



State of the Union



The Monthly Newsletter of Union Congregational Church

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Moderator: Arthur Ferris Secretary: Martha Swanson

April 2009

From the Pastor's Desk.....

AMAZING GRACE

"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; He has risen!"



Do you know that you can sing "Amazing Grace" to the tune of "Gilligan's Island?" Try it. The words fit the tune beautifully. We discovered this milestone in hymnody quite by accident while leading worship at the Middleboro Long Term Care Facility (or the Greenery, or Forest Manor; over the twenty plus years we have led worship there they just keep changing the name), and it has come to be a staple in every nursing home or care facility service we do. And we do a number of them each month.

In addition to the Middleboro Long Term Care facility, we do services at The Atrium Alzimers Facility, the Rice

Eventide Home and Marina Place, all in Quincy. It is a great ministry carried out by the Pastor, Outreach Minister, Deacons and Parishioners.

There is one verse of "Amazing Grace" that is missing from most hymnals and is seldom sung:

"The Lord has promised good to me.
His Word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures."

My daughter Stephanie sang this verse as a solo when Craig Stanley, our guitarist, led us in "Amazing Grace" in January.

As we enter glorious spring and the glory of the Easter season, let us remember God's Word secures an eternal future. The victory of the Cross is the mighty Resurrection of Jesus Christ. By His blood shed on the Cross, He paid for our sin. By His Resurrection, He has given us a portion in glory with Him. This is truly amazing!

Happy Easter.

Until May,
In Christ, Pastor Jack

Food for Thought

Thank you Jim Rickert

The Old Testament Book of Malachi says “He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.....”

This verse puzzled some women in a Bible Study and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible Study.

That week, the woman called a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver.

As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that, in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest so as to burn away all the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot, then she thought again about the verse that says: “He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver.” She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined.

The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed.

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, “How do you know when the silver is fully refined?” He smiled at her and answered, “Oh, that's easy – when I see my image in it.”

If today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God has His eye on you and will keep watching you until He sees His image in you.



If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it.

*Happy moments, seek God.
Quiet moments, worship God.
Painful moments, trust God.
Every moment, thank God.
God is good.*

“I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have called you and you are mine,” says the Lord.

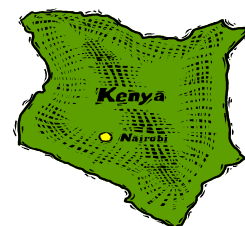


Please Pray and Help!

Rod Birnie, a Missionary to Kenya and one of our own, reports that there is a desperate need for food in Mbeere District in Kenya. To quote an email he received from Kenya:

“The challenge we are facing currently in Mbeere District is famine and hunger. About 95% of the population are affected and 5,000 families are starving – no food, no income and no one to look at only praying for God's gracious intervention.....In God's name you or any person or Church is welcome to minister to these badly hit families by providing food. As you know, Mbeere has suffered long periods of drought and crop failure for four consecutive seasons.....”

If you know of any philanthropists or can help in any way, please contact Martha Swanson in the Church Office. By the time you receive this Newsletter, Rod will be in Kenya. Please pray for him, all in Kenya and all in the Mbeere District. Thank you.



22 Happenings Around Union Congregational Church

1. We were blessed to have Craig Stanley with us twice last month.
2. He played for us on March 1st and 29th.
3. Pastor Jack had a great visit with Jack Black and his daughter Sharon last month.
4. The Pastor really enjoyed the visit, especially Jack's great stories of his rodeo and Hollywood days.
5. The scones that Sharon made were great!
6. The Pastor hooked up with his former student Lewis Floyd, or rather The Rev. Lewis Floyd last month.
7. Lewis joined that Pastor in the Pulpit on March 29th and preached a marvelous sermon.
8. Rev. Martha Swanson preached for us on the 22nd.
9. The Pastor was away on the 22nd, on an 8 day Retreat at Eastern Point Retreat Center in Gloucester.
10. Rick Brady made a fabulous breakfast for the Pastor last month on the Pastor's quarterly visit. Rick lives on the Cape.
11. All Saints Anglican Church of Dorchester used our Fellowship Hall for a Retreat and Meeting on the 21st.
12. All Saints is an Anglican African Church which uses our church yearly for this event. (Kenya)
13. They make the best tea in the world! It is a Kenyan tea.
14. Pastor John Odams and Rev. Martha Swanson led a wonderful Ash Wednesday Service.
15. It was a wonderful way to start Lent.
16. The Prayer Banners have returned to the Chancel. Each Sunday,

