

The Scroll

Newsletter of
Union Church of Proctor

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Check out the full color version of the
Scroll on line at the web address above...
lots more about the church there, too!

March 2023

Mark 1: 12-13 (NRSV)

The Testing of Jesus

¹² And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ He was in the wilderness forty days, tested by Satan, and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels waited on him.

Dear Friends,

Many years ago, in my family's preparation to begin the Lenten journey on Ash Wednesday, life threw a curve ball at us. Robert Burns' words from his famous poem "**To A Mouse**," "The best-laid plans of mice and men / Often go awry," seemed all too appropriate. For some time, due to very difficult events in our family, I could not worship with my new congregation for a couple of weeks before the start of Lent. By the second Sunday in Lent, I could officially begin a Lenten journey with the new congregation.

In my time away, I realized that even without partaking in Ash Wednesday service on Ash Wednesday of that year, I still started my own Lenten journey with the traditional themes of repentance and temptation, just from the difficulties we needed to process. I first turned my



focus inward and then outward to reflect on better knowing God's comforting presence in this present difficult journey. For me, that Lenten journey, whenever it began, I started out, just like Jesus did, in the wilderness where it felt inhospitable. Regardless of the official date of Lent, my journey was filled with scary beasts waiting to catch prey, and it felt that the sun was absent or at the least abusive to burning skin rather than bringing light and warmth.

Even though the journey may have started in discomforting places, thanks to a reminder from Rev. Talitha Arnold, a still-speaking writer from the United Church of Christ, I remembered that Jesus began his wilderness journey surrounded by angels. Angels ministered and tended to him all forty days regardless of what evil was presented. That thought about angels present brought me so much comfort and continues to help me to focus and reflect on the start of this Lenten journey.

Too often, I think, we miss details around us. We make plans. We want to stay on track. We focus but not broadly enough to see details that lie all around. The Gospel of Mark is my favorite gospel. I love its stark rawness. So, when the

Gospel of Mark gives details, I know I am supposed to take notice. There were angels ministering all the while Jesus was in the wilderness, tempted by Satan and confronted with wild beasts.

For my family and me, I believe that angels were with us while we passed through that terrible time in the wilderness. It's funny, though, as I reflect on that time, I don't believe our angels were wearing beautiful robes. The ones tending to us did not look like the ones we have come to expect angels to look like. I believe that in our wilderness time, our angels came with cups of water and blood pressure cuffs. One of the angels surrounding us had beautiful colorful tattoos and chains on her boots. Another sounded like an angel on the phone when we called the hospital multiple times a day. Each of those angels took the time to check on us and offer us care, prayer, and kind words. Each one offered us the ability and space to focus on what was needed at the time and be where we needed to be. Angels, indeed, are with us all around as we journey. We need to look for them. As Fred Rogers stated it, "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping." I think those helpers are angels in human suits.

So, wherever you are this Lenten season. Whatever comes before you, regardless of when or even if you officially recognize Lent, look for the angels surrounding you. They are always around. Let them minister to you.

Remember that according to Mark's gospel, the angels got the last word. May that be true for us in our wilderness journey this Lent, too.

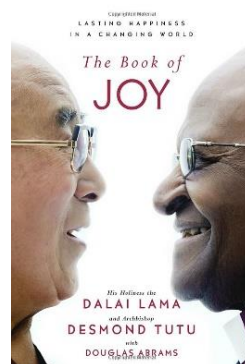
Blessings and Peace,

Pastor. Jenei

PS - Thanks, Rev. Arnold, for reminding me about the angels. It seems that you are another angel speaking words of comfort and ministering to those in need who are in the wilderness.

LENTEN BOOK STUDY

Join us for a **LENTEN BOOK STUDY** beginning March 1st (Wednesday) at 6:30 pm in the Parish House (or Sanctuary). Our study will be on **The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World** by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The Book Study will be on the 5 Wednesdays in March, and our study will last about an hour. You can purchase the book at any local bookstore or online. A good source for used books is: Thriftbooks (<https://www.thriftbooks.com/>), Amazon, or check it out at your local library. If you need assistance with obtaining the book, please contact Pastor Jenei.



