



Hilltopper

*Arlington Street UMC
63 Arlington Street
Nashua, NH 03060
Office Phone: (603) 882-4663
Pastor's Cell: (603) 546-8294*

February 2012

Why Go To Church?

Bruce Bradshaw

Every Sunday morning, I wonder: "How many people will be in church today?"

Yes, I am concerned about numbers. Many pastors say that numbers do not count, but numbers count because people count. If God counts the hairs of our heads (Matthew 10:30), I can count the people in our congregation. People are important to God, and we are important to each other.

We are important to each other because we need each other to be the church, a worshipping community. When we do not feel like going to church, we might believe that our decision to attend church is an individual decision; we live in a culture that places central importance on individual liberty, but we also invest our individual liberties in each other. Whether we are part of a church community, a sports team or a social club, we depend on each other. We sacrifice our individual preferences for the sake of the team, club or the church community. Worship, is not an individual decision. We worship in relationship to each other.

But why should we, as a community, attend church? We attend church because our spirituality is anchored in the church, the community of people who believe that God is worthy of worship.

We live at a time when many people say they do not have to attend church to be spiritual; others say they believe in Jesus, but not the church. Would Jesus have agreed with such people? He seemed to have emphasized that people worship in relationship to each other, teaching that he is where as few as two or three people are gathered in his name. (Matthew 18:20). He evidently wanted people to participate in the church that he lived, died and resurrected to establish.

We need the church because we cannot follow Jesus by ourselves. The most basic spiritual disciples require us to be in relationship with each other. The command to love God and our neighbors calls us to define our neighbor as the person who sits in the pew next to us. Also, our prayer that God will forgive us as we have forgiven other people assumes that we are in relationships of forgiveness.

As I reflect on the calling of the church to be a worshipping community, a community of people who are characterized by love and forgiveness, I realize that we have fallen short in many ways. We have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), but we are bonded by grace, not perfection.

My prayer is we exercise the expressions of love and grace that are necessary for us to be a worshipping community.

I hope to see you on Sunday morning.

Why Read the Bible?

Bruce Bradshaw

A few years ago, I read *The Harlot by the Side of the Road*, a book about the Bible. Its author, Jonathan Kirsch, wrote the book because he wanted his children to know the Bible, but he was embarrassed by some of the stories in it. He stopped reading it after Genesis 38, which records the story of Judah and Tamar.

The first chapter of Kirsch's book warns its readers that the Bible is "the most violent and sexually explicit in all of Western literature. They are tales of human passion in all of its infinite variety: adultery, seduction, incest, rape, mutilation, assassination, torture, sacrifice and murder." He was probably exaggerating, but his frustration is understandable.

The Bible is about God who loves real people in real places. It does not always portray its characters as virtuous---it is honest about their moral failings, but their moral failings are not the end of the story. The end of the story, which we are still anticipating, is that God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. When we read the moral failings of people, which the Bible is blatantly honest about, we can realize the love of God.

The Bible has drawn people for thousands of years: it is exciting to read. We, at ASUMC, are forming groups to read it. Right now, we have three groups, which meet Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturday mornings. If Jonathan Kirsch lived in southern New Hampshire, I would invite him to be part of a group. However, you can take his place.

Call me at 603-546-8294 to learn which group is best suited for you.



Bible Study Opportunities

Tuesdays, 7:00pm, Fellowship Hall. This group is studying Amos and the Old Testament prophets.

Wednesdays, 7:00 PM, Men's Faith Exploration Group, Parsonage. The Men's Group is studying Luke.

Saturdays, 8:30am, Parsonage. Reading the New Testament.

Resolution Time

Over the years, Jan and I have learned to avoid our health club during January. Why? Because at that time the clubs are crowded with people of good intentions trying to fulfill their New Year's resolutions. By February it is safe to return. What is our New Year's resolution for ASUMC? Will we let it die after a few months? I suppose the list could be quite long, but I'd like to suggest that one resolution should be to fulfill our mission as a church that "does its part" to nurture and promote the growth of Christianity locally, regionally and globally. The New England Conference is designed to help us do that, but we must support it.