- little paper crosses are placed in the Bulletin. They are collected after the service, read at Monday Morning Prayer, then placed on the Banner.
17. The Deacons are leading a weekly Sunday Morning Reflection on the Cross during Morning Worship.
 18. Allison Cooley hosted a wonderful Irish Tea on the 15th.
 19. The Tea followed our annual Celtic Communion Worship Service, always held near St. Patrick's Day.
 20. Eddie Kochanowski, our Girl's Basketball Team Coach, took part in the Service and shared his reflections on our Girls' Basketball Team and their Championship Season.
 21. They went undefeated and, on the 14th, won the Championship and a beautiful trophy.
 22. The Church gave each girl a trophy and a hooded sweat shirt during the service as well, to thank them for all their hard work, enthusiasm and success.



Congratulations UConn Girls on your successful season. It has been 35 years since UCC had a team and won a trophy!

Our home is not the one we live in at present, which serves only as a temporary dwelling; our home is eternity.

St. Alphonsus Liguori

Sermon Titles for April

Sunday, April 5th

Palm Sunday

"Waken My Ear to Listen"

Jesus Hears Our Need

Text: Isaiah 50:4-9

Sunday, April 12th

Easter Sunday

"He is Risen"

All Else is Prologue

Text: Mark 16:1-8

Sunday, April 19th

The First Sunday of Eastertide

"Doubting Thomas"

The Story of Thomas

Text: John 20:19-31

Sunday, April 26th

The Second Sunday of Eastertide

"Peace Be With You"

The Peace That Passes Understanding

Text: Luke 24:36-48

For this month, the Pastor will be using the Lectionary for his sermon texts. On April 5th, he will preach on Isaiah 50, an Old Testament prophecy of the Passion of Christ. Easter Sunday and April 19th and 26th, the sermons will be on the Resurrection of Jesus, drawing on the Gospels of Mark, John and Luke.

April Birthdays - Happy Birthday!

5- Bill Johnson

20 - Amy Downey-Whalen

22 - Betty Rideout

23 - Bonnie Marcel

24 - June Marden

29 - Morgan Elizabeth Donahue

April Anniversaries - Happy Anniversary!

9 - Bob and Pat Maguire

28 - Karen and Matthew Whalen

30 - Lorraine Gill and Don Young



What's New in the Library?

The Wilson Library received four new books during March: "The Shack" by William Young, a very popular Christian novel (watch for a review in our next Newsletter); "Daily Inspiration for the Purpose Drive Life" by Rick Warren, a daily devotional by the author of "A Purpose Driven Life," and "Bible Study Methods" also by Rick Warren. Also, Rev. Martha Swanson donated one of the books she wrote: "When the Sun Vanishes, New Hope for Dark Day," brief Christ-centered meditations to help people through the hard times of life. In addition, the Library now has a subscription to "Christianity Today," America's most widely read Christian Magazine. If anyone would like to borrow any of these or the Library's other holdings and would rather not climb to the second floor, please know that I'd always be happy to fetch something for you! Lorraine Gill

Marks Movies By Mark Goodwin



This month's movie is HOWARD THE DUCK starring Lea Thompson, Jeffrey Jones, Tim Robbins, and the voice of Chip Zien. This classic from 1986 recently got released onto DVD. Howard, a humanoid duck, was dragged through space from his home planet of ducks to earth by a laser beam from a physicist's laboratory. Howard lands in Cleveland, Ohio and meets a rock singer and her scientist friend who may have answers to how he can return home. They all work together when the laser beam is tested again and brings down an evil and powerful alien who plans to take over the world. This was a movie of comedy/action based on the Marvel Comics.