NOTES FROM THE CHURCH MOUSE



While I sit here doing the Mouse Report, I see that it is snowing again. But at least it will be gone for a couple of days, which is the way it seems to be going lately. The temperature keeps going up and down as well. Unfortunately, I hear that there is more to come as it is only February. Oh well.

I'm looking forward to the Lenten Book Study (see above) on all the Wednesdays of March.

Your Lenten Offering letter is in the mail. Can you help these people in need during this time of giving?

The Dismas House dinner and meal prep will be at 5:30 pm Wednesday, March 1, 2023.

The next Council Meeting will be March 5, 2023 after Coffee Hour.

God Bless you all and stay healthy.

A SPECIAL REQUEST!

The season of Lent began on February 22nd. The Outreach Committee members have sent out letters requesting a donation for this purpose. Our committee met after the church service on January 18th to select an organization to receive this specific offering. We selected the Bridge to Rutland (B2R).



This organization is...” a group of Rutland County residents working to bring asylum-seekers to Vermont and to support them once they’re here.” Asylum is a protection granted to someone who has recently arrived in the U.S. or has been living here who is unable, for safety reasons, to return to their home country. Unlike refugees, “who are invited and resettled by the U.S. State Department,” these people are fleeing violence and persecution.

Please check your mailboxes for your Lenten Offering request. Your donation will offer needed items and hope to many, and in so doing, we all will be helping each other.

Peace, The Outreach Committee



March Greeters

- 5 Phyllis Sawtell
- 12 Meryl Lisananti
- 19 Elsie Valach
- 26 Kim Baccei

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING



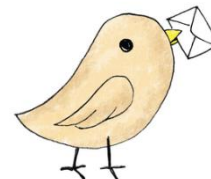
The Church Council will meet on Sunday, March 5th following the Fellowship Time. All Committees, please be sure to appoint a 2023 representative to the Council prior to the meeting. Thanks!

MEN'S COFFEE



Members & friends of Union Church- Join us for Men's Coffee every Saturday from 7-8 a.m. in the Parish House.

WE'VE GOT MAIL!



*Hello All,
I just want to take a moment to say thank you to every person praying, sending cards and letters and helping my Brother, Dan Griswold. Dan was my hero growing up and I will miss him every day of my life. I know VT was a special place for Dan and hope to bring him back to the Green Mountain State. Lots of unanswered questions right now and we are dealing with the grief. When I get to the N.E. I would love to stop by and meet the folks that has been a wonderful team of positivity for Dan.
Again, Thank you to everyone.*

*Sincerely,
Yvonne Griswold*

*Enjoy these old photos
(card & photos on the bulletin board in the connector)*

GROWING OLD GRACEFULLY

Age is relative, isn't it? In our own way, we still search for the fountain of youth. We resist the aging process by camouflaging the spots and wrinkles. Still, aging continues its relentless march.

God places a premium on age. God intends for us to be useful and active in our golden years:

- God asked Noah to build an ark when he was 400 years old.
- Moses was 80 when he led Israel out of Egypt.
- Proverbs says: "Gray hair is a crown of splendor."
- We hear Job declare: "wisdom comes with age and with length of days comes understanding."

David writes: "Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come."

Paul addresses the aging process: "Though your body is decaying, the mind is renewed daily. We are working toward an eternal glory. For we know when this earthly body is aged out, God has a body for us not made with hands, eternal in heaven."

Truth is, wherever we are in the aging process is okay, because that is exactly where God wants us to be. And for us to waste our time, energy, money, and talent attempting to change that state, that season of life, is not God-pleasing. Being dissatisfied with our age only frustrates us, and frustrates His purpose in our life. God had a purpose for us when we were young and He has a purpose for us now that we are older. It's ridiculous to attempt to go back and relive an old purpose.

How do we grow old gracefully?

Understand change. If we want everything to stay the same, life is going to be continually miserable. The senior citizen's world is full of change. Now change is not always bad. But when you pack too much change into a short space, it can be devastating. Our purpose has changed. The ambitions of climbing career ladders, and plans for raising and educating the children are over.

There are health changes, financial changes, changes in our energy level. There are some things we can no longer do, and shouldn't try to do. We must not allow these to overwhelm us.

