

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!



April 2024

Psalm 50:15 (NRSV)

“Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”

Dear Friends,

Doubt in our faith life can often feel unsettling, it may even at times feel like a crisis. Sometimes it feels like we have cowardly turned our back on God or our faith. Sometimes it can feel like we are not good people, or good-enough people, otherwise our doubt wouldn't have happened. I'm here to say these notions are poppycock.

I believe that doubt is a solid part of our relationship with God. Doubt can be a good thing and here is why I think that. Doubt means that we are engaging and thinking about God, thinking about a life of faith, thinking about what it means to be a believer, and/or Christian.

Doubts are a natural part of believing. Doubts do not equate with unbelief. Christian theologian Paul Tillich wrote, "Doubt isn't the opposite of faith; it is an element of faith."

Think about these biblical examples of doubting moments:

In the book of First Kings, Elijah had his doubts that God was still with him. In Luke, Mary had her doubts about how she could be pregnant with the promised Messiah. In the Gospel of John, Andrew had doubts about how Jesus could feed the five thousand with only five fish and two loaves of bread. In Acts, Peter had doubts about reaching out to the Gentiles. And there are so many more examples!! And yes, I purposefully did not include the famous “doubting Thomas” passages to emphasize that doubt plays a much larger role in the lives of the biblical characters than we may realize.

Doubt is an essential component of a healthy spiritual journey, challenging us to examine and strengthen our faith in profound ways. Far from being a hindrance, doubt serves as a catalyst for growth, encouraging believers to confront uncertainties and deepen their understanding of their beliefs. This is the sort of engagement we

find happening in our Lenten Book Study about God's Grace. We are questioning what we know about God, in our lives and our faith, to deepen our spiritual relationship with God.

Doubt fosters introspection and critical thinking. I believe that when we question aspects of our faith, we engage in a process of self-reflection, evaluating the reasons behind our beliefs and confronting any inconsistencies or doubts they may harbor. This introspective journey often leads to a deeper understanding of our spirituality and a more authentic connection to our faith.

Additionally, doubt promotes humility and empathy within faith communities. Recognizing that doubt is a universal experience, I think that we become more understanding and compassionate toward others who may be grappling with their faith. In other words, our hearts have more space to hold others experiences and provide care and compassion. This empathy creates a supportive environment where folks feel safe to explore their doubts and seek guidance from their community.

Moreover, doubt challenges us to seek answers and pursue knowledge. Rather than accepting dogma blindly, we are motivated to study scripture and engage in theological discourse. This pursuit of knowledge not only strengthens our faith, but also enriches and deepens our understanding of the divine. The struggles we have been going through in our Lenten study lead us to a deepening of our beliefs and our understanding of God in our lives.

Remember that faith is more than seeing. Faith is more than observable facts. Faith is more than just feelings. Faith is trusting God even when you cannot see God at work in your life or our world. It is trusting in the light even in the midst of darkness.

You may ask, what can I do to overcome my doubts? Reinforce your faith through reading your holy book, through conversation with others, and prayer. Remember how God has been faithful in the past and present. Question your doubts as much as you question your faith. Take baby steps

of faith. Share your doubts with those you trust so that they may encourage you. Don't let your doubts overcome you. Accept them, deal with them, and move through them. Faith will prevail as you yield space in your heart to remember that God is faithful, trustworthy, and ever-present.

May the joys of Eastertide remind you that you are a blessing, that you are made with the spark of the divine, that you are love, and of all of those amazing things we doubt that we truly are. I'm here to remind you that God don't make no junk. If there's anything you shouldn't doubt, it's that!

Happy Easter, beloved creation!

Pastor Jenei

ATTENTION ALL CANNERS



Attention all those canners and wanna-be canners! We have a great deal of interest in establishing a water-bath and pressure canning class at the Parish House. Anyone that can save up canning jars (all sizes) please feel free to bring them to the church. If you are willing to share new lids and bands, that would be wonderful too. We also are looking for someone willing to teach pressure canning. We have a couple of people who said they feel like they can teach water-bath canning, but if you are interested in teaching either of these methods, please let Pastor Jenei, Kim Metcalfe, or Jeannie Cushman know. You can always email Pastor Jenei at ucprev@gmail.com or call/text her too. We will need the use of a good pressure canner if anyone is willing to share one of those when we setup up the classes. We are thinking the classes would not be until much later as fruits and veggies become ready, more plentiful to can. Let's help each other learn these sustainable and cost effective methods of saving our food (and thus saving on our grocery bills!).



UCP DONATES TO PROJECT ARISE IN RIO GRANDE VALLEY, TEXAS

Through the Outreach Committee, our church has donated 10 quilts to an organization in South Texas, Project Arise, that helps immigrants settle into the United States.

Arise promotes personal development of the immigrant community, especially women and children, through educational programs and community events. Their emphasis is on building strengths, respecting individual dignity, spirituality, and cultural values.

Our friends, Lon and Betty Schneider, have been supporting this organization for a few years as it is located near their winter home in Alamo, TX. When asked about donating quilts, Lon was sure that they would be welcomed. The quilts were sent to Lon and Betty who then delivered them to the central location of Arise.

The photo above shows Betty and several recipients holding the quilts we sent.

FIDGET QUILTERS

Let's gather Tuesday, April 16th, at 1:00 in the Parish House to get a start on more fidget quilts. Contact Kay Bergquist with questions.



