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Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.
(Joel 2:12-13)

Dear Friends,

It is with these words from Scripture that we begin the Lenten season, starting with Ash Wednesday. It seems to me that over the years we have lost touch with the spiritual significance of Lent in our liturgical year. Perhaps that is because in many Protestant religions we do not observe the season of Lent, as well as we might. The reason for this is that historically it was associated with "high church" liturgical worship that our forbearers rejected. However, we see that many churches today are engaging in worship

services, such as Ash Wednesday, as a means to deepen their spirituality in a culture that is becoming more secular each day.

We all know that Lent is a forty day period which begins on Ash Wednesday and climaxes during holy week with Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the concluding Saturday before Easter. Today Lent is marked by a time of prayer and preparation to celebrate Easter. For some this may include fasting or denial of chocolate or some other precious commodity, pertinence for one's sins, and works of charity.

Originating in the fourth century of the Christian Church, the season of Lent was a time of preparation for those who were to be baptized. It was a time of concentrated study and prayer before their baptism at the Easter vigil. Given that these new members were to be received into a living community of faith, the entire community was called to pre-

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On the Website

Have you checked out the website lately? There's a button labeled "Links" with enough connections to keep you entertained forever - links for spiritual enrichment, links to PBS specials and magazines such as Sojourner, and all the Bible resources you could imagine. Read the sermons you missed, or send on to a friend. And the calendar is available long before your newsletter may arrive, a great convenience when the bulk mail delivery is slow.

Upcoming Dates

March 09						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

March

1 Sunday

9:30 Choir Rehearsal
11:00 Worship - Rev. Rose
Carvelli Coffee Group

4 Wednesday

10:00 AM - 11:30 AM Knit and
Crochet for the Homeless

April 09						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

8 Sunday

Sandwiches for Outdoor Church
9:30 Choir Rehearsal
11:00 Worship - Rev. Rose
Beyer/Harm/Ack Coffee Group
Daylight Savings--set ahead 1 hour

10 Tuesday

ElderSpirit: coffee at 10:30, presentation at 11:00

May 09						
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

11 Wednesday

10:00 AM - 11:30 AM Knit and
Crochet for the Homeless

15 Sunday

9:30 Choir Rehearsal
11:00 Worship - Rev. O'Brien
Ramsay/Parsons Coffee Group

16 Monday

Newsletter Deadline

June 09						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

17 Tuesday

St. Patrick's

18 Wednesday

10:00 AM - 11:30 AM Knit and
Crochet for the Homeless

19 Thursday

7:00 PM Trustees
7:30 PM Executive Council

21 Saturday

Pizza and Movie Night. Pizza at 6:00; Movie at 6:30

22 Sunday

9:30 Choir Rehearsal
Diaconate 9:30
11:00 Worship - Rev. Rose
Addison Coffee Group

July 09						
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August 09						
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30	31					

24 Tuesday

ElderSpirit: coffee at 10:30, presentation at 11:00

March

25 Wednesday

10:00 AM - 11:30 AM Knit and
Crochet for the Homeless

29 Sunday

9:30 Choir Rehearsal
11:00 Worship - Thomas Hathaway

April

1 Wednesday

10:00 AM - 11:30 AM Knit and
Crochet for the Homeless
April Fools Day

5 Sunday

9:30 Choir Rehearsal
11:00 Worship - Rev. O'Brien
Carvelli Coffee Group
Palm Sunday

8 Wednesday

10:00 AM - 11:30 AM Knit and
Crochet for the Homeless

9 Thursday

Maundy Thursday

10 Friday

Good Friday

12 Sunday

Sandwiches for Outdoor Church
9:30 Choir Rehearsal
11:00 Worship - Rev. Rose
Beyer/Harm/Ack Coffee Group
Easter

14 Tuesday

ElderSpirit: coffee at 10:30, presentation at 11:00

15 Wednesday

10:00 AM - 11:30 AM Knit and
Crochet for the Homeless

16 Thursday

7:00 PM Trustees
7:30 PM Executive Council
7:45 PM Finance Committee Quarterly Meeting

18 Saturday

Pizza and Movie Night. Pizza at 6:00; Movie at 6:30

19 Sunday

9:30 Choir Rehearsal
11:00 Worship - Laity Sunday

September 09						
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October 09						
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November 09						
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December 09						
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January 10						
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30	31					

February 10						
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

ElderSpirit

March 10 ~ *American Indian Songs and Stories* presented by Jerry “Yellow Turtle” Rockwood and Wende Weinstein.



