the front of the church. He had to sit on a stool to preach. After the service he made it to the back of the church to greet everyone. I said to him, “In the church we came from they pray for sick people. He said, ‘Presbyterians do that.’ Well, then, we should pray for you. ‘Okay, we’ll do that next week.’ During the week John called and asked ‘Do you want to wait until after you’re a member’ – we were set to be received January 30. I said, do you believe God will heal you? ‘Yeah.’ Then why do you want to wait? So we came and Elders laid hands on him, right in the center of the church, and on the 30th he walked to the front of the church with no pain. He had to see a doctor (we all had the same doctor), who said ‘John, I can’t believe this.’ And he said, ‘The church prayed for me.’ This was when the healing prayers became a regular part of the congregation’s worship – on the last Sunday of every 5-Sunday month, until some members said this wasn’t often enough, and urged having healing prayers every last Sunday of the month. It continues to this day.

This same doctor later got cancer, and another member who was one of her patients asked her if it would be okay to pray for her. She said, ‘Of course.’ So we prayed for her, mentioning her in our prayers. The cancer required her to leave her practice. Over a year later, Fran went for a physical and asked after the doctor... who walked into the room, recovered and healthy.

❖ *Elizabeth Everts* – When 9/11 happened, Session called everyone in town they could reach, and we met here that evening for prayer. Anthems were sung, bells were rung, and it was a very community time... very moving, very comforting, and I was so happy that we were able to reach out into the community a little deeper and spend that time together.

- ❖ *Merle Fitzgerald* – I want to look back 60 years ago next month, when Pat and I took vows up there, which we've remained true to all these 60 years. *(pb – This is a really special place)*
- ❖ *Shellie Samuels* – I was very moved and glad to be part of some of the youth mission trips. So powerful for the kids and for the adults who got to go and chaperone. Something you never forget being part of. *(pb –How far back do these go?) Virginia Beach 2012 (pb –So, they've been happening for a while... and still are, with the Kauppilas going to Puerto Rico this year. Important ministry going on here.)*
- ❖ *Katherine Gates* – Over 40 years ago a member bought the building next door and gave it to the church. Since then, the fellowship has run it as a community thrift shop. This is the first year it hasn't opened. But it is completely set up and ready to open first thing next spring. It's been a mission to the community. *(pb – You have an active mission presence here in Barnet.)*
- ❖ *Tess Conant* – I agree with Shellie about missions we go on. They're very special and important to all of us. I remember we've gotten together as a community to eat, downstairs *(referring to the state operated senior meal sight, hosted by the church)*. And before we eat, we say grace ... a very special moment.
- ❖ *Ed Shields* – I hate to see numbers come up, but almost 50 years ago Carol and I were married here. *(pb – you hate to see the numbers come up?! Take credit for as many as you get!*
- ❖ *Jenna Carpenter* – My memory is when the church sent me to South Africa for 3 weeks. It was a very special trip. *(pb – What did you do there?)* We went to schools, had some meetings with women. *(pb – What was the most powerful thing you brought back from that experience?)* Well, I was in college and ended up changing my major. I started out in education. While we were in South Africa, we visited a lot of schools and learned there was a lot of substance abuse there. So I ended up changing so I could help families and children who have substance abuse problems here. *(pb – Powerful moment. On mission to someone else and you come back with a changed and whole new perspective.)*
- ❖ *George Hannon* – Because we have the mission retreat center at the Center Church, other churches are able to come here and share their mission trips. We have people coming from all over the country. *(pb – One of the unique things about this parish. My first day on the job here, Dennis took me to all your buildings. You do reach out. It's fascinating to see you have the retreat center.)*
- ❖ *Melody Morrison* – When I think of church, I think of people. Les and I got married and lived in Monroe, and he joined my church, the Methodist in Monroe. When we moved to Peacham in '98, I had a very hard time breaking away from Monroe. We'd come and visit this church and sit in this pew *(slapping the back of the pew in front of her)*, with his parents, from time to time. Finally, I realized it was time to say goodbye to Monroe and become part of this church. And there are people who've just left imprints on my heart. And I think of them. When we would sit here... *again touches pew in front of her, then goes on to name a handful of folk no longer here, and how she thinks of them every time she comes to church. (pb – I expect some of you are remembering people all over the place who have been here... and you can see*

them. I would comment – since we've been in virtual worship since the quarantine, I could picture where you sat. You're not now sitting where you used to, because of the COVID restriction.

