



North Prospect Union UCC

Volume 27, Issue: December 2009

Inside this issue:

From the Senior Minister

<i>Calendar</i>	2
<i>In Care Committee</i>	3
<i>Greening of the Church</i>	3
<i>Christmas Eve</i>	3
<i>Storm Closing</i>	3
<i>ElderSpirit</i>	5
<i>Tough Questions</i>	5
<i>Food Pantry</i>	6
<i>Joys & Concerns</i>	7

Dear Friends,

When I was growing up you had to plan on reaching good old age if you wanted to be a church deacon. It was a position of high honor reserved for those who had served the church with wisdom for decades. That's why in some traditions they are called elders.

Well, by the time I began my ministry in 1983, the waiting-list had disappeared. More than a few people found themselves pressed into committee work, including the diaconate, within weeks of joining the church. In some ways it was a better circumstance; newer and younger members had more of a say and more prestige than they used to. But, in honesty, it was also a sign of the shrinking pool of people to serve.

Now, a quarter of a century later, going to committee meetings is low on the list of reasons people attend church. On the other hand, I am convinced that our congregation members are highly committed to serving the church. The dozen or more volunteers raking the yard after worship, the great pile of sandwiches that appear each month for the Outdoor Church, the fact that we ran out of tags for presents to the needy on the Giving Tree last Christmas, and many other things I could mention make it clear that we have a vibrant commitment to service.

Historically the deacons have provided much of the service in the life of the church. Indeed, the word deacon comes from the Greek word to serve. In our church the deacons greet worshippers on Sunday morning; take the offering;

(Continued on page 4)

Blue Christmas ~ December 20, 4:30



Blue Christmas is a worship service that acknowledges the difficulty many experience maintaining the expected good cheer of the holiday season. Held when the northern hemisphere is at its darkest, it offers a quiet space to reflect on losses - the losses of loved ones, of relationships, of health, of jobs. The meditative service is a lovely, peaceful way to begin a hectic week in which there are few opportunities to reflect. The ministers invite you to join them Sunday afternoon, December 20th, at 4:30.

Upcoming Events

December 09						
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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December

2 Wednesday

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet for the Homeless)

5 Saturday

10:00 AM Craft Making

6 Sunday

Manger Sunday
9:30 Choir Rehearsal
11:00 Worship - Ms Beach-Ferrara
Carvelli Coffee Group

8 Tuesday

ElderSpirit: coffee at 9:30, presentation at 10:00

9 Wednesday

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet for the Homeless)

12 Saturday

10:00 AM Craft Making

13 Sunday

Pageant Sunday
9:30 Choir Rehearsal
Sandwiches for Outdoor Church
11:00 Worship - Rev. Rose
Beyerman/Bodwell/McKeown Coffee Group
Christmas Pot-Luck & Party

16 Wednesday

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet for the Homeless)

17 Thursday

7:00 PM Trustees
7:30 PM Executive Council

19 Saturday

10:00 AM Craft Making
Pizza and Movie Night. Pizza at 6:00; Movie at 6:30

20 Sunday

9:30 Choir Rehearsal
11:00 Worship - Rev. Rose
Ramsay/Parsons/Weinstein/Kelley Coffee Group

Blue Christmas, 4:30

21 Monday

Newsletter Deadline

22 Tuesday

ElderSpirit: coffee at 9:30, presentation at 10:00

23 Wednesday

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet for the Homeless)

December

24 Thursday

Christmas Eve, 5:30

25 Friday

Christmas

26 Saturday

10:00 AM Craft Making

27 Sunday

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

30 Wednesday

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet for the Homeless)

31 Thursday

New Year's Eve

January

1 Friday

New Year's Day

2 Saturday

10:00 AM Craft Making

3 Sunday

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

6 Wednesday

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet for the Homeless)
Epiphany