PEACE AND LIGHT THROUGH MUSIC SHARED

In early March we had the joy of hearing soloist Olivia Whiting, as she opened the worship service with the Prelude by Reynaldo Hahn, "Si Mes vers avaient des ailes" ("If my verses had wings"), written in 1888 when the composer was only 13! Singing with the choir throughout the service, Olivia closed her time with us with the Postlude, "Thou Art God," by Lionel Bourne, a calm and lovely piece with lyrics such as:

*Thou art the peace of all things calm
Thou art the place to hide from harm
Thou art the light that shines in dark
Thou art the heart's eternal spark*

Many thanks to Jen Cohen for arranging for another wonderful performer, and thank you, Olivia, for sharing your beautiful voice with us!



Barry Cohen performed on his bassoon on March 17th. It's always a treat when Barry is with us!



PULPIT SWAP

Many thanks to Rev. Mary Woodman for having some fun in “swapping pulpits” on March 17th. Rev. Mary is from the United Church of Christ in Cornwall. Rev. Mary was a fun and informative preacher and it was a joy to have her singing with the congregation. Rev. Mary’s message always brings an interesting perspective and humor. Maybe next time she will remember where the collection plates are..... It has been too much fun teasing her about it!



Pastor Jenei had a great time with the congregation in Cornwall and participated in their “Bible in Year” study, that is held as part of the worship service. Pastor Jenei, Rev. Mary, Rev. Mark Blank from Second Congregational UCC in Bennington, and Rev. Sara Rossigg from the Congregational Church, UCC in Brandon plan to have at least one more pulpit swap before the end of the year. What fun it is to share wisdom, insight, and unique perspectives with each of our churches.

LET’S GET CREATIVE!

What’s happening on April 21, 2024?

- The London Marathon
- Big Word Day (my favorite: “dociousaliexpilisticfragicalirupus” — Thank you, Mary Poppins!)
- World Curlew Day
- National Tea Day
- World Creativity and Innovation Day, and
- **The Church Council meeting** in the Higbee Library following the Fellowship time!



A VISIT FROM DISMAS HOUSE



Eric Maguire, Rutland Dismas House Director, and resident, Joshua Croteau, gave a very informative presentation at our March 10th worship service. Eric filled us in on Dismas of Vermont’s mission and the discussions the staff has with residents about each one’s goals, the effect of the choices they make, and doing the hard work every day of improving their approach to life. He also thanked Union Church for not only the monthly dinners we provide, but also for the financial contributions we make to Rutland Dismas. All of it makes a difference.

Joshua expressed his gratitude for our volunteers taking the time to prepare the dinners and for joining the men around the table. That sense of community that comes with each of us sharing gratitudes and maybe a story or two is a seemingly small, but very important part of the lives they’re building at Dismas House. Thank you, Joshua and Eric for joining us!

If you’d like to help with our monthly dinners, such as salad or dessert, please see Nancy Young, our Dismas Team leader. You might even consider joining us at the dinner. The more the merrier!



Several of the members of the UCP Dismas Team with Eric Maguire and Joshua Croteau from Rutland Dismas House.



- 3 Dinner Prep. And Meal Sharing at the
Rutland Dismas House, 5:15 p.m.
- 7 Choir Rehearsal, 8:30 a.m., Sanctuary
Morning Worship, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary & Zoom
Coffee & Fellowship, 11:00 a.m.
- 8 Eclipse!
- 14 Choir Rehearsal, 8:30 a.m., Sanctuary
Morning Worship, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary & Zoom
Coffee & Fellowship, 11:00 a.m.
- 16 Fidget Quilters, 1:00 p.m., Parish House
- 20 Articles & info due for May Scroll
- 21 Choir Rehearsal, 8:30 a.m., Sanctuary
Morning Worship, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary & Zoom
Earth Day Celebration
Coffee & Fellowship, 11:00 a.m.
Church Council Meeting, 11:15 a.m., Parish House
- 22 Earth Day
- 28 Choir Rehearsal, 8:30 a.m., Sanctuary
Morning Worship, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary & Zoom
Coffee & Fellowship, 11:00 a.m.

NOTES FROM THE CHURCH MOUSE



I hope this weather change doesn't last long. Even with the snow falling and covering everything again, it's depressing. Especially since it's spring.

On March 17th, Rev. Mary Woodman was here at Union Church as an exchange minister and Rev. Jenei was in Cornwall for their service.

Welcome back to Jeff and Kay who have been traveling for the last month. It's great to have them back.

The next Council Meeting will be April 21st after Services and coffee hour.

God Bless everyone and stay healthy.

April Liturgists



- 7 Jean Noren
- 14 Kim Metcalfe
- 21 Glenn Giles
- 28 Janet Yager

April Greeters



- 7 Kim Baccei
- 14 Meryl Lisananti
- 21 Kay Bergquist
- 28 Elsie Valach

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April Birthdays



- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Kelly Toher | 12 Bruce Baccei |
| 2 Wayne Flewelling | 17 Jeannie Cushman |
| 3 Aidan Hall | Janet Yager |
| 7 Allan St. Peter | 20 Kathy Cawley |
| 8 Ali Flewelling | 23 Bonnie Blanchard |
| 11 Peter Curtis | 24 Michael Moran |
| Simon Curtis | 28 Linda Doty |