March 24 ~ *One Humanity: A Symphony of Religious Voices*, by Rev. Dudley Rose.



Upcoming Worship Music

March 22 - Scarlatti's *Salve Regina in c minor*.

April 9 - Maundy Thursday: Arvo Pärt's *Littlemore Tractus* and *Da Pacem*

April 12 - Easter Sunday: Music for Trumpet, Organ and Choir.

Huntinton Chamber Singers and Guests

May 17 - Bluegrass Sunday: Amy Black and the Red Clay Rascals (formerly Goodtime Charlies).

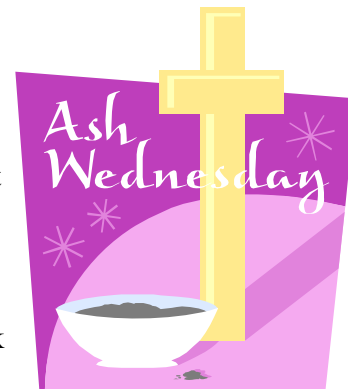
Ash Wednesday Observed with Worship and Supper



The first day of Lent will be observed at NPU with a 5:30 worship service, followed by a soup and sandwich supper at 6:00. This format was the result of polling which took place at coffee hour several Sundays, and aims to accommodate the greatest number of people. If those who show up are interested, there may be more such events. Most people will receive this announcement after Ash Wednesday, but it will be seen by those who read the newsletter online, and was, naturally, announced in church several weeks.

(Continued from page 1)

pare for this event. It was also a time when those who had been separated from the church would prepare themselves to rejoin their community. While ashes are mentioned in the Hebrew scripture as symbols of penitence and humbleness, the ancient ceremony of the imposition of ashes from which Ash Wednesday gets his name was actually a service which originated in Gaul in the sixth century and was at first only for public penitence for serious sinful acts. At the time the clergy tried to comfort and encourage by submitting themselves to the same public humiliation. (Book of worship, United Church of Christ)



Perhaps it is time to look more deeply into our Lenten practices rather than focusing on the joy of Easter which of course is more appealing. We enjoy the celebration of Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. These are happy and hopeful times. We have palm branches carried by happy children, Easter flowers and the expectation of spring. But, if we only focus on these high points it becomes too easy to treat our faith as a panacea for all our ills rather than a journey with God. This promotes a cheap grace, which neither feeds us, nor deepens our relationship with God.

Lent gives us the opportunity to walk with Jesus through the darkness of Good Friday on a journey that begins on Ash Wednesday. Lent does not occur only during our Tenebrae service, but is a forty day journey with God. It is a time in which we may humble ourselves before God, stripped of all our pretenses and self-righteousness. Through the confession of our sins, and atonement for our sins we seek to open ourselves up before God. In doing so, we may be renewed and opened to hear God's call to us. During Lent we have the opportunity to abandon ourselves in Jesus and to allow the transforming grace of God to once again work within us.

Lent offers us all a very special opportunity to grow in our relationship with God and to deepen our commitment to a way of life, rooted in our baptism. In our busy world, Lent provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon our patterns, to pray more deeply, experience sorrow for what we've done and failed to do, and to be generous to those in need. It is a journey that begins in ashes. It moves through darkness and brings us into the light. It is only after the long journey that we are resurrected into new life with Jesus to once again go forth renewed and able to respond to God's presence in our lives and in our world.

