

The Pioneer

'Preparing for others to follow'

Newsletter of the Preble Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
PO Box 186 1953 Preble Road
Preble, New York 13141

Pastor Rebecca West
607-749-3606 (office) 315-456-8746 (cell)
www.preblechurch.com

~ July 2017 ~

...from the Pastor's Pen...

Dear Friends,



Here are the new Mission and Vision Statements for the NY Conference:

Our Mission: *United in Spirit, and inspired by God's grace, we move forward **boldly** to welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all."*

Our Vision: *United in Christ's love, a just world for all.*

My June Pastor's Pen described our experience at the NY Conference Annual Meeting in Tarrytown, NY. This month, I would like you to read the report given at the meeting by our NY Conference General Minister, David Gaewski. The full report is printed elsewhere in this issue.

Here is the article printed in "Happenings," our conference weekly newsletter:

Report on Annual Meeting

There were approximately 200 present for the joint meeting of the New York Conference UCC and the Regional Synod of New York, RCA in Tarrytown on May 24-25.

The UCC delegates voted on the following:

- 1. Approved the 2018 Conference Budget as presented.*
- 2. Approved the Proposed Conference By-Laws Revisions as amended;*
- 3. Approved by acclamation the new Vision and Mission Statements of the New York Conference.*

4. *Approved: To have the Associations of the New York Conference vote to add a \$2.00 Conference per capita to their Association per capita invoice which each Association will then forward to the Conference. If all Associations agree to this new policy, the Conference will discontinue the Covenant Share special offering. [Reformed Association will be exempt from this due to the fact that they are already paying a Conference per capita (assessment)]. The Associations are being asked to take this vote prior to the 2018 Annual Meeting. It will require a positive vote of all Associations for this policy to take effect in 2019.*

Thank you to all the volunteers and worship leaders who made this a special and memorable event.

NY Conference Staff



In response to the call to increase our per capita donation to the Conference, church council will discuss and then bring the matter before the congregation for a vote. Our church has been faithful in giving our Covenant Share, and I believe our church will choose to participate in the change to the per capita donation.

On another note, if you don't receive the e-publication, "Happenings," please consider subscribing at communications@uccny.org. Each issue includes thoughts written by one of the conference ministers as well as information from various churches about events and UCC happenings around the Conference and nation.

This month's issue offers articles about the LGBT Booth at the NY State Fair, Global Ministries mission opportunities, training classes, ACA accredited youth camping plans, and much more. And, if you haven't heard about "Applezilla," this is where you can learn about it! I have volunteered again this year to staff the LGBT Booth on Saturday, 8/26, from 10-2. If any of you would like to go with me, please let me know.

The biggest reason to subscribe to "Happenings" is to learn more about what our sister churches and denomination are doing as we live out our faith, and to see how our church connects to the whole.



**In faith and love,
Pastor Becky**

**The best way to feel good about yourself is to do something
to make someone else's life better.**

John W. Barfield

Congratulations, Graduates!

On Sunday, June 25th, we celebrated our graduates during worship, and heard once more our traditional graduation sermon written in 1965 by the Rev. Loren House, Jr., called "The Parable of the Umpires. Steve Wilson, our own resident umpire, and Pastor Becky presented the sermon as a dialogue. Loren's words never seem to get old – the advice works for graduates of every age and time.

Courtney Delia, daughter of Jeff and Jessica DeLia, graduated from the University of Connecticut Law School and will take the New York Bar examination in July. Courtney is the great-granddaughter of Marilyn and the late Max Stoker

Bryn Mugnolo, granddaughter of Dick and Jean Martin, graduated *summa cum laude* from Ithaca College with a major in Art History.

Noah Perry Ryan, grandson of Melanie and Scott Cook and son of Aric Ryan, graduated from Marathon High School, receiving three awards for his scholarship and character. An avid baseball player, he won the Coaches Award in 2017.

Noah's true passion is volunteering as a fireman for the Village of Marathon. He has received over 200 hours of training and served over 300 hours as a volunteer. He aspires to a fulltime career in firefighting.

Nicholas Mueller, grandson of Cindy and John Steger, graduated from Baker High School in Baldwinsville. He has started his own business in yard management and looks forward to continuing his education once he decides on his focus.

*We wish all of our graduates well
and many, many blessings!*

**Nothing is more honorable
than a grateful heart.**

~ Seneca Nation ~

Pies & Flags Fundraisers

Thank you to everyone who helped with this fundraiser, the proceeds of which go to the Porch Restoration Project.

This year we sold 88 flags and 44 pies for a net total of \$907 after expenses.

