



THE TORCH

United Church in Walyole, Massachusetts 02081

February, 2012



PASTOR'S MESSAGE

"OUR LENTEN JOURNEY"

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22, with a beautiful and meaningful service of worship in Bradford Lewis Hall, including ashes (for those who request them), candle lighting, and meditation. This will be the start of our journey toward Holy Week and Easter Sunday.

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I have developed a powerful theme for Lent this year, "Following Jesus, Trusting God." The thread that runs through it is Jesus' humanity. It is understanding Jesus' human nature that allows us to follow his example. Jesus models the best we can be and shows us what it means to be truly human.

In sermons and services, we will consider how Jesus was able to conquer fear and doubt, to rise above suffering and rejection, by placing complete trust in God. This is something we can actually learn and practice.

We will also be providing Lenten booklets for the congregation, to assist us in daily devotions and prayers. Finally, we are suggesting participation in a project called, "A Complaint-Free World." If we trust God to address all our problems (as Jesus did), there's no need to complain. In this program, we wear a purple band on one wrist and whenever we catch ourselves complaining we switch the band to the other wrist. The goal is to go twenty-one days without having to switch. (It's harder than it sounds, but those who've done it report that it made a great improvement in their life.)

We hope, above all, that these ideas will turn into actions that will help us live our faith, follow Jesus, and trust God more and more every day.

Ash Wednesday, February 22, 7:30 PM.

Blessings,
Ray

WORSHIP

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2012

Holy Communion

Scripture: John 17: 6-19

Meditation: "Out of This World"

Theme: Why are we in church this Sunday, or any Sunday? Because we believe the values we affirm here are not necessarily respected in the world "out there." The Church supplies faith, hope and love for our daily lives.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2012

Scripture: Romans 3: 19-26

Sermon: "Clear A Path"

Theme: When it comes to living our faith, we all need more practice. The goal is not to follow God's law perfectly, but to have an intimate relationship with God.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2012

Scripture: I Corinthians 9: 19-27

Sermon: "Being Politically Correct"

Theme: It's spoken of as a terrible thing, as a hindrance to freedom of speech, as a tool of elitist snobs. But more often than not, it's simply a criticism of ugly and hurtful language or humor. In the most basic sense, political correctness expresses concern for the most vulnerable among us. And that's a very good thing!

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2012

First Sunday in Lent

Scripture: Mark 1: 9-15

Message: "What if God Were One of Us?"

Theme: In fact, we do believe this—that God became human in Jesus the Christ. It is crucial to know the human Jesus, otherwise we cannot follow his example.



LENT BEGINS FEBRUARY 22

As we approach the season of Lent, we are reminded that the word Lent means springtime. Here in the coldest part of the year, we are invited to step into a period of preparation, reflection, growth, and change. Lent is a springtime for our souls, a time to open ourselves to God's still voice, to discern what God is calling us to do. It is a time to examine the quality of our commitment to Christ, to learn from Christ's example how to deepen our relationship with God. Lent is a time to rid our lives of the burden of sins, accumulated as we go through the simple business of daily life: sins of unkindness, dishonesty, inaction, etc. Lent is a time to take notice, to do better.



ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

FEBRUARY 22 at 7:30 p.m.

An Ash Wednesday service, will be held in Bradford Lewis Hall. It is a perfect time to enter this deep and thoughtful season of Lent. There will be candlelight and quiet music; there will be words of welcome and introduction; there will be time for prayer and reflection; there will be stations with a focus on clay, water, oil, or ashes; there will be cards with scripture passages, a reflection and a hands on action for each element. Following the meditation time, we will join together in a short service including song, a responsive reading, and the use of ashes.

Everyone in our church family is invited. No one is too young or too old to leap into spring, to listen for God's voice and to commit to growing closer and trusting in God.

THE SANCTUARY FOR LENT 2012
A Daily Devotional by Rev. Robert Dodd

This year the entire church is invited to join in the use of a daily devotional with scripture reading, reflection, and prayer for every day from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. Small enough to carry in your pocket, easy for everyone with a busy lifestyle to use, the *Sanctuary for Lent* will explore Jesus' parables, examine the nature of God's Kingdom, and help us to discern God's call. It will be exciting to share this experience of study and reflection together. Look for your copy of the devotional in your mailbox, or if you didn't receive one by mail, pick one up at church.

Join in a Lenten Project:
A COMPLAINT FREE WORLD
A Program for Positive Transformation

During Lent, we are inviting everyone to wear a purple bracelet. The purpose of the bracelet is to remind us all to make an effort to put aside complaining, to take a positive attitude towards working to bring God's kingdom on earth.

We remember that God reviewed all of the work of creation and declared it to be "good." We humans often focus on the wrongs in the world, forgetting that God's creation is inherently good. When we spend our time complaining about problems, we tend to miss the solutions, relieving ourselves from the responsibility of confronting the issues and working towards a resolution. Complaining has been found to have a negative effect on people's health and relationships. A positive attitude inspires healing and growth.

Here is how the bracelets work. Every time you catch yourself complaining, you move the bracelet to your other wrist. The goal is to go for hours, days, weeks, without complaining and having to move the bracelet. It is said that new behaviors take 21 days to become established as the "new you." Lent is 40 days long. Let's all give it a try!

"Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones." ~ *Proverbs 16:24*



Music Monthly

MUSIC CALENDAR for FEBRUARY 2012

Sunday, February 5 – Communion Choir (All welcome!)

Sunday, February 12 – Chancel Choir

Sunday, February 19 – Chancel Choir

Sunday, February 26 – Chancel and Handbell Choirs

Communion Choir on February 5!

