



Dear Union Church family,

March is already here and with it the season of Lent. Historically Lent was a grim time of sacrifice with a focus on atoning for one's sinfulness. The purpose of Mardi Gras (literally "Fat Tuesday") was to eat all of the meat, cook with the last of the lard and sugar, dance, and enjoy all of the activities (including sex) that were supposed to be given up during Lent. Union Church, not known to miss out on an opportunity to have a good time, celebrates Mardi Gras in fine fassion. We are grateful to Elaine Robinson and the fellowship committee for organizing and providing for this year's grand celebration. However, Lent itself has evolved into a more positive season. It is a time when we are invited to spend quality time with the Divine in an attempt to deepen our relationship and grow in our ability to reflect more of God's goodness. Some people do more acts of kindness during Lent. Others try to make changes in their attitude or behavior so as to become more Christlike. Still others spend more time reading and reflecting on Scripture, meditating, or engaging in other practices that help them connect with the sacred. I believe that it was St. Benedict who defined contemplation as "wasting time with God".

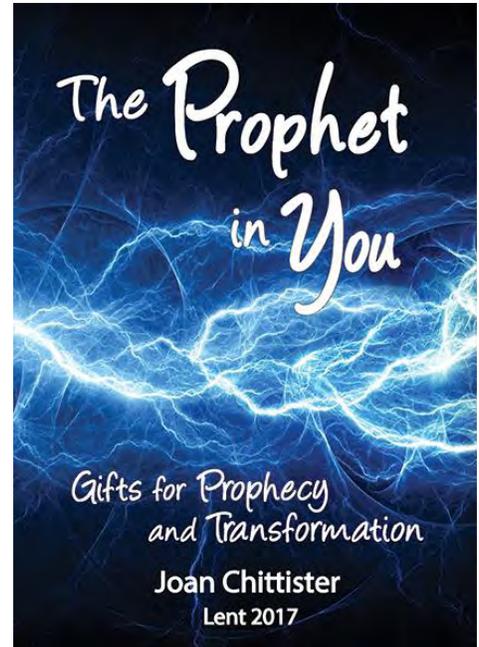
My hope is that this Lent you will give yourself the gift of wasting time with God in whatever way you find meaningful so that when Easter arrives you will be able to sing a resounding Alleluia, rejoicing in a more sustaining spirituality and deepened friendship with your God.

Love, as always,

Nancy

The Prophet in You: Lent 2017

Two groups have been organized for sharing reflections about the Sunday Lenten readings. You are invited to take part in either of these groups or to organize your own at a time and place that works best for you. The discussion guides are available at the entrance of the church. If groups aren't your thing, please feel free to take a pamphlet to use on your own, or with your family.



Church Office Group

#221, 2 Main Street
Biddeford
Tuesdays 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.
Begins February 28

Steve Fox Group

7 Evergreen Drive
Arundel
Thursdays 7:p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Begins March 2

Readings for each Week:

Week 1: Matthew 4:1-11

Week 2: Matthew 17:1-9

Week 3: John 4:5-42

Week 4: John 9:1-41

Week 5: John 11:1-45

Week 6: Matthew 27:11-54

From the Mission Committee

The Union Church Mission Committee recently reached out to help two refugee families in Biddeford. Thanks to a connection that Paul Schlaver has with a teacher in the Biddeford School system, we learned that these families needed proper beds, bedding and shoes for their children. Using Mission Committee funds generated by the Speaker Series, and Pastor Nancy's impressive shopping skills, we were able to meet all these needs. Both families are very grateful.

Ed Hryniewicz and Bob Sherman putting together bunk beds for a refugee family with eleven children.



The next meeting of the Mission Committee is in the church office at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, March 6, 2017. You are cordially invited to attend, without obligation, to learn about the work we do on behalf of Union Church.

Ken Murray, Chair



Notes from the Finance Committee Since our semi-annual meeting, when we discussed our projected budget shortfall, we have had 12 individuals or families reconsider their gifting to the church. Presuming all commitments are met, this will result in additional

\$4,675 in income to the general funds. While this does not get us entirely out of the woods, it is very encouraging, and we are deeply grateful. If you haven't pledged, or if you would like to add a bit to your pledge, it is not too late!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 1 – Ash Wednesday Vespers 7:00 p.m.