Grace and peace,



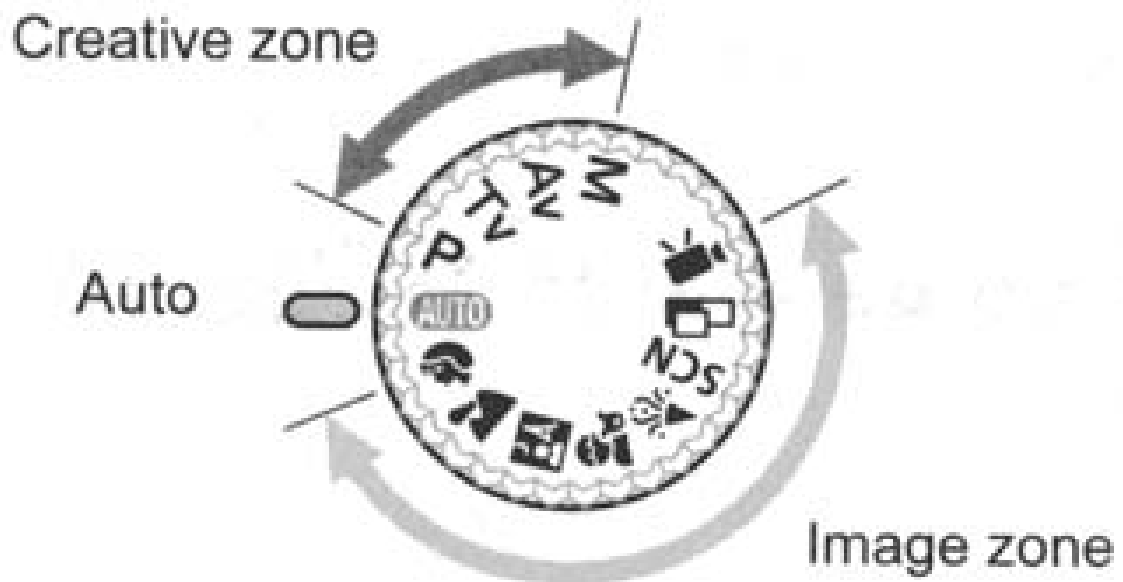
Moms' Drop-In Group

The sounds of children playing and moms in conversation are now part of the church environment on Thursday mornings, as NPU has become the winter gathering place for those women who would meet on the sidewalk with their strollers and chat about kids. Our being able to facilitate the networking of these neighbors helps raise our profile while we serve the community.

Dudley's Photography Corner

This month we're going to begin a series that goes back to the basics of operating your digital camera. Even the simplest point-and-shoot cameras today have a seemingly endless array of settings, dials, and menus. Thankfully, you can just set the dial to 'Auto' and get pretty good pictures. But the truth is, with a little bit of understanding and not much effort today's compact digital cameras will help make your pictures even better.

We'll start with the dial that sits on the top of most cameras. The one pictured below is from a Canon A series camera, but most cameras should look pretty similar. This month we'll look at Auto and the two symbols (the head and the mountains and cloud) just below Auto.



Auto is just like it sounds. At this setting, the camera makes its best guess at all settings for the camera. It assumes an average subject or scene.

Moving counterclockwise, the symbol of a head is for **portraits**. It gives a soft effect. It also tries to blur the background a bit, which isolates the subject and gives a more satisfying picture.

The next symbol is meant to convey mountains and clouds and denotes the **landscape** setting. This works nearly the opposite of the portrait mode. Where in portraits you want the subject sharp and the rest slightly out of focus, in a landscape shot you want everything in as sharp focus as possible. One caution with landscape is that it will produce a slower shutter speed, so you may need a tripod or will at least want to be sure to hold the camera especially steady. A later column will explain why the shutter speed is slower in landscape mode.

Next month we'll continue the other 'image zone' modes. In future months we'll look at creative modes, and also at menu settings. By taking a little at a time, you will become familiar with that confusing array of settings on your camera, and your photography will be just that much more fun.

The Rev. Marjorie A. Scott 1948-2009



Former North-Prospect Church Associate Minister Marjorie Ann Scott has died. After struggling with chronic health problems for most of her adult life, she declined in December and January and died at the age of 61 on January 28, 2009.