2011 was a turnaround year, both spiritually and financially. I am tempted to tell you that we "ended up" with 33 Estimates of Giving for a total of \$60,420, (which is wonderful) but it is not an "end" – it is a beginning. Our receipts through the first 3 Sundays of January (the "beginning" month of 2012) still lag what the General Fund needs to meet budget. We need to make sure that 2012 is a "going forward" year. One way that we can do this is to think of stewardship as a continuous process, not an event or campaign that has a beginning and end. I believe that ensuring that stewardship, in all its forms, continues is a good 2012 resolution for ASUMC. I hope you agree.

On January 5 the Finance Committee presented its proposed budget for 2012 at the Administrative Council meeting. The 2012 budget is \$120,399 – down 1% from the 2011 budget of \$121,614. The budget was approved as submitted and now our work is to ensure that we can meet that plan. As I outlined in a previous letter, a significant portion (37%) of the budget is our support to Conference. The Finance Committee members often struggle with decisions as to how we best allocate the available monies in the General Fund, but with your help and prayers, we will succeed. The folks on this committee endeavor to make decisions that further the church's mission and promote our collective spiritual growth.

Thanks to everyone for your commitment to Arlington Street United Methodist Church!

Respectfully,

Bob Larmouth for the Finance Committee

Choir Rehearsals

The following are the planned Wednesday night rehearsals. Rehearsal begins at 6:45 pm and continues for an hour or so.

February 15, 29 (3rd & 5th Weds as 2/22 is Ash Wednesday),

March 14, 28

April 11, 25

May 9, 23

Schedule is subject to change as needed. In the event that a rehearsal needs to be cancelled due to severe weather, the usual plan will be that the remaining schedule will not change, unless the rehearsal was critical for some reason.

Tony Schaffer , Music Director

Mission Interpreter of the United Methodist Church to visit ASUMC!

Bruce Bradshaw

Do you ever wonder what becomes of the money that we invest in our mission shares? If so, save this date-February 12, 2012; Dan Randall will preach on the missions of the UMC and then answer your questions after the service. This question and answer forum will include a light meal and refreshments.

Dan is a missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church, currently serving as the mission interpreter in residence for the Northeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church in the United States. Dan's previous missionary assignment was as a youth/young adult coordinator with the Latvia United Methodist Church in Riga, Latvia.

We are privileged to have Dan visit us; please make every effort to attend.



Poems

by Arlene Marshall Geer

As copied from "*Not a Mite Would I Withhold*",
Original Poems compiled for the benefit of the ministry
Of The Salvation Army

Morning Prayer

Dear Father, as I start this day
Help me not forget to pray,
To thank You for my night of rest,
Through this day to give You my best
I would be helpful, kind, and true,
Seeking Your guidance all day through;
As I go about my work today
Please hold my hand—show me the Way.
Amen.



Evening Prayer

Draw near, dear God, fill my heart;
Bring me Your comfort and peace.
I'm thankful for my blessings;
From my sins I seek release.
I've been busy all day, Lord,
But I've tried to walk with You.
I've left many things undone,
But I've tried my best to do.
You know each interruption
And You know every mistake;
I don't see half my faults, Lord,
But those I see make me shake!
Lord, I give You my troubles;
Rid my thoughts of pettiness;
I praise You for Your patient love;
Forgive my unworthiness. Amen

Sunday School News



The Sunday School children (ages 3 to grade 5) continue to study the Old Testament stories in Genesis chapters 33 to 46. Jacob and Esau have been reunited, Joseph gets his coat and has dreams, Joseph is sold into slavery, Joseph is in Egypt working with the King, and Joseph is able to save his family during the famine. Please ask the children about these stories as they know them very well.