Don't miss our second Communion Choir on February 5th. Join us at 8:45 AM in the Sanctuary to work on an anthem for the morning service. A brief time of fellowship (yes, I will get more donuts this time) will be held before the service begins. ALL AGES are welcome (children may leave for church school after the offering).

Lincoln Center performance

On Sunday, March 18, eleven members of our Chancel Choir will take to the stage of Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall (home of the NY Philharmonic) for a performance of Mozart's *Requiem*. Two hundred singers from across the country, four professional soloists, and a full orchestra will be featured. Vance George, conductor emeritus of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus and a two-time Grammy winner, will lead the rehearsals and performance. The concert will also include Rene Clausen's *Memorial* (in commemoration of 9/11) by the choirs of the University of New Mexico. Tickets for the performance, which begins at 2 pm, are available at www.dcinny.org.

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

Early Elementary (PreK- Grade 2)

- Feb 5 Jesus in the Wilderness
- Feb 12 Jesus and the Children
- Feb 19 Group Project
- Feb 26 Holy Family/Mystery of Easter



Elementary (Grades 3-4)

- Feb 5 Feeding of the 5000
- Feb 12 Call of the Disciples
- Feb 19 Group Project
- Feb 26 Making Pysanki Eggs/Legend of Easter Egg

Older Elementary (Grade 5)

- Feb 5 TBA
- Feb 12 TBA
- Feb 19 Group Project
- Feb 26 John the Baptist

Rite 13 - Grade 6 & Grade 7

- Feb 5 Lesson: Sexuality, God said it was very good
- Feb 12 Lesson: Sexuality, God said it was very good
- Feb 19 Group Project
- Feb 26 Bible Scavenger Hunt/Trivia or Games Day

J2A- Grade 8

- Feb 5 Identity and Vocation
- Feb 12 Using Our Talents
- Feb 19 Group Project
- Feb 26 My Purpose Statement

Rummage Sale March 23rd and 24th

United Church will be hosting its annual Rummage Sale in March and will be accepting donations of the following items, beginning on March 18th: A table and rack will be set up on the stage in BLH for these donations.

- Gently used clothing and footwear
- Curtains, sheets, blankets, comforters and towels
- Full size brown paper grocery bags for the Bag Sale (we need a lot of these!)

Jewelry can be donated anytime-please mark for the Rummage Sale and leave in the church office. Small jewelry boxes are appreciated as well.

More info on sign-ups for helping with this sale will be available in the weeks to come. Please consider offering your time and talent for this worthwhile event. Thanks in advance to everyone...for questions: rummage@unitedwalpole.org

Jen Owens 508-668-8089

Ginny Barry 508-660-2271

Lisa Oberly 781-352-2429

Note: No donations of books or White Elephant items please



As you clean out your jewelry boxes this holiday season, please think of donating to our annual rummage sale. Jewelry maybe dropped off at anytime. Please label jewelry for rummage sale.....the earlier we get it the better.....thanks

From the Moderator: Mark the Date and Give Me Some Feedback.

The Annual Meeting of the United Church in Walpole will take place on Sunday, February 12th, shortly after worship. As usual, lunch and childcare, and transportation afterward for those who need it, will be provided. Despite all that, we know that attending the whole meeting can be problematic for some. If there are some aspects of the meeting that, if changed, would make it easier for you to attend or stay longer, or make it a more satisfying and worthwhile experience for you, please let me know. Send your thoughts, complaints, ideas or suggestions to moderator@unitedwalpole.org. All such feedback will be dissociated from the names of the senders, so don't hesitate to be candid. Thanks! **Dan Lupfer, Moderator**

POT LUCK DINNER

Saturday, February 18, 2012, 6-8 PM

United Church, Bradford Lewis Hall

For visitation team members, spouses and partners, and those who are considering joining the visitation ministry.

Bring a main dish (A-M)

Or dessert (N-Z)

Appetizers and beverages
will be provided.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

With Sympathy

We hold in our thoughts and prayers the families and loved ones of:

Charles Bringham

Carolyn Robinson

John Makinen

INQUIRERS' CLASS – SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH

Would you like to know more about:

United Church in Walpole?
our denomination, the United Church of Christ?
what it means to be a member of United Church in Walpole?

Join Rev. Ray following worship at 11:15 a.m. in the Library.

IS THIS THE RIGHT TIME FOR YOU TO CONSIDER MEMBERSHIP AT UNITED CHURCH IN WALPOLE?

We will be receiving new members during worship on Sunday February 12th. If you have decided that this is the right time for you to make a commitment to membership, it would be a privilege and a pleasure to welcome you into our community of faith during worship on February 12th. To aid in planning, please call the church office at 508-668-0551 to let us know your intention.

United Church in Walpole
A Member Congregation of the United Church of Christ
Open and Affirming

Rev. Ray Kostulias, Senior Minister

E-mail: sr-pastor@unitedwalpole.org
Cell phone: 508-345-4113

Nathan Zullinger, Music Director/Organist
Ed Watson, Church Custodian
Jean Duffy, CE Administrator ce-administrator@unitedwalpole.org
Lee McCarthy, Office Administrator

PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday & Wednesday 9:30 am—12 pm
CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: Monday-Thursday 9:30 am - 3:30 pm
Staff meeting is Monday at 10 AM.

Church Telephone: 508-668-0551 Church Fax: 508-668-4825
Web Site: www.unitedwalpole.org E-mail: office@unitedwalpole.org

Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00 am - Sanctuary
Church School Every Sunday: 10:15 - 11:15 am

Publicity Coordinators

publicity@unitedwalpole.org

VISION TEAM

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Cover drawing by Cassandra Annati