A special thank you to all the pie bakers and to those of you who made extra pies this year. And thanks to the "ribbon-writers" who wrote the names of loved ones to tie onto the flags for the front lawn. We couldn't have done it without all of you. Great job!

Food Pantry Musings

The Food Pantry continues as we accept God's blessing; which I believe is God's love shining upon us - constant, continuous and faithful. I believe God's love is the very light of Creation, and as we embrace that Light it shines through us. As God has allowed me to share in the Food Pantry I have learned that giving and receiving are one and the same. I have learned that we do not 'give' and we do not 'receive', but rather we share. And what we share is God's blessing.

When I don't accept God's offer of His blessing I struggle, and I see 'need' rather than 'abundance'. June's open pantry has had special huddles to jump and many of my e-mails to the pantry volunteers have included the word "need". I can feel our gentle God smiling upon me and saying, "My dear boy, there is nothing you need for I have already given you everything."

As this adventure with the Food Pantry continues I see the world more and more as abundance.

As a dear friend and wonderful soul through whom God's Light shined brightly used to tell me, "Don't worry so much, Lou, everything will work out."

Just wanted to share a little of my recent journey. lou

UCC Daily Devotional

We've had quite a month, actually, with the losses three of our friends and families suffered when their loved ones passed. We, too, wept with them. For the July Pioneer, here is the Rev. Ron Buford's reflection on grief, from 8/26/17.

Every Time I Remember You

*"I thank my God every time I remember you."
Philippians 1:3-11*

When we remember people who have died, simple things remind us of them – a smell, a song, a flower, the gathering of family and friend. And we remember them...

Sometimes their memory breaks in on us like an intruder, without ample time for us to prepare and brace ourselves. And so, we cry. We miss them. At other times we laugh. Either way, it is a good thing to not hold back.

Experience your range of emotions but do not stop there. Give God thanks for having had them in your life. Acknowledge their presence as a gift from God; this will always put your heart in the right place.

Sometimes, we are like children who want more ice cream. "We did not have them long enough," we say. And that is always true of those we love most dearly – especially those who had, from our perspectives, untimely deaths. Let us instead give thanks that we had them, remembering, we have them still.

They were never our possessions. They were companions God placed into our life's journey...for a while.

Best of all, they surround us now, so many as to be like the stars of the Milky Way, a cloud, all witnesses to love, faithfulness, to the hope and mystery that we shall see them...again.

Prayer

Gracious God, sometimes I miss them so much I cannot seem to bear it. Still, I thank you for placing such a great person in my life. I remember her perfume, his crazy laugh, the way he looked at me that let me know I was loved, for the great things she accomplished, for the things we saw together.

Thank you for these special lives and times, and for ways they helped shape me to be the person I am today. Give them blessed rest and peace and confidence in knowing they left us well and continuing on with life until we meet them again. Amen.

A Special Thanks

We have grieved with the families over this past month of June, for the Rev. Loren House Jr., Steve Morgan, and Jeannette Waffner Stevens. They were saints of our church, and we help one another with our sadness when we face these losses together.

At such times, we remember other beloved people who preceded them in death, and in many ways, our grief for those losses is refreshed. Over the course of ordinary life, we become "practiced grievers," and we find we can offer our strength to others, knowing that through God's grace, we learn to live with loss in ways that our loved ones would ask of us.

When a family grieves, they need time to be together, and tending to daily detail is difficult. We as their church family step in at that point to help with the planning of funerals and memorial services, and we are glad to be able to do so.

Our hospitality means not just feeding the hungry and bereaved, but showing our sadness, too, through our companionship with them. *You all do wonderful, loving, and remarkable ministry in this way, and I give you my constant and grateful thanks!*

~ Pastor Becky ~

Rest in Peace

In the last two weeks, our church has been honored to celebrate the lives of three people whom we have loved as family and friends for many years.

The Rev. Loren House Jr. died peacefully in his nursing home residence, surrounded by family and friends and his caregivers. We sang his favorite hymns, all of them and more, because he never lost his joy in singing the words to those songs, until the day of his passing.

We celebrated his life on June 17th. Loren served our church for eighteen years and is beloved in our memory.

Steve Morgan lost his courageous battle with cancer on June 10th, at his home on Steger Road. Steve's family selected some of Steve's favorite songs on CD to play during his service, and we sang a hymn he loved, "In the Garden."

Steve's strong faith supported him every day, and he testified to anyone who would listen to his belief in Jesus Christ. We celebrated his life on June 16th.

Jeannette Marie Waffner Stevens passed on December 24, 2016, at her home in Florida, and we celebrated her life on June 24th here in her childhood church.

Her family shared dozens of photographs of Jeanette, and memories and tributes during "Words of Remembrance," followed by a joyful reception in Jeannette's memory.