- ❖ *John Heartson – A lot have heard this story before. My memory of this church is pretty profound. I had walked away from God, blaming God for my problems. It was at that point that I had a heart attack and was in the hospital for 11 days, having blood drawn every 3-4 hours, terrified of needles. But they put me back together. After 11 days I came home, glad to be home. Sitting in a recliner – when they cut you open you can't do much... can't even lift a gallon of milk – so, I was just recovering there and my wife, Janet, said, "I know this has been a rough ordeal for you. But it's been one for me, too. Can I go for a walk?" It was a Sunday morning, and I said "Yes, I'll be fine." So she went for a walk, and during that time, I think it was about a quarter after or 10:20, I felt like I had sort of dozed off and was lying on the couch and in zombie land... and all of a sudden I was floating in a church, up in the corner of the ceiling, and it was a church I'd never been in before, in Barnet Center. And I was just there for a couple of seconds and I heard people praying for me ... I heard my name mentioned. And then I zoomed right back into the living room, and I thought that was a very strange experience. And Janet came home an hour later and said, "I just saw Shellie, and she said they were praying for you at the church." And I said, "Wow! I saw that!" And as soon as I could hobble, a couple of weeks later, I came there and have never stopped coming back since. But I appreciate the "call" home. (pb – John's testimony, for some, might be kind of fanciful. But I can tell you from personal experience, such moments are real. They do happen. They are powerful, and I think it very*

much a testimony to what kind of community of faith you are here.)

- ❖ *Amanda Cashin – I, too, am a transplant from Monroe, and very new to the crew. But my first experience, with some of you at least, was caroling with Howard, pretty close to Christmas, and being extremely cold, very icy. And I was so impressed with how you all had your snow pants and muck boots, and you hoofed up hills and then sang at the top. And I'm so grateful to be here, and that warmth from that evening is maintained, whether you're here or on-line. It's wonderful.*
- ❖ *Sue Coppentrath – I lived across the street from Bernice Mackay, and my husband and I were married after about 5 years when we moved here – it was the late 70's. And one day – she was the best surrogate mother (my mother lived in Albany, NY, and my mother-in-law was in Florida) – she was sweet and said to me; "Would you like to come to church with me?" And that's one of the reasons I stood over there (pointing toward the communion table), that's where I started with her. And I have three children and they all went to Sunday School – my oldest two went to the Green Mountain Camps. I have so many wonderful memories, whether it's the Sunday School programs or the Christmas programs. When I started, Stan Blankenship was the minister, and his wife did the Sunday School programs and got my shy little son to come up on stage. I sang in the choir. It's a wonderful, wonderful church. My memories are still evolving, but I just love it.*
- ❖ *Dennis Kauppila – Some of my favorite memories are the beach service. And some of the people were baptized full immersion – those are fun.*
- ❖ *Jen Roy, on FB live feed – Letting Jan Warner have senior meals downstairs. A good time to*

see everyone enjoying each other and a good meal. And I had such fun helping with the meal site. I also remember my grandparents, Joe and Vera, going to church here... and all the times I went to VBS at Barnet Center.

Pastor Nominating Committee

The PNC (Pastor Nominating Committee) is comprised of Les Morrison - Chairman, Rebecca Boardman, Jenna Carpenter, Bill Conant, Tom Flanagan, Ben Gates, Shellie Samuels and Celina Wright, Secretary. We are assisted by Diane Nichols-Fleming, from the First Presbyterian Church in Barre.

