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Dear Friends,

Traditionally Lent has been a season of prayer, penitence, almsgiving and self-denial in preparation for Holy Week and Easter. Like most Christian celebrations, though, it has earlier origins. Many speculate that a season of eating less was built into ancient agricultural societies. In spring, as the food stored from last fall's harvest began to dwindle or spoil and this years early summer crops were still a ways off, there was a period of forced fasting. My farming grandparents experienced this cycle well into the twentieth century, and I'm sure some your families remember such times, too.

More recently most of us have been fortunate enough to have food, even fresh food, available all year long. Any Lenten scarcity we have practiced has been self-imposed. And it has generally been thought of as self-denial.

I would like to call us back, however, to the even deeper meaning of the agricultural cycle. On the farm one was intimately connected with one's food. In order to eat one planted and hoed, harvested and stored. If you didn't do it, you didn't eat. And even if you did it right, floods and droughts, insects and disease could always foil your best efforts. I remember my mother telling us of one year that all they had to eat were beans. The rest of the crops had failed. Before refrigeration even in a good year it was almost impossible to make things last until the next harvest, especially in climates like ours here in the northeast.

So, it was harsh. But what can easily escape our attention was just how clear one's connection was to what one had to eat. There was a much more immediate sense of the interrelatedness of things -- rain and sun, the work of plowing and weeding, picking and shelling the peas. But there was more. You

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Laity Sunday

Do you feel called to lead worship? Maybe you want to experience it from the chancel rather than the pew. Laity Sunday, which this year will be the Sunday following Easter, April 19, presents just that opportunity. David McGill is preaching, and all the other parts are available. Someone will write an invocation and read it, someone else the call for the offering. There are parts that require writing and some just reading, with a little ad-libbing, like the joys and concerns. How will you share your gifts? Sign up with Corey O'Brien.

Upcoming Dates

April 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		

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

7:00 PM 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, presen-
tation 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 Quar-
terly 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
Ramsay/Parsons Coffee Group

20 Monday

Newsletter Deadline

22 Wednesday

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

April

26 Sunday

9:30 Choir Rehearsal
Diaconate 9:30
11:00 Worship - Thomas Hathaway
Addison Coffee Group

28 Tuesday

ElderSpirit: coffee at 10:30, presen-
tation at 11:00

29 Wednesday

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

May

3 Sunday

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

5 Tuesday

Cinco de Mayo

6 Wednesday

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

10 Sunday

Mother's Day
Sandwiches for Outdoor Church
9:00 Women's Communion
9:45 Breakfast for the Women
11:00 Worship - Rev. Rose
Beyer/Harm/Ack Coffee Group

12 Tuesday

ElderSpirit: coffee at 10:30, presen-
tation at 11:00

13 Wednesday

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

16 Saturday

Armed Forces Day
*Pizza and Movie Night. Pizza at
6:00; Movie at 6:30*

17 Sunday

9:30 Choir Rehearsal
Annual Meeting, 10:00
11:00 Worship - Rev. O'Brien
Bluegrass Service
Ramsay/Parsons Coffee Group

18 Monday

Newsletter Deadline

October 09

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November 09

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29	30					

December 09

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May 09

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31						

June 09

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July 09

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August 09

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September 09

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January 10

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31						

February 10

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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

March 10

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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Maundy Thursday Music

North Prospect Union continues its tradition this year of music for Maundy Thursday. In the past we have performed Pergolesi's Stabat Mater, Bach's Cantata 159, and Walford-Davies' World War I Requiem. This year we have prepared two contrasting works by the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt and the early Roman school composer Gregorio Allegri. The Littlemore Tractus is a short, prayerful work whose central message is peace. Allegri's setting of "Misere Mei, Deus," one of the most treasured pieces of sacred music and shrouded in its mysterious roots still carries its vision of mercy to listeners today. These works will be performed by members of the Huntington Chamber Singers under the direction of Bryce Sady, Director of Music.