We need to lose ourselves in something bigger than we are. One of the problems in retirement is that attention is turned to self. The focus is no longer on: the children, career, church, but directed inward. This creates serious problems at any age. John Gardner, one time Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, said, "People can achieve meaning, only if they have a commitment to something larger than their own little egos; be it family, fellowmen, careers or religion." I think Jesus gives us the answer: Serve Others!! There's hospital and hospice visits to be made, nursing home patients that need encouragement. Think about volunteering at one of these institutions. There are numerous ministries at church that can use our expertise.

Don't kill today with yesterday's guilt. Some of us spend our time grieving over our mistakes we've made until we kill the joy of today. We spoil the golden years with resentment from the past. Sure, all of us have made mistakes, serious ones, but there is no reason to allow these to rob us of today's joy. "Forgetting what is past I press on to the goal, the high calling of Jesus Christ."


Will to die young. Douglas McArthur had this essay on his wall: "Youth is not a time of life, it is a state of mind." Grandma Moses was still painting when she was 101. Oliver Wendell Holmes was still serving as a Supreme Court Justice at 90. Conrad Adenauer was Chancellor of West Germany at 87. Noah Webster was 70 when he published his dictionary. Golda Meir became Prime Minister of Israel when she was 71. Paul Southern of Abilene Christian was still teaching college in his nineties. Tillit S. Teddlie was still writing church music and preaching when he died at 101. Mother Teresa died serving others at age 87.

God has providentially brought each of us to this point, and this place in our life for a specific purpose. The question is will we allow Him to use us for that purpose? Indeed! The best is yet to come!

*Randall Caselman, Bella Vista Church of Christ
Bentonville, AR*

March



- 1 Dinner Prep. And Meal Sharing at the Rutland Dismas House, 5:15 p.m.
Lenten Book Study, 6:30 p.m.
- 5 Choir Rehearsal, 8:30 a.m., Sanctuary
Morning Worship, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary & Zoom
Coffee & Fellowship, 11:00 a.m.
Church Council Meeting, 11:15 a.m., Parish House
- 8 Lenten Book Study, 6:30 p.m.
-  11 Set your clocks ahead so you're on time for church tomorrow
- 12 Choir Rehearsal, 8:30 a.m., Sanctuary
Morning Worship, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary & Zoom
Coffee & Fellowship, 11:00 a.m.
- 15 Lenten Book Study, 6:30 p.m.
- 19 Choir Rehearsal, 8:30 a.m., Sanctuary
Morning Worship, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary & Zoom
Coffee & Fellowship, 11:00 a.m.
- 20 Articles & info due for October Scroll
- 22 Lenten Book Study, 6:30 p.m.
- 26 Choir Rehearsal, 8:30 a.m., Sanctuary
Morning Worship, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary & Zoom
Coffee & Fellowship, 11:00 a.m.
- 29 Lenten Book Study, 6:30 p.m.

March Readers



- 5 Jean Noren
- 12 Glenn Giles
- 19 Janet Yager
- 26 Kim Metcalfe



March Birthdays

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 2 Erik Chapin | 17 Deb Kingsbury |
| Jean Lertola | Shelby Moody |
| 4 Amy Larson | 18 Liz Fothergill |
| 5 Nancy Thompson | 19 Paul Pilcher |
| 7 Barb Corliss | 22 Leah Moody |
| Peg Thomas | 23 Mike Kingsbury |
| 9 Chris Heintz | 25 Jeff Bergquist |
| 10 Jeff Metcalfe | 26 Cairle Ault |
| 14 Jim Toher | Roy Pilcher |
| | 27 Carol Westin |

Union Church of Proctor
5 Church St.
Proctor, VT 05765

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Address Service Requested

Easter Memorial Flowers

Once again, we expect to have Easter lilies and other potted spring flowers enhancing the Sanctuary on Easter Sunday. In order to have an accurate listing of Memorial Flowers, we ask that you please fill out the slip below or pick up a form at church and return it **by Palm Sunday, April 2nd**. You may email your memorial information to Kris at kris.finni@gmail.com or send it to Union Church of Proctor, 5 Church St., Proctor, VT 05765.

Please note that the information you provide below is **only for our memorial listing in the Easter Sunday bulletin**. *All flowers must be arranged through a florist or brought to the church by those wishing to give them.*

aa

Easter Flowers Memorial Listing

In Memory of:

Given by