We have been meeting weekly and just finished the Ministry Information Form, (MIF) which describes our Church and what we are looking for in a Pastor. The MIF was approved by the Committee on Ministry. The next step is to upload this form to the Presbyterian website where potential applicants may read it.

Then starts the excitement and challenge of finding the best person for us! Please keep us and our work in your prayers. Thank you.

Angel Tree Thank you
(late!)
Celina Wright

I received the following thank you, for the 2019 Angel Tree, just after I finished the February 2020 newsletter. I forgot to include it in the next newsletter in May, and by the time of the August newsletter, it didn't seem to fit. (Christmas in August just didn't seem right to me) So, I kept it to print in this edition, just in time to think about the 2020 Angel Tree. Efforts are being made by the Deacons to come up with a workable plan for this year. Nothing has yet been formalized, please stay tuned.

From Emily Hazard, Reach Up Supervisor:
The families that the Angel Tree assisted were

very grateful for the generosity. The parents are working hard to overcome obstacles, explore opportunities, improve their finances, and reach their goals. They are working on high school completion, taking college courses through CCV, working on improving their physical and mental health, and increasing their employment skills through community service programs and work experiences. Holidays are a tough time for the families we work with, as the Reach Up grant is used to pay for rent and basic living expenses. Often times, it is not enough to pay for anything additional. Being able to have some gifts for the children made the parents very happy. They also appreciated the clothes and shoes the Angel Tree provided for them. Having a reliable pair of winter boots or a new outfit makes a huge difference in getting through the winter and getting ready for employment.

Upcoming Events

The Thanksgiving Dinner at the Danville Methodist Church is on! Karen Fitzgerald will host a to-go (pick up) dinner on Thanksgiving Day. Please call her in advance at 745-8520 to reserve your meal of turkey and all the trimmings. Donations will be accepted for the meal, and pie donations are also welcome.

Happily, the 2020 Memory Tree is planned. It is in memory of Marvin Bailey, Margaret Strobridge, and friends of Barnet. The lighting of the Memory Tree will take place on Sunday November 29 at 5:00 pm, outside of the West Barnet Church. Light refreshments will be served outside. All names of loved ones will be remembered on Sunday December 27th at 10:00 am, also at the West Barnet Church.

Christmas Services have not been finalized. It's difficult to plan ahead this year, since any inside activities depend on how much of Covid is around in late December. Please watch the Church's Facebook page and website for information on the Christmas Eve service and the Angel Tree.

The brightest light, the greater love
By Diana Moore

I asked my friend Diana, whose writings I have included in the newsletter in the past, if she had written a blessing for these pandemic times. She graciously sent me three, and this one spoke to me.

Chaos is actually a word that describes, in part, a universal, organized energy that moves very rapidly, making it look like it is disorganized. As our Earth continues to feel more chaotic, it may help to raise our perspective to one of a more cosmic nature, as a way to accept that this, too, is part of some larger plan. It can be challenging, with our human brains, to fully understand the vastness of the cosmos within which we live. In the midst of organized creation, there is destruction, as with the cycle of life, there is death. As we move forward, the path to follow is the one that holds the brightest light, the greater love. Trust in the energy of Spirit/God/Divine Mother to hold us at each turn, even when darkness and despair seem to feel all encompassing. There is almost always a flicker of Light somewhere within reach. Sometimes we have to look in unexpected places and be open to receiving from unforeseen sources. We are all in this together, this time of global and cosmic shifting. There may be those who feel they are

“experts”, but really, we are the ones who know our own truth, which at the beginning and in the end is always where Love and Light are, at the core of our very being.

Joys and Concerns

Joys: Alice’s grandson became an Order of the Arrow, National Honor society of the Boy Scouts. Jean McPhee is doing well.

Concerns: those with Covid and other illnesses. Families who are struggling with health and school issues. Family of Margaret Strobridge.

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