Arvo Pärt, born in 1935 in Estonia, has established himself as one of the most important composers of our time. Known primarily for his minimalism and the hypnotic use of repetitious tintinnabulation, the majority of his choral oeuvre is settings of sacred texts. The Littlemore Tractus (2000) derives from the final prayer of John Henry Newman's (1801-1890) sermon, "Wisdom and Innocence," on Matthew x. 16. The work is structured around a deliberate exposition of the text by the choir. The organ provides continuous movement as if a pealing bell, while the pedal establishes a lead-tone foundation around which the choir builds its chords. Pärt chooses contemplative e minor as the key, but fleeting accidentals in the organ suggest the peaceful, restive key of e major. The choir adds voice and volume until it reaches the anvil-like unfolding of the text "and our work is done!" A change of key and registration in the organ dispenses the miraculous words, "then in his mercy." The final phrase, "and peace at the last," is disturbed by dissonance in the alto, which is resolved only momentarily by a G-sharp on the organ. Although the clouds part and there is a vision of mercy and the final rest, Pärt himself gives no resolution at the end: our work is not yet over.

The original work was of such austere beauty that the Vatican specifically forbade any copies or other performances of it, adding to its mystery. In 1771, Mozart, at the age of 14, while attending Holy Week services at the Sistine chapel, created a "bootleg" copy by ear of the work.

Gregorio Allegri (1582-1652) was director of music at the Sistine chapel in Rome under Pope Urban II. In contrast to many early Baroque composers of his time, Allegri exuded a particular simplicity carefully guarded by the Sistine authorities. His most well-known work is a setting of Psalm 50 for Holy Week, "Miserere Mei, Deus." It is designed for two choirs singing antiphonally, with every third verse intoned by chanters. The original work was of such austere beauty, however, that the Vatican specifically forbade any copies or other performances of it, adding to its mystery. In 1771, Mozart, at the age of 14, while attending Holy Week services at the Sistine chapel, created a "bootleg" copy by ear of the work. The music historian Charles Burney obtained Mozart's manuscript and published it in England, safe from the Vatican authority. Eager to recreate the original performance, a copyist in the 1880s studying manuscripts of the work as well as Burney's published version made an error in transcribing parts. Although hardly in the style of Allegri or appropriate to his era, the effect of this "mistake" is magical, and has propagated through performance practice to the present.

ElderSpirit

ElderSpirit continues to meet the second and fourth Tuesday of the month, with coffee and socializing at 10:30 and programming at 11:00, followed by a light lunch. Upcoming speakers include Kate Eshelman, Penny Light, Don Polley and someone from Mass. Audubon Society. Check the website or call the office for the exact schedule.

(Continued from page 1)

spread the manure on the land, because it made the crops grow stronger. You knew that potatoes did best on “new ground” and that if you raised corn in an area one year, you needed to grow peas there the next. If a late spring frost was in the air, you covered your tender seedlings. You planted your orchards on an east facing hillside because the air moved and helped keep the frost from the fruit blossoms. And you knew about the guy in the next county who had a new variety of corn seed for which you could trade some maple syrup. When you farmed in the old days, you couldn’t help but realize how deep was your dependence on a multitude of things and beings near and far. Never was that more evident than when the stores began to run low in the late winter.



Ironically, today our dependence on other things and beings is more than ever. It’s just that we don’t have to pay very much attention to it. Today the things we eat come to us from a huge and interconnected web of people, places and materials. The point is quite simple. We do not and cannot exist alone. We can’t now, and we’ve never been able to. Maybe, then, an important aspect of our Lenten period is the opportunity to reflect about our necessary interrelatedness with almost every element of creation.

So, here is a Lenten practice you might find interesting and helpful – a guided meditation on our inter-connectedness. It shouldn’t take more than fifteen minutes, and you could do it daily or at whatever frequency that you like. Simply sit comfortably in a quiet place, so you won’t be distracted. Below you will find the words of the guided meditation. Say each statement and then sit for a time in silence. Even better, you will find an MP3 on the website (just like the sermons) that has the words with intervals of silence. That way you can just sit, meditate and listen.