Folks from church decorated the altar with garden flowers, because Jeannette loved them.

We will miss Loren, Steve, and Jeannette and give thanks that they now live with God in peace and wellness.

Spiritual Direction

If you are interested in learning more about this ancient practice, please see Pastor Becky, who is certified as a Spiritual Director. Don't be misled by the word "director," because you won't be directed in any way. Your walk with God and your spiritual growth develops from within your own life and experience.

Spiritual Direction is more like being companions on your spiritual walk. Meetings usually happen once a month for about an hour, and are conversational in nature. It's a way of sharing your spiritual journey with someone else who is willing to walk with you.

Quilt Raffle

Three beautiful quilts made by Sue Swayze and Gail Brennan are the prizes for the raffle underway from now until fall. Get your tickets from any of the trustees or council members, \$5 each or 5 for \$20.

See the quilts in the sanctuary. First winner drawn will pick the first quilt, until all three are chosen. These quilts are absolutely lovely!

Coming Up...

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|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| July 2 nd , Sunday | CE Mtg, 11 am |
| July 9 th , Sunday | Lou Scott preaches
Deacons mtg, 11 am |
| July 12 th , Weds | Church Council 6:30 pm |
| July 21 st , 22 nd , Friday and Saturday | Rte. 81 Fundraiser |

August

- | | |
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| Aug 6 th , Sunday | Chautauqua, Homer Grn
CE Mtg, 11 am |
| Aug 13 th , Sunday | Worship on the Lake at
Greg Gallup's, 10:30 am |

Time Capsule: A Surprise from 1951

This article appeared in the Cortland Standard on Saturday, June 24, 2017, written by Katie Keyser, Living and Leisure Editor of the C-S.

Linda Underwood said she likes everything about the Preble Congregational United Church of Christ.

"The fellowship is what I think brings everyone to this church – the people, the fellowship. We are a United Church of Christ. We have a mission to work on."

But she has a special place in her heart for the 1831 building, on the New York State Historic Register, that sits on Preble Road. "It has chestnut beams – they are 12 or 14 feet by 12," she said.

Those beams were pulled up by horse and muscle power and were likely constructed by shipwrights used to the work building masts and needing work in the winter, Underwood noted.

Imagine the church historian's excitement when a construction worker found a time capsule during work in the last week or so, nestled inside a cement block hole, which he was unearthing the current porch.

Church officials are overseeing the approximately \$45,000 job replacing the porch floor and foundation, removing and renovating its four massive columns.

In the process, workers found a 1923 porch that was built beneath the 1951 version. Kyle Hoke, a carpenter with Morgan Hill Construction, made the discovery of the 1951 capsule, which no one knew existed.

"It was just a little blue jar in all the dirt that we pulled out," he said. "It was inside of a brick."

"It's a complete surprise when something like that happens," said the Rev. Becky West. "It was broken. It had a crack in it. We had to be careful. Linda carefully extracted the papers inside and dried them. Everyone is excited."

Underwood took the jar home and pulled two documents out of it – "Conference Trails from May 1951," with the title of the article "A Village Unites," and another paper: "The Manse on Route # 281, Aug. 6, 1951," which talked about the history of the church in 1950.

"This is what I live for. My favorite job at the church is the Church Historian," said the Little York woman, a farmer, and also chairwoman of the Board of Trustees.

And 1951 was a pivotal year for the Congregational Church, she said. It was the year two churches in the Preble area combined: Methodist and Presbyterian.

"They couldn't make a go of it. They talked about combining for years and years. Finally in 1951, they combined," Underwood said.

The first minister of the combined church, was the Rev. George Blue. The first big project they did was build this front porch," Underwood said. Two men did the work, Leon Riehlman of Preble and Martin Leighton of Cortland, one a Methodist and the other a Presbyterian.

Members have been putting together documents and memorabilia that will go into a new time capsule of the current state of the 74-member Preble Congregational UCC.

Music Director Stephen Wilson put in an original score he and other member, Lou Scott, wrote: "Journey Into Light," and another song sung seasonally, "Go Out With Joy."

Copies of the two documents found in the original time capsule will go in, along with Underwood's beloved "A Matter of Taste," a community cookbook made in 2001. "60-70 years from now they will see what good cooks we have," she said.

A church bulletin, a church coffee mug, records from the Community Food Pantry, photos of church activities and a copy of the current 'Cortland Standard' will be among the contents.

Evan Benson of Homer, 10, is a member of the church and Sunday school class. "I wrote papers talking about the Christmas pageant, the Easter Egg Hunt and everything else," he said.