The Stooges by Alphabet

Humorous Anecdotes by Letter

G

“G.C.M.”: Unfortunate diagnosis given to a canine patient at the Stooage-run dog hospital in *Calling All Curs*. Although Larry describes it in layman’s terms as a “bad case of Scavengeritis,” it turns out that G.C.M. is a common affliction at the hospital more formally known as “Garbage Can Moocher.

“Garcon”: Prized canine patient kidnapped from the Stooges’ dog hospital in *Calling All Curs*. Most veterinarians would not have chosen to replace the fluffy Garcon by gluing mattress stuffing to an ordinary mutt, but true pet lovers cannot help but appreciate the Stooges’ sense of duty in such a case.

“The Goon” Immutable Stooges Law

#21: If there is an important science experiment in the works, the scientist will consider the Stooges to be perfect subjects for the experiment. In *Outer Space Jitters*, the Grand Zilvh of Sunev already controls one zombie, The Goon, but wants to create three more for his collection.

The Official Three Stooges Encyclopedia;
Robert Kurson; Contemporary Book,
1998; Pages 85, 88

Book Review: “*And the Angels were Silent: The Final Week of Jesus*” by Max Lucado
Submitted by Lorraine Gill Young



For Lenten reading, I picked up “*And the Angels were Silent*” from the Wilson Library. Louise Swanson had recommended Lucado to me and I had read only short

devotional pieces of his – never any of his books. The title certainly seemed appropriate for Lent.

Lucado writes in a very informal preaching style, much as if he’s mulling ideas over with a friend. He shares stories from his own life, muses over details, sometimes jokes. But he has a vibrant imagination, a keen mind, a deep knowledge of Scripture, and a clear, friendly writing style. He is able to put us at the scene of Jesus’ last days and recreate those episodes vividly in our minds.

He also ponders over details that have long been accepted at face value. For example, when he is writing of Jesus’ Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem, he ponders over who owned the donkey and how did he come to give it up so easily. Had God spoken to him to prepare him for this occasion? Did he know what a momentous occasion it was? He concludes that we need to be ready to give to God whatever is required of us, without knowing how it may be used.

In another section which amused and delighted me, he speculates on whether there is a museum in heaven and what it might contain – Moses’ rod, pieces of the ark, David’s slingshot, the donkey’s reins?

We can imagine that Jesus would have been especially aware of feeding his flock during his last days, so these are days and episodes that demand our special attention. Reading Lucado’s thoughts on this time has been especially meaningful to me in this Lenten season. Many thanks to you, Louise!

We are eager to have a wide representation from the congregation in the Book Review column. Members are encouraged to submit reviews of books they have enjoyed. Please give them to Don or Lorraine Young, who are coordinating this column, or email them to don@beld.net



Men's Column

Manly Men

Paul Revere (1735 – 1818)

“A silversmith and engraver by trade, Revere is best remembered as the horseman who galloped through the countryside to warn the citizens of Lexington and Concord that a British army was coming. The story, embellished in *Paul Revere's Ride* (1863) by Longfellow, is only partly true. Two other patriots also rode that night, and Revere was stopped by the British before reaching Concord. Born in Boston, Revere published anti-British propaganda before and during the Revolutionary war. In 1773, he took part in planning the Boston Tea Party. The following year, he was appointed the official messenger of the Massachusetts Provincial Assembly to the First Continental Congress. The night of April 18, 1775, Revere and William Dawes were sent by Joseph Warren to spread the news that British troops were on their way to destroy the military supplies at Concord and seize two rebel leaders, Samuel Adams (1722 – 1803) and John Hancock. Reaching Lexington about midnight, Revere woke the inhabitants and then, accompanied by Dawes and Samuel Prescott, started for Concord. En route, Revere was stopped by a British patrol. His horse was taken away, and he was forced to return to Lexington on foot. One of the two other riders reached Concord, although it is unclear whether it was Dawes or Prescott. Revere subsequently designed and printed the first issue of American money, supervised the manufacture of gunpowder, and created the first official seal of the colonies. As a result of his only military engagement – a poorly planned effort in 1779 to oust the British from Penobscot Bay in present-day Maine – Revere was accused of cowardice and insubordination. At a court-martial three years later, he

was cleared of the charges. In later years, Revere became a familiar sight on the streets of Boston, still dressed in the costume of his revolutionary days. The aged silversmith died on May 10, 1818.”