- Dear God, I am truly connected to everything in your creation, your creation which you made out of love.
- I think of the food I have eaten today. Someone planted the seed in the soil. I am connected to that person.
- Someone tilled and weeded, watered and harvested. I am connected to that person.
- Someone trucked it from the farm. I am connected to that person.
- Someone inspected and packaged it. I am connected to that person.
- Someone placed it on the shelf to buy. I am connected to that person.
- Someone cooked it. I am connected to that person.
- Someone made the pans in which it was cooked. I am connected to that person.
- Someone mined the ore that made the pans. I am connected to that person.
- Someone made the plates on which it was served. I am connected to that person.
- Someone dug the clay for the plates. I am connected to that person.
- Someone made the tools that mined the ore and dug the clay and tilled the ground and transported the food. I am connected to that person.
- Many little beings, bugs and bacteria, worked the soil, converted the nutrients and pollinated blossoms.

(Continued on page 5)

I am connected to those beings.

- The chemicals in the soil and the air fed the plants and let them breathe and flourish. I am connected to those elements.
- Dear God, there is nothing I can find to which I am not connected. Thank you for your creation, which you made out of love.

Blessings,

Dudley

Holy Week Services

Palm Sunday, Worship 11:00

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*Maundy Thursday Communion and Tenebrae Service, 7:00*

Huntington Chamber Singers and Guests singing Arvo Part's Littlemore Tractus and Da Pacem and Gregorio Allegri's Miserere

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Good Friday Taize Service, 7:00 at CCWM

Observe Good Friday with a contemplative labyrinth walk and Taize service. NPU and The Congregational Church of West Medford are teaming up to present a worship experience that holds at once the sorrows of the world and the glimmers of hope, the darkness of death and the expectation of resurrection. The service will be in Fellowship Hall at CCWM, 400 High Street (Rte 60). On-street parking is available and there are a few places behind the church.

Whether you feel like walking the labyrinth, reflecting in silence, or participating in the Taize chants, there is a place for you at this Good Friday service.

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*Easter Sunrise Service, 7:30*

Here in our own beautiful yard, followed by a light breakfast indoors.

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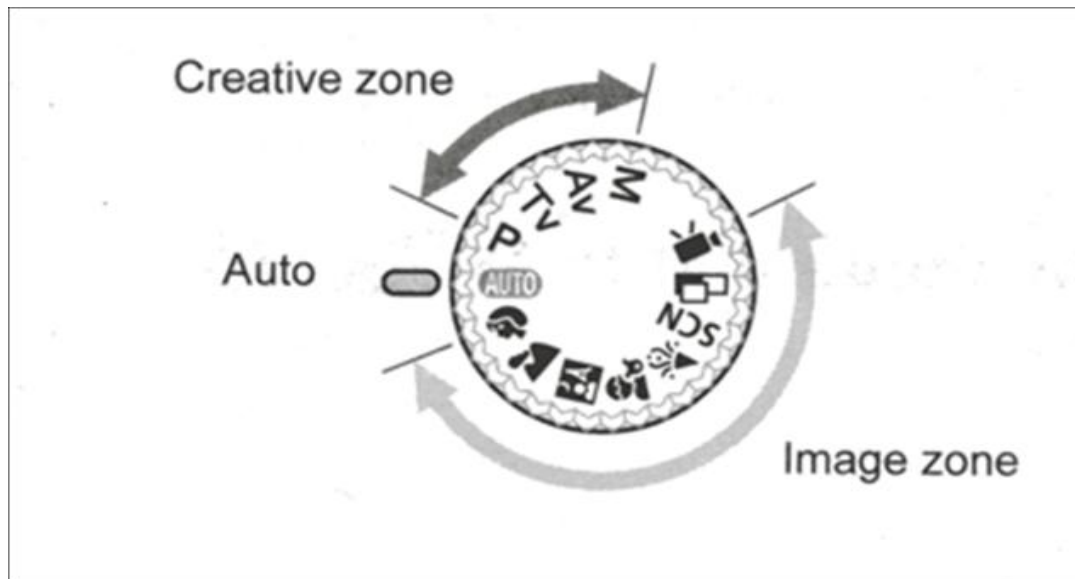
Traditional Celebration of the Resurrection. 11:00

Music for Trumpet, Organ and Choir

NPU Choir, Huntington Chamber Singer and Guests

Dudley's Photography Corner

This is the second in our series on the basic operation of your digital camera. We're looking at the dial that sits on the top of most digital cameras. Last month we looked at Auto and then portraits (the head icon) and landscape (mountain icon) in the 'image zone'. This month we'll continue around the dial. Not every camera will have all the settings, so don't worry if your camera dial doesn't look exactly the same.