The middle and high school youth will study the book, *God's Story, Our Story* and discuss these questions, What's really going on in the Bible?, Why is the church so important to God?, and many others during the winter semester. The book puts readers in touch with two stories that Christians are constantly hearing and telling. First, there is the Bible's story of how God has been working in human history to restore us- and all of creation-to wholeness.

The center of this story is Jesus Christ who lived, died, rose, and still lives-for us. The second story involves our own lives today. How do we connect with God's story? Where is God working today in our lives? What will we do with Jesus' invitation to follow him?

Sunday School is from 9:30-10:30am.

Worship Volunteers for February & March

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Liturgist</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Communion Steward</u>
February 5	Bob Larmouth	James Davis & Roger Gaskill	Sue Viens
12	Debbie Sherwood	Eric Thompson & Matt Erickson	
19	Sue Viens	Charlie Dutton & Roger Gaskill	
26	Bob Larmouth	Debbe Smith & Nancy Stafford	
March 4	Heather Davis	Matt Erickson & Charlie Dutton	Sue Labrie
11	Sue Viens	James Davis & Scott Roystan	
18	Debbie Sherwood	Debbe Smith & Nancy Stafford	
25	Bob Larmouth	Eric Thompson & Roger Gaskill	

Hosts for Coffee Hour: February– Board of Trustees, March– Commission on Missions

If you are unable to volunteer at the scheduled time, please contact another to substitute for you and let Kelley know. Thank you!

2012 PUBLIC SUPPER SCHEDULE

SATURDAYS
4:30 PM – 6:30 PM

FEBRUARY 18

ROAST PORK

Potato, carrots, green beans, applesauce

MARCH 17

CORNED BEEF & CABBAGE

Boiled potato, turnip, carrots

APRIL 21

(To be determined)

MAY 19

ROAST BEEF

Mashed potato, carrots, string beans

SEPTEMBER 15

ROAST BEEF

Mashed potato, carrots, string beans

OCTOBER 20

CORNED BEEF & CABBAGE

Boiled potato, turnip, carrots

NOVEMBER 17

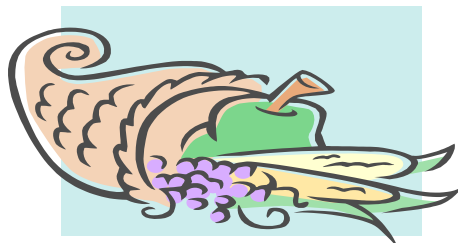
ROAST PORK

Potato, carrots, green beans, applesauce

SERVED FAMILY STYLE

All suppers include bread, coffee/tea/milk/water and dessert.

Adults \$10, Seniors \$9, Children \$6, Under 5 free





Ash Wednesday, February 22

This year's Ash Wednesday service will be held at ASUMC with Main St. UMC. Pastor Bruce Bradshaw and Pastor David Svenson will be officiating. Both choirs will be performing together. This service will begin at 7:00pm.

Thank you to Carolyn Fluke and her nephew, Hugh Mercer & family, for donating the battery-operated candles for the Christmas Eve service.



Thank you to Tony Schaffer, Heather Davis and everyone who helped with the children's performance in December. Thank you to the children for doing such a wonderful job.

Christmas Poinsettias

Wayne Barron	In memory of Don and Lena Barron
John & Kim Bull	In memory of Thomas Keller
Kim Bull	In memory of Aunt Mickey
Moe & Sharon Cloutier	In memory of Loved Ones
Heather & James Davis	In memory of Bud and Edna Drudy
John Fernandez	In memory of Bruce, Ernie, Jr., Angie
Carolyn Fluke	In memory of Roy Fluke
	In memory of Loved Ones
Roger Gaskill	In memory of Sylvia
Judy Geer and Family	In memory of Loved Ones
Velma Hendrick	In memory of Paul Hendrick
The Larmouth Family	In memory of Stanley & Stella Zawatski
	In memory of Robert & Minnie Larmouth
Nathan Plummer	In memory of Celene Philips
	in memory of Jean Plummer
The Schaffer Family	In memory of Anna Olen
The Stafford Family	In memory of Mr. & Mrs. Harry Stafford
	In memory of Mr. & Mrs. Alvin Miller
Sue Viens & Debbe Smith	In memory of Maurice & Theodora French
Lorna Stickney	In memory of Olive Dutton
	In memory of Patrick and Paul Larocque
	In memory of Nancy Ferdinand
William and Shirley Tipping	In memory of Our Parents
Children, Grandchildren &	In memory of Ethel Tipping
Great Grandchildren of	Ethel Tipping
The Tipping Children	In memory of Hobart Tipping

