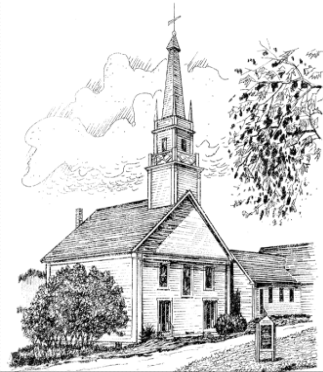


Congregational Church of Temple Newsletter

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A TREAT OF A RETREAT

Saturday January 9, 2010 marked a memorable day in my life as a member of the Temple Congregational Church as an attendee of the Healing and Renewal of Hope Retreat. After an opening welcome and a short worship service, our day began with groups gathered. First there were sets of two, then four, (except for Sandy and me ... the stragglers ... who ended up joining an already established group of four to form the notorious "six-pack"), then finally two sets of eight and our six-pack.

As a set of two, we had specific questions to ask and create name cards for each other. When joining the next group, we introduced our partner and details of the answers to the questions we had asked.

All of the groups gathered after this introduction and Pastor Graham led us into the next segment of the day. During this time, we were given Bibles and specific verses to read from the Gospel about Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3:1-21; 7:37-52; and 19:38-42). Using a study guide, we discussed the story and answered questions which we shared first in our small groups, then with the entire group.

After eating a delicious lunch of Shepherd's Pie, salad, and dessert prepared by the Sisters, we began our afternoon session. Pastor Graham led the group in more discussion relating to the verses and then sent us back with our groups of four to explore a second Bible story and participate in a short study.

From the Gospel of Mark 2:1-12 we read about Jesus, the paralyzed man and the four friends. After the reading, time was taken to answer questions in the study guide followed by a final time segment with questions to discuss specifically related to our church life. Before ending the day with a closing worship service, we again gathered as a large group to discuss the perspectives drawn from each group with regard to the questions asked.

Continued ...

As simple as this synopsis of the day might seem, it is quite astounding to me to experience the insight and guidance from Pastor Graham along with the Gospel readings chosen. As a group I felt we were led to places of deeper understanding of self, each other, and as a church community. While it is true that we must ponder the possibility of a let-down after being on such a "high," on the contrary, might I suggest that this rocket ship reentering the atmosphere is not likely to "burn up." We picked up precious cargo along the way to bring back to our church and the world that is too valuable to risk its safe arrival.

Personally, I wish to thank Our Lady of Hope House of Prayer for providing a most perfect setting imaginable, the Sisters for their warm welcome to us and delicious food served, Pastor Graham for the tremendous amount of time and effort put forth to facilitate an atmosphere conducive to our needs of spiritual growth and development, the individuals who participated, and the entire Temple Congregational Church membership for support as we, as a church community, strive to walk on this spiritual journey in the Light of God together.

Submitted by Vivian Nicholl

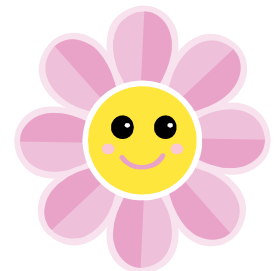
Today, upon a bus, I saw a very beautiful woman
and wished I were as beautiful.
When suddenly she rose to leave
I saw her hobble down the aisle.
She had one leg and wore a crutch ...
but as she passed, she passed a smile.
Oh God, forgive me when I whine.
I have two legs; the world is mine.

I stopped to buy some candy.
The lad who sold it had such charm.
I talked with him, he seemed so glad.
If I were late, it'd do no harm.
And as I left, he said to me, "I thank you,
you've been so kind.
It's nice to talk with folks like you."
"You see," he said, "I'm blind."
Oh God, forgive me when I whine.
I have two eyes; the world is mine.

Later, while walking down the street,
I saw a child I knew.
He stood and watched the others play,
but he did not know what to do.
I stopped a moment and then I said,
"Why don't you join them, dear?"
He looked ahead without a word.
I forgot, he couldn't hear.
Oh God, forgive me when I whine.
I have two ears; the world is mine.

With feet to take me where I'd go
With eyes to see the sunset's glow
With ears to hear what I'd know
Oh God, forgive me when I whine.
I've been blessed indeed, the world is mine.

Submitted by Sandy Benotti





What Did You Think Of the Retreat?

The retreat was hopeful; no criticisms, just good fellowship. We got to know our friends better. We felt the peace and kindness of the sisters praying for us. So good to know that others care what our church is doing.