9 Saturday

10:00 AM Craft Making

10 Sunday

9:30 Choir Rehearsal
Sandwiches for Outdoor Church
11:00 Worship - Rev. Rose
Beyerman/Bodwell/McKeown Coffee Group

12 Tuesday

ElderSpirit: coffee at 9:30, presentation at 10:00

13 Wednesday

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet for the Homeless)

16 Saturday

10:00 AM Craft Making
Pizza and Movie Night. Pizza at 6:00; Movie at 6:30

June 10						
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Upcoming Events

December 09						
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January

17 Sunday

9:30 Choir Rehearsal
 11:00 Worship - Rev. Rose
 MLK Sunday, Spirituals
 Ramsay/Parsons/Weinstein/Kelley
 Coffee Group

18 Monday

Martin Luther King, Jr.
 Newsletter Deadline

20 Wednesday

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet
 for the Homeless)

21 Thursday

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

23 Saturday

10:00 AM Craft Making

24 Sunday

9:30 Choir Rehearsal
 Diaconate 9:30
 11:00 Worship - Ms Beach-Ferrara
Creativity Sunday
 Addison Coffee Group

26 Tuesday

ElderSpirit: coffee at 9:30, presentation
 at 10:00

27 Wednesday

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet
 for the Homeless)

30 Saturday

10:00 AM Craft Making

31 Sunday

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

February

2 Tuesday

Groundhog Day

3 Wednesday

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet
 for the Homeless)

6 Saturday

10:00 AM Craft Making

7 Sunday

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

February

9 Tuesday

ElderSpirit: coffee at 9:30, presentation
 at 10:00

10 Wednesday

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet
 for the Homeless)

12 Friday

Lincoln's Birthday

13 Saturday

10:00 AM Craft Making

14 Sunday

9:30 Choir Rehearsal
 Sandwiches for Outdoor Church
 11:00 Worship - Rev. Rose
 Beyerman/Bodwell/McKeown Coffee
 Group
 Valentine's Day

15 Monday

Newsletter Deadline
 President's Day

17 Wednesday

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet
 for the Homeless)

18 Thursday

7:00 PM Trustees
 7:30 PM Executive Council

20 Saturday

10:00 AM Craft Making
*Pizza and Movie Night. Pizza at 6:00;
 Movie at 6:30*

21 Sunday

9:30 Choir Rehearsal
 11:00 Worship - Ms Beach-Ferrara
 Ramsay/Parsons/Weinstein/Kelley
 Coffee Group

22 Monday

Washington's Birthday

23 Tuesday

ElderSpirit: coffee at 9:30, presentation
 at 10:00

24 Wednesday

10:00 AM Knitwits (Knit and Crochet
 for the Homeless)

27 Saturday

10:00 AM Craft Making

28 Sunday

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

June 10						
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April 10						
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October 10						
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November 10						
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Committee Named for In Care Support

I am pleased to announce that Thomas Hathaway, our previous student intern and now member of our church, will begin his In Care process for ordination with North Prospect Union UCC. We have a formal committee, whose members are Shelly Scruggs, Bob Seiler, Kate Eshelman, Melissa Mitchell, Steve Bodwell and Penny Light, who will guide Tom through this important part of his pastoral formation.

The duties of the committee are to mentor and support the student through the In Care process. Tom will prepare a *Spiritual Journey and Call* paper for the committee and also submit his resume and transcript for review by the committee. The committee will then meet with Tom and discuss his *Spiritual Journey and Call* paper in the spirit of helping Tom in his discernment process. The committee will evaluate whether the church can recommend Tom for the ministry. We will then take a vote and provide in writing our findings to the Metropolitan Boston Association of the UCC. I am confident that this will be a interesting and spiritual journey for all of us.

Corey

Greening of the Church

Merri and Henri help decorate the church on the first Sunday of Advent.