"We printed pictures from my phone and we wrote about that," said Annette Benson of Homer, his grandmother.

Alyssa Swayze, 10, of Preble, offered another detail from Sunday School: "We raised money to buy blankets. We gave people all around the world blankets. We gave over 40."

"We have something from everyone; deacons, Sunday school, the pastor, Underwood said.

The big time capsule will be nestled under the slab at the front of the top steps, she said, and she'll have the notice of the time capsule recorded at Preble Town Hall.

"It just made sense to put one back. If someone took the time to tell their story, we should do the same," she said. "We are stewards of the church. Who knows if other documents stand the test of time. This will. It's going with the building."

On the other side of this page is printed a copy of the letter from Rev. Rebecca West, which was included in the contents of our 2017 Time Capsule.

June 19, 2017

To all who read this letter when you discover and open our Time Capsule, we greet you!
Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

We reach out to you from your past and from our present. We wonder when you will find this capsule and recover its contents, and we hope you will enjoy your discovery as much as we loved finding the little blue bottle buried in a cinderblock in 1951 under the old porch. Our message to you: we love God and this church, its people, and our entire valley community, and we are confident that the Holy Spirit guides you, the good people of the future, to serve God and the kingdom as faithfully in your day as we try to do in ours.

My pastorate began six years ago, on June 11, 2011. Our members and friends come from many vocations, interests, and places, but as a rural church, we include several families whose ancestors trace back generations. Roots run deep; I was advised when I arrived to “be careful of what I say about people, because everyone is related in some way to each other.” I’ve enjoyed discovering those connections! This community knows and depends upon one another, and our church resides in the heart of the village and the hearts of the people who live here, whether or not they actually attend worship. Our church’s age, our care for this church building, and our community involvement bear witness to the buoyant and animated presence of the still-speaking God.

Like other churches, we experience rough spots on occasion, but when that happens, we consistently choose to renew our love for the church and our desire to work through issues faithfully. Going forward together affirms this church as a good place for relationship-building. The windows in the sanctuary, the people named on them in memory, our scrapbooks, the 200th Year Anniversary Quilt hanging in the Riehlman Room, and our oral and written memories remind us of the saints who have come before us, and of their care for the church that we continue to express today.

Our children and youth are carefully guided by a committed group of men and women who teach according to the mission of the UCC: *Inspired by God’s grace, we move forward boldly to welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all.* In today’s diverse world, our families rely on consistent Christian values to help their kids make good decisions, and we are a vital part of that process. In the same spirit, we contribute generously to ministries and missions beyond our church, including the Community Food Pantry, which freely serves all people and is staffed not only by members of our church, but also village volunteers.

What do we want you to know about our church today? That we faithfully try to fulfill God’s loving plans for those of us who worship together, for those beyond our doors, and also for you, the saints and mission workers (we hope some of you are the kids of our day) of the future who have serendipitously discovered our 2017 Time Capsule.

We send you love and blessings!

Becky West

Rev. Rebecca F. West



July Celebrations

- July 1: David Griswold
2: Sylvia Fitch
Laura Swayze
Cynthia and John Steger
(Anniversary)
3: Marilyn Bishop
Mimi Cornue
6: Connie Griswold
7: Donna and Burdette Swayze
(Anniversary)
8: Austin Lieber
9: Kaylee White
10: Dan Twentyman
11: Laura and Matt Swayze
(Anniversary)
12: Casey Knapp
18: Pat and Dan Twentyman
(Anniversary)
20: Mary and Bernie Podsiedlik
(Anniversary)
25: Jenna Henderson
Jackson Henderson
Cathy Scott
29: Michael Griswold
Lincoln Shirley



Joy in the Morning

By Joy Niswender

What a bountiful Heavenly Father we have!
He bestows so many blessings lavishly upon
us - free of charge.

How about those days when incredibly white
clouds float across a vivid backdrop of sky...
and then there are the gray skies that
forewarn of much needed rain. Both are
miracles in their own way.

We feel the sun's warmth on our face and
forget to say "Thank You!" to God. We enjoy
the fellowship of a cherished friend, and
forget that the father of us all put us here to
commune with and comfort each other.

We look at a view that is so overwhelming in
its beauty we are at a loss for words with
which to adequately say "I love you, Father.
Thank you for the wonder of the earth and
your goodness to us, your undeserving and
erring children."

*Psalm 19: "The heavens are telling the glory
of God and his firmament proclaims his
handiwork."*



Sunday Morning Worship, 10 am.

Sunday school for kids and youth. Fellowship
Time after worship.

**Wherever you may be on your
life's journey, you are welcome
here!**

We really mean it!

We offer Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month, and all may share the table, no restrictions.