~Carolyn Myrick

The retreat was an experience of spiritual growth for me. We opened and closed with a short worship service, complete with singing. Thanks to Nancy Woods and Helen Emma for their accompaniment. It was wonderful to get to know one another better. Hopefully we can carry this Christian love and hope from Our Lady of Hope into the future of our church.

~Jennifer Daler

I met Keith Olewine after reading the story and talking about the paralyzed man carried by his friends to see Jesus. I shared a personal concern with my friends, Keith, Wendy and Tom. The retreat gave me that confidence.

~Shirley Wildes

A very worthwhile day spent getting to know others on a different plane. Sometimes we get so busy and caught up in life in general that we don't stop to really hear each other. An excellent place to hold the retreat. Perhaps another one can be held later on for people who did not participate the first time.

~Sandy Benotti

I felt that the retreat was a wonderful opportunity to exchange dialogue with each other about our personal lives, our church experiences, and be in thoughtful meditation, prayer, and a God-guided direction as we walk together in faith. The Bible verses and study provided great discussion and a way to see views and interpretations that brings better understanding to the way we interact with each other.

~Vivian Nicholl

This retreat provided me with fuel for my faith walk. Life day to day can wear you down if you feel alone. The attendees were wonderful and the Sisters were lovingly hospitable as always.

~Wendy Drouin



I think that meeting at Our Lady of Hope – a spiritual community – helped us to begin interacting in a different way in our own “spiritual community.” We treated each other with respect and compassion; we listened deeply, and acknowledged the presence of the Holy Spirit. We also learned the value of communicating first one-to-one, and then moving to larger groups.

~Rob Wills

INTERIM MINISTRY AS A RAILROAD TRACK

I have always enjoyed riding on trains, especially during my graduate school summers, when I worked as a tour guide for train trips across Canada from Montreal and Toronto to the Rocky Mountains, Vancouver, and Seattle. I especially loved the clickity-clack sound of the rails as I fell asleep at night. More recently, I have been thrilled by the high speed trains in Europe which reach a cruising speed of 187 mph. Because of a younger brother who has spent years "laying track" in the Canadian northwest, I appreciate the skill involved in laying the parallel rails and the "ties" which both hold them apart and yet keep them together – especially at 187 mph!

I perceive interim ministry as a form of "laying track" with the two rails and the necessary ties. One of those rails, to introduce another metaphor, is "holding the fort."

HOLDING THE FORT

One of the two tasks of interim ministry is to see that the traditional business of being a church doesn't get neglected: preparation for and the leading of worship, meeting and talking with people, attending meetings, visiting in homes and hospitals, writing for the newsletter, attending denominational meetings, leading classes, etc.

The second rail of interim ministry, to mix metaphors again, is "building a bridge."

BUILDING A BRIDGE

The second task of interim ministry is to enable a congregation to begin the process of evaluating its past, especially its most recent past, examining its present, and starting to envision its future. As outlined in my contract/covenant with the congregation, this second task is broken down as follows:

- a. Coming to terms with the congregation's history
- b. Discovering a new identity
- c. Allowing needed leadership change
- d. Renewing denominational linkages, and
- e. Committing to new directions in ministry.

As we explore together the task of building a bridge, I anticipate the following "steps" or "sta

- 1) Exploring together and coming to terms with the Congregation's history.
- 2) Exploring the Congregation's current self-understanding, leadership structure and style, and sense of purpose.
- 3) Begin to explore and develop a vision of the Congregation's future and its mission.
- 4) Develop an understanding of the implications of that vision for the stewardship of the Congregation's finances, facilities, and lay and clergy leadership.
- 5) Develop more fully a profile of the clergy leadership needed to implement that vision.
- 6) Form a search committee to seek the appropriate clergy leadership. Find, call, and install that clergy person as the Congregation's next settled pastor.

Pastor Graham

BUILDING COMMITTEE

The Building Committee has some good news. The Parsonage project has begun and a lot has been accomplished. As of this month, the upstairs bath is almost complete. The old tub was taken out and replaced with a new one, and new wiring and a fan/light combination have been added. The old floor was torn up and new underlayment installed and is now waiting for the inlaid to be put down. As soon as the vanity arrives and has been installed, the wainscoting will be put up with all of the necessary trim that goes with it. A linen closet has been added underneath the attic stairs. A new light fixture over the vanity and a medicine cabinet will also be installed to complete this part of the project. The barn door on the Parsonage has also been repaired. Replacement rollers were found and installed and then adjusted, so we can now easily open the big door from the inside. We have taken the old cabinets out of the kitchen and the ones that we could salvage are on the back porch. If someone needs some for their garage or basement, they may have them for the taking. They would be adequate for storage items.