Christmas Eve ~ 5:30

North Prospect Union will have its service of carols and readings on Christmas Eve. The evening is just the right blend of don't-change-a-thing traditional carols and bible readings, spiced with modern takes on the nativity from T.S. Eliot and Frederick Buechner. Buechner's description of the shepherds' experience of Jesus's birth portrays the exuberance and lunacy that must have attended a visitation by a host of angels. Somehow "Angels We Have Heard On High" sounds more right, makes more sense, when we sing it after hearing Buechner's reflections. And Eliot shows us the grinding fatigue of the journey of the magi, both their physical journey and the spiritual ground they cover. Eliot's words mingle the joy and exhaustion of the season.

And at the end of the service, we all stand holding tiny candles in the dark sanctuary singing "Silent Night." Each little flame is the spark of an individual person, the glow of all the flames together are the light of our community.

Christine Parsons

(Continued from page 1)

serve communion; assist in baptism, confirmation and membership services; take part in special services such as Christmas Eve and Maundy Thursday; and visit or send cards to members who can't get out or are ill. And that's likely missing a thing or two. They have also attended monthly Diaconate meetings at 9:30 on Sunday mornings.

In our last meeting, the deacons came up with a few hunches. First, there are many people who because of family or travel considerations would find this early meeting inconvenient. Second, some would be glad to serve, but are turned off by monthly meetings, no matter when they are held. Third, there are people who might be interested in taking some of the roles of a deacon but who wouldn't want the whole enchilada.

Based on these hunches the deacons have decided to reconfigure themselves so that more people can participate in the things the deacons do. As an initial experiment, the deacons have instituted the following:

- Diaconate meetings will be held only as necessary, and usually for no more than 30 minutes after worship when they are held.
- Congregants may elect to be specialized deacons. For example, you could be an 'offering deacon', which would mean you would sign up for and collect the offering every so often. Or you could also be a 'communion deacon' and serve communion from time to time. A 'communion deacon' would need a little training (though it's pretty easy), while an 'offering deacon' probably wouldn't. Or you could be a 'pastoral deacon' and visit or write cards. In other words, you can choose the things that you feel called to do.
- Over the next few weeks the deacons will be signing up new deacons. We sincerely hope that many of you will embrace one or more of these opportunities in the life of the church.
- On a Sunday morning after the first of the year, we will celebrate and commission this new band of "the servants of God."

Let us "serve the Lord with gladness (Psalm 102)

Blessings,

Dudley



Winter Closing Announcements

If you're wondering whether worship will be cancelled due to winter weather, just tune turn the radio to WBZ 1030AM or the TV to WBZ Channels 4 and TV38 (channel 14 on some cables).

ElderSpirit ~ December 8



The American Institute of Stress claims that up to 90% of all health problems are related to stress. Chronic stress can contribute to heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, depression and sleep disorders. In today's busy world, it's important for people to learn stress reduction and emotional management skills. So, what to do? Come to the December 8th ElderSpirit session to see how cool technology can show you how you are able to intentionally shift to a positive emotion, thereby changing your heart rhythm. This shift in heart rhythm creates a favorable effect on the entire body that is immediate and long lasting.

You will have the opportunity to practice this simple technique and see for yourself how you are able to make this shift. Each person attending will be taught how to use an emWave Personal Stress Reliever, the winner of this year's [Last Gadget Standing People's Choice Competition](#) which represents the best of the best at the Consumer Electronic Show. Coffee at 9:30, presentation by Kathleen Beyerman at 10:00.

Tough Questions

Coming soon to NPU - a chance to ask the ministers questions about all those perplexing, ambiguous or downright contradictory passages in the Bible, or any other aspect of our faith and values. The Christmas stories raise a few themselves. (*Note: the pageant on December 13 addresses some of those in an amusing and very educational way.*) Questions will be submitted beforehand, so write them down now, as they occur to you.

Movie & Pizza Night

Movies are not scheduled for December, January or February. If we get a particularly dry spell and the sidewalks are clear, that could change after the beginning of the new year.