The next two icons (the black square with little white objects in it and the one with three little black objects) are somewhat similar. The first one is for shooting with low light, as at twilight. The second one is for capturing kids and pets. For any scene three elements comprise the proper exposure: how long the shutter is open, how wide it is open (aperture) and how sensitive the film, or

in this case the sensor, is to light (ISA).

Low light scenes have less light available, so we need to open the shutter wide for as long as possible with the sensor's sensitivity as high as possible. But there are trade-offs. The wider the shutter is open the narrower what is called the depth of field. That is, the focus will be sharp for a narrow distance range. The longer the shutter is open, the more your shaking or the your subject's movement will cause blurring. And the more light-sensitive the sensor setting the grainier the picture will be.

So, for the low light setting, the camera tries to balance a somewhat slow shutter speed, with a somewhat wide aperture and high sensor sensitivity.

The children and pets setting has a slightly different set of challenges. Children and pets move. So the shutter speed needs to be reasonably high so they don't blur. Also, they move closer and further away without notice, so a narrow depth of field doesn't help. But if you have pretty good light, you can accommodate these issues. The camera will set a reasonably high shutter speed and a narrow aperture that will give good depth of field. It will also set a high sensor sensitivity, which combined with bright lighting will balance the conditions.

We'll take a more in-depth look at the technicalities of shutter speed, depth of field and sensor sensitivity in future columns. For now, just know that the low light setting and the children and pets setting are trying to balance these for the best exposure.

Go paperless with an email link to the newsletter! We save a bit more than half the first-class postage rate by mailing a certain number each month, but if we can shave a few names off we can save even more. Email the office if you want to read the newsletter online.

Thelma Alice Povey 1911~ 2009

Thelma A. (Magoon) Povey, 97, died on February 28. A founding member of North Street Union, Thelma filled leadership roles at church as she did in her many civic organizations. Her name isn't mentioned here at NPU without someone telling stories about her community-building and fund-raising meals and her love of music. One long-time member portrayed Thelma as the person who would take on tasks that others didn't want. Another said when the music director was not in worship, Thelma could step to the piano or organ and perform beautifully. During the memorial service, her son lovingly described her as feisty.

Although unable to attend worship for several years, she did return last year with her daughter Barbara for a tour of the renovated building (she loved it all, especially the kitchen), and communion with Rev. O'Brien who had been visiting Thelma regularly.

Thelma's daughter Barbara and her son Alan, and her many, many friends will miss her greatly.



Dorothy Evelyn Clauson 1915 ~ 2009

Lifelong church member Dorothy Clauson died on Wednesday, March 18 at age 93. She lived all her life in Cambridge and Arlington. As a young child Dot worshipped with her mother and grandmother at a Swedish Lutheran congregation in Cambridge. Dot loved to tell the story of how they came to join the UCC.

When she was seven Dot accompanied a friend to a Brownie meeting held at Prospect Church. The Brownie leader was the wife of the Prospect minister. At the end of Dot's second meeting, the leader held Dot's gaze and said she expected to see her in Sunday school the next Sunday; Dot gave her solemn promise. When she got home she told her mother she'd given her word and they had to go. And so began their 80-plus years at Prospect, North-Prospect, and North Prospect Union churches.

Dot regaled her friends with hilarious tales of her childhood, her travels, and her experiences working at the First National Bank of Boston, where she rose to become the executive secretary to the President. Her eyes sparkled with humor, keen observation, and warm generosity. We will miss Dot's bright, wry, steadfast presence.

Joys & Concerns

We miss Betty Rockwood who is still recuperating at home following her February hospitalization. (Don't forget how welcome a card or call can be to someone stuck in the house.) Also in our prayers are the sister of Wende Weinstein, who has had complications following surgery, the families and friends of our members Dot and Thelma, Kim Bears, whose uncle and godfather died this month after a long illness, and Vinny Vellucci whose uncle also passed away.

North Prospect Union UCC

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The Good News ~ April 2009