March 2 – Lenten Group Discussion: 7:00 p.m., 7 Evergreen Drive, Arundel

March 5 – Communion Sunday – First Sunday in Lent

March 6 – Mission Committee Meeting – 11:00 a.m., Church Office

March 8 – Knit Wits - 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, Church Office

March 7 – Lenten Group Discussion, 1:00 p.m., Church Office

March 9 – Deacons' Meeting – 4:30 p.m., Church Office

- Lenten Group Discussion: 7:00 p.m., 7 Evergreen Drive, Arundel

March 11-22 – Pastor's vacation

March 12 – Rev. Lamar Robinson officiating at the Sunday service

March 14 – Lenten Group Discussion, 1:00 p.m., Church Office

March 16 – Lenten Group Discussion: 7:00 p.m., 7 Evergreen Drive, Arundel

March 19 – Rev. Ned Dougherty officiating at the Sunday service

March 20 –Saco Meals

March 21 – Lenten Group Discussion, 1:00 p.m., Church Office

March 22 – Knit Wits - 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, Church Office

March 23 – Lenten Group Discussion: 7:00 p.m., 7 Evergreen Drive, Arundel

March 26 – Life Lessons Sunday – “Lessons from Loss”

March 28 - Lenten Group Discussion, 1:00 p.m., Church Office

March 30 – Lenten Group Discussion: 7:00 p.m., 7 Evergreen Drive, Arundel



Union Church Women's Retreat: March 29th and April 5th are available dates for an overnight retreat at Marie Joseph Spiritual Center. Like last year it would involve prayer, group sharing and time on your own. (Not to mention a fair amount of wine and laughter.) We would meet Wednesday afternoon and end after lunch on Thursday. Please sign up for the dates that you would like to attend.

Maine Council of Churches Update:

Union Church has been unanimously voted by Council members to become an Associate Member of the Maine Council of Churches. We are the only non-denominational unaffiliated Church on the roster. The other members are:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland
United Methodist Church, New England Conference
United Church of Christ, Maine Conference
Episcopal Diocese of Maine
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, New England Synod
Unitarian Universalist Association, Northeast District
New England Yearly Meeting of Friends
Presbyterian Church, USA, Presbytery of Northern New England
Swedenborgian Church
Union Church of Biddeford Pool

Tom Bancroft was approved by the Council to represent Union Church. Union Church has one vote in Council business, the other Churches, all Denominational, have more votes depending on population, e.g., the Roman Catholic Diocese has ten votes, Methodists seven votes, etc. The Council requires unanimity in all its public statements and positions.

The Maine Council of Churches' Mission statement is simple and to the point: "Rooted in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, our mission is to inspire congregations and persons of faith to unite in good works that build a culture of justice, compassion and peace."

To this end, The Council has several Sub- Committees set up to address issues that concern people of faith and their communities. The standing committees of the Council are: Nominating Committee, Finance and Investment Committee, Development Committee, Public Policy Committee, and Financial Review Committee. Most of these further the day-to- day operations of the Council, but the Public Policy Committee reviews proposed legislation of the State Legislature, and following a discernment process, determines whether to take a stand supporting or opposing said legislation.

Issues of current focus for the Council are;

1. The eradication of poverty and economic insecurity, including a livable wage and adequate assistance to those unable to work. Healthcare, hunger, and homelessness, aging in place and addressing the root causes of poverty are included in this focus.
2. Reducing violence and bias while promoting civility and respect. Human trafficking is included in this.
3. The environment and right relationship with the earth. Climate change, sustainable practices, local foods and protecting our natural resources are common themes in all our denominations' concerns.

The Council has Partnerships and Liaison with other groups;

Environmental Priorities Coalition

Maine Gun safety Coalition

Maine Equal Justice Partners

Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition

Maine Prisoners Advocacy Coalition

National Religious Campaign Against Torture

Maine Council on Aging

AG Task Force on Human Trafficking

Maine Military& Community Leadership Council

The Maine Council of Churches takes many political stands pro and con public policy and legislation, and wherever it believes injustice occurs. Although Union Church has traditionally been an apolitical church, many individuals in our church have expressed a desire to become involved in social justice activism. Our involvement in Maine Council of Churches will help us all be more aware of the issues being addressed and how individuals can become involved. Our monthly update will keep you informed of the Maine Council of Churches agenda. In addition you can to the Council's website at mainecouncilofchurches.org.

Treats Wanted: The teachers who work with the immigrant students at the Biddeford Primary school find that the kids are often hungry so they have been spending their own money buying snacks for them and handing them out throughout the day. By donating snacks we can help the teachers and communicate that Union Church welcomes immigrants. The teachers suggest Cheerios or other healthy cereals put in snack bags, granola bars, fruit cups, snack cracker packages, etc.