Food Pantry at Shiloh Baptist Church

This fall, church folks decided to continue the efforts of the Sunday School kids and collect food on a weekly basis for the neighborhood food pantry. The response has been gratifying, and the people who run the pantry are very pleased. One does not need to be destitute to pick up groceries. Any resident of Medford who needs a bit of extra food during the month should call 781-483-8850 or show up the second Tuesday (6-7pm) and the third Saturday (10-11am) at Shiloh Baptist Church, Holton and Bower Streets in West Medford. From NPU, you would take Boston Ave toward Arlington, and the third right after crossing the river. Tell your neighbors. You never know who might be malnourished or hungry.



This is from a Bible puzzle website, so you know all the answers must be found in the Bible, but be aware they all aren't particularly biblical words. Directions are on the next page.

T	C	R	E	M	O		E	C	U	L	E	B
M	A	D	D	A	V		D	V	A	N	C	E
D	I	S	M	I	S		A	L	L	O	W	M
E	L	I	M	M	O		T	A	L	Y	C	E
G	W	E	A	S	E		F	O	R	T	A	L
P	L	A	M	A	R		L	E	A	S	E	D
E	L	E	G	I	O		J	E	C	T	O	R
T	E	D	R	E	B		K	E	I	N	G	K
B	E	C	O	N	D		C	T	R	I	N	E
D	R	E	S	F	A		I	L	Y	E	S	T
P	I	N	J	O	R		A	N	D	L	E	N
C	A	B	R	E	E		E	M	P	T	Y	C
A	B	D	A	D	O		T	E	N	T	I	M
S	A	T	E	A	C		R	E	F	U	L	L
C	A	R	P	E	N		E	R	S	O	N	S
R	E	N	J	O	Y		U	L	L	I	N	G
M	C	A	R	O	B		A	R	D	O	N	E
Z	V	E	N	A	P		E	A	L	O	U	S
D	A	T	H	A	T		H	O	S	E	M	N
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I	D	W	A	R	F		O	W	E	R	O	N
M	D	E	P	R	A		E	R	E	D	A	L
F	E	D	E	R	L		N	G	U	A	G	E
U	S	C	O	U	R		E	F	E	R	M	K
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W	X
Y	Z

There is **one place** for each letter of the alphabet in the **26 empty squares** in the diagram below. Fill in each letter so that **a word of at least 5 letters** is formed **reading across only**. Not all the letters in each row are used; it's up to you to discover which ones are needed to complete the **right** words. Some of the letters may fit in more than one of the empty squares to complete words; however **only one arrangement of all the letters of the alphabet** will complete a word in each row. **Plurals not allowed**. Use the handy alphabet key on the left to cross off each letter as you use them

Joys & Concerns



Please remember in your prayers . . .

Millie Fontana has been ill, but is bouncing back. Barb Ricker, Florence and Herb Webber's daughter and Deb Bears sister, is facing surgery for ovarian cancer. Doris Rushton had complications from chemotherapy and is getting her strength back. Nancy Johnson is at Radius, a special care nursing facility in Boston. Kim Bears experienced a break-in.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1-Merri Jones

5-Marilyn MacLeod

21-Peggy Rice

28-Nancy Vellucci



Many in our church family are having birthdays in October, but we don't know about it. We are just beginning to compile a list. Please contact the office and add your birthday.

Feeling particularly blessed are . . .

Sally Addison, whose granddaughter Sandy was married at NPU; and Janet Christo, who has finally retired. We hear that Louise Macnair has found pain relief with acupuncture and are grateful for that.

North Prospect Union UCC

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December 2009

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

DECEMBER 6 – MANGER SUNDAY

DECEMBER 13 – PAGEANT AND POT LUCK PARTY

DECEMBER 20 – BLUE CHRISTMAS, 4:30

DECEMBER 24 – READINGS, CAROLS & CANDLELIGHT, 5:30