January Birthdays

- 1- Samantha Jean
- 2- Debbe Smith
Sue Viens
- 9- Brenda Gaskill Vincent
Adam Caron
- 10- Velma Hendrick
James Graichen
- 23- Emily Schaffer
- 24- LeeAnn McEvoy Burke
- 25- Scott Roystan
- 26- McKensie Newell
- 30- Sara Roberts
Kim Smith Muise
Lia Brouilliard
- 31- Leeanne Roystan

February Birthdays

- 18- Shirley Tipping
- 19- Jim Wilkins
- 21- Ryan Sherwood
- 28- Nila Proko

January Anniversaries

- 11- Patti & Tony Schaffer
- 12- Sandy & Dick Netto
- 14- Kim & Steve Gontarz

February Anniversaries

- 18- Diane & Moe Renaud

If you would like to be included in the birthday & anniversary list, please contact the church office.

Apologies for the omission of Rick Sherwood's birthday on December 14.

Happy Belated Birthday Rick!



Those who need our Prayer

Those who are homebound or in care facilities: Arlene Geer, Ruth Coronis, Don Thompson, Alma Porter, Irene Belowski

Please notify the Pastor if anyone has been hospitalized or is in need of a pastoral visit.

Volunteers needed at the Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter

On the 4th Friday of each month from 3:45-6:30pm.
2 to 3 volunteers needed to serve meals and pour drinks.
Youth are able to volunteer if at least 12 years old.

Additional information can be found at

<http://www.nsk.org/>

Donations needed

*If God is calling you to serve in this capacity,
please contact Heather Davis at 603-429-0496.*

February 2012

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

			1	2	3	4 D.O.W. 10:00AM, AA 7:00PM
5 Choir Rehearsal 9:9:30AM Sunday School 9:30, Worship 10:00AM	6 Finance Committee meeting 7:00PM	7	8	9 Staff Parish Relations Committee 7:00PM	10	11 D.O.W. 10:00AM, D.O.W.4:30- 6:30 (Fellowship Hall) AA 7:00PM
12 UMM Breakfast 8am, Choir Rehearsal 9:9:30AM Sunday School 9:30, Worship 10:00AM	13 Quester's 7:30pm	14	15 Choir Rehearsal 6:45-7:45	16	17	18 Roast Pork Supper 4:30- 6:30pm D.O.W. 10:00AM, AA 7:00PM
19 Choir Rehearsal 9- 9:30AM Sunday School 9:30, Worship 10:00AM, Coffee Hour	20	21	22 Ash Wednes- day Service at ASUMC 7:00PM	23	24	25 D.O.W. 10:00AM, AA 7:00PM
26 Choir Rehearsal 9:9:30AM Sunday School 9:30, Worship 10:00AM	27	28	29 Choir Rehearsal 6:45-7:45			

Supper Hours 4:30-6:30pm
Saturday, March 17
Corned Beef & Cabbage Supper

Roast Pork Supper
Saturday, February 18

Ash Wednesday Service
at ASUMC
February 22 at 7:00pm



FEBRUARY 2012

Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT
PERMIT # 495
U.S. POSTAGE PAID

ARLINGTON ST. UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
63 ARLINGTON STREET
NASHUA, NH 03060
REV BRUCE BRADSHAW, PASTOR.
REV. EDWARD BROWN III, PASTOR EMERITUS.