Alternative Pathways, the high school for challenged kids at risk of not graduating opens a store every Friday where students can use the credit that they've earned through attendance, completing their homework, acts of kindness, etc. to buy snacks and other small things that they otherwise could not afford. They appreciate power bars, and other snack items, Snapple, bottled flavored tea and gift cards to fast food restaurants.

Beginning the first Sunday in Lent there will be a box in the second side pew to collect donations for each school. They will certainly appreciate your generosity.



Union Church Knit Wits: New times and new projects. All are welcome. Prayer shawls needed. Hats and scarves requested by Seeds of Hope. Students at Alternative Pathways want to learn how to knit. Please contact Carol Sherman if you are interested in joining in the fun.

Dates : Wednesday, March 8 and March 22

Place: Union Church Office in North Dam Mill Building

Time: 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. **NOTE CHANGE IN TIME. YOU MAY BRING BROWN BAG LUNCH OR SNACK IF YOU DESIRE.**

For those of you that want to help teach students knitting at **ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS**, the 4 DATES are:

Wednesdays, March 8, March 15, March 22 and March 29

Time: 9:45 am (for about an hour)

Place: Alternative Pathways School



Heart Health – Gail Quinney, a heart attack survivor, would like to share the following information from the Mayo Clinic with you:

Water and Aspirin

A cardiologist determined that heart attacks can be triggered by dehydration.

Good

Thing to Know from The Mayo Clinic. How many folks do you know who say they don't want to drink anything before going to bed because they'll have to get up during the night?

Heart Attack and Water - Drinking one glass of water before going to bed avoids stroke or heart attack. **Interesting.....**

Something else I didn't know ... I asked my Doctor why people need to urinate so much at night time.

Answer from my Cardiac Doctor:

Gravity holds water in the lower part of your body when you are upright (legs swell). When you lie down and the lower body (legs and etc.) seeks level with the kidneys, it is then that the kidneys remove the water because it is easier. I knew you need your minimum water to help flush the toxins out of your body, but this was news to me.

Correct time to drink water... Very Important. From A Cardiac Specialist!

Drinking water at a certain time maximizes its effectiveness on the body:

2 glasses of water after waking up - helps activate internal organs

1 glass of water 30 minutes before a meal - helps digestion

1 glass of water before taking a bath - helps lower blood pressure

1 glass of water before going to bed - avoids stroke or heart attack

I can also add to this... My Physician told me that water at bed time will also help prevent night time leg cramps. Your leg muscles are seeking hydration when they cramp and wake you up with a Charlie Horse.

Mayo Clinic on Aspirin - Dr.

Virend Somers is a Cardiologist from the Mayo Clinic who is the lead author of the report in the July 29, 2008 issue of the Journal of the American College of Cardiology.

Most heart attacks occur in the day, generally between 6 A.M. and noon. Having one during the night, when the heart should be most at rest, means that something unusual happened. Somers and his colleagues have been working for a decade to show that sleep apnea is to blame.

1. If you take an aspirin or a baby aspirin once a day, take it at night.

The Reason:

Aspirin has a 24-hour "half-life"; therefore, if most heart attacks happen in the wee hours of the morning, the Aspirin would be strongest in your system.

2. Aspirin lasts a really long time in your medicine chest; for years. (when it gets old, it smells like vinegar).

Something that we can do to help ourselves - nice to know. Bayer is making crystal aspirin to dissolve instantly on the tongue. They work much faster than the tablets. Why keep Aspirin by your bedside? **It's about Heart Attacks** - There are other symptoms of a heart attack, besides the pain on the left arm. One must also be aware of an intense pain on the chin, as well as nausea and lots of sweating; however, these symptoms may also occur less frequently. There may be NO pain in the chest during a heart attack. The majority of people (about 60%) who had a heart attack during their sleep did not wake up. However, if it occurs, the chest pain may wake you up from your deep sleep. If that happens, immediately dissolve two aspirins in your mouth and swallow them with a bit of water. Afterwards: - Call 911. - Phone a neighbor or a family member who lives very close by. Say "heart attack!" - Say that you have taken 2 Aspirins. - Take a seat on a chair or sofa near the front door, and wait for their arrival and **DO NOT LIE DOWN!**

"Life is a one-time gift" (Let's forward and hope this will help save some!!!)