

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 2024

Romans 8: 31-29 Modern English Version

³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ³³Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, yes, who is risen, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written:

"For Your sake, we are killed all day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter." ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities nor powers, neither things present nor things to come, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Dear Friends,

As I sat down to consider what to share with you in our March Scroll, I was struck that once again

March falls in a funny place in our liturgical year. The Lenten season has already started and this year, Easter feels early with Holy Week falling the last week of March and culminating at Easter on the 31st.

So, what do I say in March? Do I stick with the Lenten Season or do I jump ahead and talk about the joys of Easter? If you had the opportunity to hear my sermon on February 11th, you would know that I talked about just that conundrum - that I do not want to slog through the muck of Lent and work hard and fight the "demons in the wilderness." I am tempted to want to get on to Easter and experience that joyful moment that Christ has risen! (And me too!)

I know the logical stuff, that putting the work into Lent will deepen my relationship with God, myself, and others. I will be better for it. I also know that the groundhog said this was a short winter, so I don't want to spend any more time in the proverbial winter of my faith than needed.

It was in this very context that I had a friend recently recite part of the Romans passage above to me as we were talking. I chuckled and chimed

in saying it with them. Part of this passage from Romans was the benediction we said to one another at the end of every worship service at the church that ordained me. It was the reminder that no matter what happens, no matter what we say, do, or how we act, God's grace will always be present and God's love for us will never be absent or withheld.

It's such a powerful statement that at first glance, it sounds like overblown hooley. What an exaggeration! Who could keep such a promise or live into it after it was stated?

God can. And we can too. God loves us for everything that we are and everything that we aren't too. God seeks progress over perfection. God seeks a relationship with us (and all of creation) over even progress. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Paul knew it. Paul preached it. I'm not the biggest fan of Paul's works (those stories for another time) and yet, that is the one thing that Paul seems to really drive home - God's love is everything. It's infused in everything. It's part of us, literally and metaphorically. Created in God's image, we carry the spark of the divine, and that spark is unconditional love.

This Lenten time, I have chosen to pick up a book that I haven't read in about ten years. It was a book that changed my thinking and I could even say it changed the very way I try to live my life. I tried to read it when it first came out in the late 80's and well, I tossed it in the bin because it upset me to think that I should/could/would be able to offer Grace to all those who have wronged me. Or, think that those "terrible" people would be accepted into God's open arms, just like me.

Then, I reread it at a different place in my life. This time, I needed to hear things differently. I wanted to be different. I wanted my children to experience a parent that was love-filled, and love-oriented and that meant I needed to find a way to let go and believe that Grace is true at all levels of being. That was at a time when I served a small church in Cleveland that was known for its, well, difficulties. It is also the church that changed who it was and became a place filled with such great

love and grace, that it was seemingly miraculous. It was the church that called for my ordination. I needed to hear and share what was in this book (and many others) as a part of my ordination process. I guess you could say it had a great influence on my final ordination process.

Well, here I am another decade or so later and this same book keeps falling out of my bookshelf, ending up on a table, on my desk, and/or in my satchel. It seems fate would have me read it a third time and open it up for a discussion with all of you, a first time. The Book is: If Grace Is True by Philip Gulley and James Mulholland. I'm betting if you read it, the book may raise a few hackles for you. That's okay. Sometimes we need to hone our edge to be more sure of what it is we believe. And, sometimes too we need to be challenged to change our beliefs to be our better selves. Heck, I haven't read it in well over a decade. I bet things have changed for me too as I reread it.

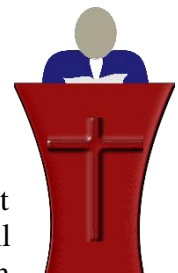
I'm not sure where this book study will land for you or me. Regardless of the final overall thoughts on the book, my hope, and prayer is that because you engaged in this book it will help deepen your faith, fill you with hope, and firm up your understanding that you are loved.

Come journey with me this Lenten season on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm in the Parish House or Zoom throughout March and let's see where we go together. I hope that on Easter morning, all will be able to see the bright shining resurrection of pure love in and around us!

Blessings and peace,
Pastor Jenei

PULPIT SWAP

We are having another pulpit swap! Rev. Mary Woodman will be leading our worship service on March 17th while Pastor Jenei is leading the service in Cornwall. We hope to have Rev. Sara Rossigg from Brandon Congregational Church swap with us after Easter, as well as Rev. Mark Blank from 2nd Congregational in Bennington sometime in the Spring.





LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

Join us for Lenten Bible Study in the Parish House at 6:30 pm on Wednesday nights during Lent for an hour-long discussion on the book: *If Grace Is True: Why God Will Save Every Person* by Philip Gulley and James Mulholland. Our discussion continues on February 28, and March 6, 13, 20, and 27. We'll meet in the Sanctuary on March 6th.

HOLY WEEK & EASTER



Palm Sunday is March 24th. Join us for a fun processional!

Union Church of Proctor and St. Paul's Lutheran Church will join the folks at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Rutland for a **Maundy Thursday** service at 7:00 p.m. at **Good Shepherd**, on March 28. They are hoping to offer Zoom for that service.



Brandon Congregational, Good Shepherd, Union Church and St. Paul's will gather together for a **Good Friday** service at 7:00 p.m. at **St. Paul's Lutheran Church** in Proctor on March 29. This service will focus on the Last Words of Christ.



Begin Easter morning, March 31, with a Sunrise service in the connector at 6:30 a.m. There will be a light breakfast following the service.