On Saturday, February 7 friends from many different spheres of Marjorie's life gathered at Church of the Covenant in Boston for a memorial service filled with Marjorie's favorite gospel hymns. Those of us who knew Marjorie only in her later years at North-Prospect were treated to funny and poignant anecdotes of her earlier years in Boston, years of scholarship, community organizing, and activism. A photo collage included pictures of a small girl with enormous brown eyes, and a tall, confident, energetic and striking young woman.

We learned that after her 1979 graduation from Andover Newton Theology School, Marjorie worked doing pastoral care and counseling through the Boston City Mission Society, Boston Aging Concerns, Elizabeth Stone House and the Boston Medical Center. She also completed all of the course work for a Ph.D. in social ethics at Boston University. Marjorie was ordained as a UCC pastor at the Church of the Covenant in 1989.

Marjorie came to North-Prospect in 2004. The North-Prospect Christian Education committee had for years had the goal of hiring an associate minister whose primary focus would be the Sunday school. Just a few months before, the committee had decided to broaden the search, seeking a Christian education coordinator who was not necessarily a minister. We met over dinner with one candidate, who thought the position was not a good fit for her but who had a friend who might be interested. That friend was Marjorie, and ironically she was of course already an ordained UCC minister.

Marjorie proceeded to transform the Sunday school space, laying in a huge supply of enticing craft supplies and decorations from many cultures. Her commitment to diversity education revealed itself in the many books, posters and photos she purchased and also brought from home.

The children thrived under the loving attention she lavished on them. They knew that when she was with them, Marjorie was exactly where she wanted to be, loving them and striving to show them the immensity and variety of the world, and their place in it as responsible people and loving Christians.

When Marjorie came to us she used a walker to get around outside, and just a cane indoors. After a year the cane disappeared and the walker became a fixture. A year later, she moved to her formidable electric wheelchair and began to need supplemental oxygen. Marjorie worried about the effect of these changes on the Sunday school children. Would it upset them to see her in a wheel chair with oxygen tubes? We discussed this at length at a Christian Ed committee meeting. The committee agreed unanimously that as long as Marjorie felt up to continuing her work with the Sunday school, that she should do so. Her example would itself teach the children important lessons: that people in wheelchairs are people like everyone else, that a teacher in a wheelchair commands authority and respect, and most importantly, that if a person has enough determination, a wheelchair is no kind of obstacle, merely a hindrance.

Examples of this last lesson abound: Marjorie picnicking on the river bank during the Head of the Charles Regatta, powering through the rain and snow to church staff meetings, and powering home down Mass Ave on a cold, starry Christmas Eve night after the candlelight service at North-Prospect. Marjorie later told people that crossing the BU bridge that night, seeing the Boston skyline and feeling the world holding its breath for Christmas morning, was an experience she would not have missed for anything.

Despite her abundant determination and stubbornness, Marjorie eventually had to make concessions to her failing strength. She sadly resigned her position as North-Prospect's Associate Minister in 2006. She continued to worship at North-Prospect when her strength and the weather permitted, and she also worshiped at her beloved Church of the Covenant, a much easier commute from her home.

In 2005 Marjorie wrote, "The Colors of Change" for the children of North-Prospect. In April of 2006 during a worship service, she read the book aloud to the entire congregation including the Sunday school, and presented each child with a copy. The book concluded with a blessing for the children.

May you have many, many happy days. And may God make you strong for the sad days. And may the ever-changing colors in you and in our great big world always make you smile and keep you wondering.



Joys & Concerns

Two members of our faith community have experienced family deaths in the past month. Bill Bartsch's cousin and close friend Charles passed away in January, and Sandy and Bill Dunphy lost his sister in early February. Another Dunphy sister was critically ill but is recovering. Sally Addison and Margaret Ackerman are back to their activities after being house-bound for many weeks, and John Micco is back at his post as Sunday morning greeter following two months of recovery from surgery. Betty Rockwood was hospitalized in February, and is recovering at home, and Dot Clausen is back at Wingate after a short hospital stay.

Movie & Pizza Night

The movie for March is *Renaissance Man*, a feel-good comedy starring Danny DeVito and directed by Penny Marshall. He's an out-of-work ad exec trying to teach remedial English to a group of Army recruits. The movie is funny and charming and inspiring.



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The Good News ~ March 2009