We have also had the contractor fix the bad place in the floor in front of the stairway in the Church and now it will have to be touched up with a little stain to match the rest of the floor. Also, he is replacing the kickboard outside the door going into the Chapel, which has been bad for a long time.

So as you can see, we have been busy trying to get some of the repairs and refurbishing work done. May we all have a great year!

The Building Committee

DONATION TO CHURCH WORLD SERVICES

In memory of Ethel Fiske, the Missions Committee will be accepting donations to purchase blankets for Church World Services. Five dollars will buy a high-quality wool blanket. While these blankets may not go to Haiti, they will replenish the blanket supply Church World Services passes out where needed.

Checks can be made out to Congregational Church of Temple – Haitian Blanket Fund

Submitted by Laura Clayton

The Ladies Aid will meet on February 2 for their regular meeting.

We are planning a Craft Fair for March 6 at Friendship Hall from 9AM-1PM. If you are a crafter or know of one who might be interested, please call Sandra Benotti at 878-2297.

The Ladies want to thank everyone who helped in any way for the Fiske family memorial service.

Sandy Benotti



A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO BIBLE STUDY

In the 1970's, when I was co-pastor of a large congregation in Denver, Colorado, the other pastor and I decided to lead together a bible study for Lent. We wanted to focus on both the Bible and the personal growth of the participants. We realized, however, that we faced a situation in which Bible study and personal growth were often not seen as having anything to do with one another! We sensed that if we emphasized "Bible Study" in our publicity, persons interested in personal growth would not attend. Likewise, an emphasis on "Personal Growth" would drive away those interested in Bible study! What were we to do? We decided, somewhat unimaginatively, to simply call the offering *Bible Study and Personal Growth* and let individuals decide for themselves! Well, it worked! Many persons were intrigued by the fact that we were trying to mix, so to speak, oil and vinegar, which, as many of us realize, make a better salad when combined.

I sense that some genuine progress has been made since the 70's in that "Bible Study" and "Personal Growth" are now seen to have something in common. It is recognized by many that an exploration of the Bible can lead to a renewing and deepening of our individual lives.

However, I would like to have us take our understanding of the connection between the Bible and our individual lives one step further. Can there be a connection, not only between Bible study and our life as individuals, but between Bible study and our life as a congregation? In other words, is the relevance of Bible study limited to how it affects an individual, or does it speak to how we might understand the identity and purpose of a congregation? It is with this second "different" approach to Bible study in mind that I wish to characterize the following opportunity for our Lenten Season.

- WHAT? Our Church and the Gospel of Mark
An optional resource will be The Gospel of Mark by Marcus Borg
- WHEN? Weekly during Lenten Season which begins Ash Wednesday, February 17
- WHERE? Friendship Hall
- WHO? Anyone in the congregation and wider community who is interested
- WHY? To deepen our understanding of ourselves and our congregation
- LEADER? Pastor Graham (with a little help from the Holy Spirit!)

Pastor Graham and Laura Clayton

POSSIBLE MEETING TIMES

Check preferred time(s) and turn in bottom of form to church office or Pastor Graham.

Sunday after coffee hour _____

Sunday at 4:00 PM with bread and soup at 5:30 _____

Monday at 9:30 AM _____

Monday evening at 5:30 for soup & bread and 6:30 Bible study _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

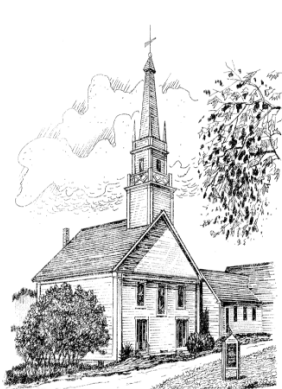
MIGRAINE, ANYONE?

Mary Jane Wolbers announces that her daughter Marian, sister of Vivian Nicholl, is the author of a new book concerning the treatment of chronic migraine headaches. A copy of Migraine: Pain of the Body, Cry of the Spirit by Marian Frances Ordway* has been donated to the Mansfield Library of Temple and will soon be available for circulation. Based on the author's personal experience with overcoming the malady, it deals with a spiritual approach to its management.

Marian's novel, Rider, also in the Mansfield Library collection, is drawn from her experiences in Japan. The heroine of the story depicts the treatment of women in modern Japan. It is frequently required reading for college students enrolled in courses on Japanese culture.

*Current U.S. policy requires that authors use pseudonyms if they publish more than one book per year. Ordway is the maiden name of the author's great-grandmother, Mary Jane Ordway of Temple. Marian's first published book, released this past year is entitled, Uncovering Fashion: Fashion Communications Across the Media.

Submitted by Vivian Nicholl



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