Easter Morning Service - 10:00am. With the **Downtown Brass** playing!



There is some interest in holding a **canning class** at our church! If anyone is interested in learning to pressure can or helping others learn to pressure can, please contact Pastor Jenei or Kim Metcalfe. Additionally, **if you have canning jars you are willing to part with, bring those to the church.** We will also be looking for new lids and bands (or unused) if you see any of these around and would like to contribute to this new endeavor to share with our community!

We are also looking to build up our **silk flowers** for arrangements in our sanctuary. As you are able, **please bring in new or slightly/lightly used matching (2-4) stems of flowers, ivy, leaves stems, etc.** so that we can decorate our sanctuary with beautiful flowers throughout the seasons! Thank you!



“GOD’S COUNTING ON ME... GOD’S COUNTING ON YOU!”

Phil Henry led the congregation in singing those words together during a worship service in late January. The song of that title was written by Pete Seeger and Lorre Wyatt, and was especially appropriate to sing as that Sunday marked the 10th anniversary of Pete Seeger's passing. A nice tribute and a great message. Thanks, Phil, for sharing your musical talents with us. God IS counting on all of us!



NOTES FROM THE CHURCH MOUSE



I'm not starting with my usual weather report this month. After all, why point out the obvious? Instead let me tell those of you that may have missed it about the wonderful service at UCP on Ash Wednesday. We had several guests from local area churches including: Rev. Bruce Bishop from St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Rev. Patti Stratton from First Baptist Church and Good Shepherd Lutheran, Rev. Sara Rossigg from Brandon Congregational Church, Rev. Mary Woodman from Cornwall and, of course, our own Rev. Jenei Rossigg.

One of the elements of the service was writing on a piece of paper the problem or issue you want to dispose of, then taking the paper to the front to be burned, thereby doing away with that issue. (This part was something that kept me in the back of the church, far from the flames!) Last but not least

was the ritual of receiving ashes in the form of a cross or, on this night, a heart.

We send sympathy and condolences to the family and friends of John Lafond who passed away on Feb.6th after a long illness.

We were sorry to hear of the passing of Mary Jane (McCullough) Cunningham on September 24, 2023. Though she left Proctor long ago and has lived in New Mexico for many years, she often stayed in touch with Union Church and always read her Scroll. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family.

The town of Proctor was shocked and saddened by the death of Ben Curtis, Proctor Jr/Sr High School History teacher and chair of the Proctor Select Board, on February 16, 2024. Son of Albert and Gail Curtis, Ben grew up in Proctor and we were so happy he returned and went on to be such a positive force in our town. We appreciate all he did for our students and our town and will sincerely miss him.

God Bless everyone and stay healthy

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, March 24th**. You may email your memorial information to Kris at unionchurchofproctor007@gmail.com or send it to Union Church of Proctor, 5 Church St., Proctor, VT 05765. You may bring your Easter flowers to church from 9-11 on Saturday, March 30, or to the Parish House on Friday if you have a key.

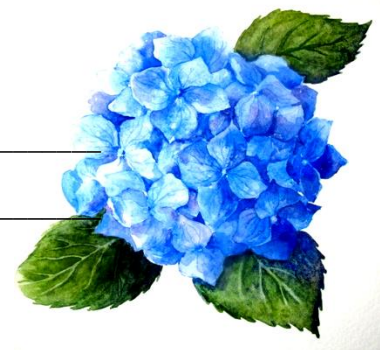
Please note that the information you provide below is **only for our memorial listing in the Easter Sunday bulletin**. *All flowers must be arranged through a florist or brought to the church by those wishing to give them.*

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Easter Flowers Memorial Listing

In Memory of:

Given by



March



- 3 Choir Rehearsal, 8:30 a.m., Sanctuary
Morning Worship, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary & Zoom
Coffee & Fellowship, 11:00 a.m.
- 6 Dinner Prep. And Meal Sharing
at the Rutland Dismas House, 5:15 p.m.
Lenten Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
- 9 Turn your clocks ahead so you're on time for church tomorrow
- 10 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
- 13 Lenten Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
- 17 Choir Rehearsal, 8:30 a.m., Sanctuary
Morning Worship, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary & Zoom
Pulpit Swap, Rev. Mary Woodman preaching
Coffee & Fellowship, 11:00 a.m.
- 20 Lenten Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
Articles & info due for April Scroll
- 24 Choir Rehearsal, 8:30 a.m., Sanctuary
Palm Sunday Morning Worship with Processional!, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary & Zoom
Coffee & Fellowship, 11:00 a.m.
- 27 Lenten Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.
- 28 Maundy Thursday Service, 7 p.m., **at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Rutland**
- 29 Good Friday Service, 7 p.m., **at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Proctor**
- 31 Easter Sunrise Service, 6:30 am, Union Church Connector
Choir Rehearsal, 8:30 a.m., Sanctuary
Easter Morning Worship with the Downtown Brass, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary & Zoom
Coffee & Fellowship, 11:00 a.m.



Men's Coffee every Saturday morning in the Parish House at 7am.



THE CHURCH COUNCIL will meet on Sunday, March 10, following Fellowship time.

March Liturgists



- 3 Jean Noren
- 10 Glenn Giles
- 17 Janet Yager
- 24 Jeannie Cushman
- 31 Kim Metcalfe



March Greeters

- 3 Kim Baccei
- 10 Meryl Lisananti
- 17 Bonnie Blanchard
- 24 Elsie Valach
- 31 Sue Osgood and Carol Trudelle

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

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*March
Birthdays*

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