*Taken from American Heritage
Illustrated History of the United States:
Volume 3, the Revolution; Choice
Publishing Inc., New York, 1988; Page
E102*

† Holy Week Schedule †

Palm Sunday – April 5th

9:00 a.m. - Breakfast
10:00 a.m. - Worship Service
7:00 p.m. – Men's Group

Monday – April 6th

8:30 a.m. – Morning Prayer
2:00 p.m. – Worship at Greentree

Tuesday – April 7th

12:30 p.m. – Tuesday School/Mothers and Others Bible Study

Wednesday – April 8th

6:00 p.m. Light Supper and Movie
“The Fourth Wiseman”

Maundy Thursday – April 9th

7:00 p.m. Holy Communion and Tenebrae

Good Friday – April 10th

Morning – Worship at Atrium and Eventide
3:00 p.m. – Worship Service at UCC
3:30 p.m. Walk of the Cross to First Baptist Church Braintree
6:30 – Dinner at First Baptist Church, Braintree
7:30 – Worship Service at First Baptist Church

Holy Saturday – April 11th

10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. “Jesus of Nazareth Movie-thon”
5:30 p.m. – Evening Prayer

Easter Sunday

6:30 a.m. - Worship Service on the Beach
10:00 a.m. – Worship Service – Holy Communion and Sermon, Easter Egg Hunt



PRAYER CORNER – *Please remember these folks in your prayers and please feel free to visit them or send them a card.*

Ellie LaBombard

*845 Quincy Shore
Drive
Quincy, MA 02170*

Mary Ireland

*Bay Path Nursing
Home
308 Kingstown Way
Duxbury, MA 02332*

Joe Casagrande

*Norwell Knoll Rehab
and Nursing Center
329 Washington Street
Norwell, MA 02061*

Don Evans

*Quincy Nursing Home
and
Rehabilitation Center
11 McGrath Highway
Quincy, MA 02169*

Ben Raybuck

*165 Beach Street
Wollaston, MA 02170*

☆Rick Brady

☆The Ministry of Bay
State Community
Services

☆The Quincy Crisis
Center

☆Interfaith Social
Services

Barbara Ingram

*Hannah Dustin Health
Care Center
126 Monument Street,
#115A
Haverhill, MA 01832*

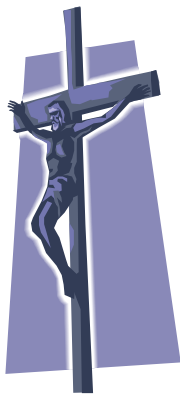
**Our Service Men and
Women Deployed
Throughout the World**

For All Who Suffer in
Mind, Body or Spirit

For All Who Are Mentally
Ill, The Addicted, The
Lost, The Homeless, The
Unemployed Or Under-
Employed.

**And for us all, a continually deepening relationship with God through Jesus Christ,
and for the evidence of that relationship in all that we do.**

**Union Congregational Church
136 Rawson Road
Wollaston, MA 02170**



In God We Trust



Fred Mouse



Hey everybody! Does it sometimes seem like I talk about food a lot? Because I sure do love it and I like to tell you so, particularly to compliment you all on the quality and quantity that is always around here. So this month, wow, what a feed I got after the marvelous Irish Tea that was held after the annual Celtic Liturgy the week of Saint Patrick's Day. Thanks, **Allison Cooley!** You and your helpers did a great job.

And, you folks not only have great food for yourselves, you even think of us critters! The great big Christmas Tree that graced the Sanctuary so beautifully during the Christmas season became a great Bird Tree for God's winged creation during our snowy winter. Sexton **Mark Goodwin** propped it up with snow, hay bales and the like, and **Tuesday School** and **Sunday School** made birdseed bread creations and hung them out for the birds. It didn't take long for the birds to eat ever bite. And, they told me to tell you thank you for thinking of them!

Till May, Fred Mouse

For Your Information.....
 Eastertide is a fifty-day period of seven Sundays, beginning with Easter, the festival of Christ's Resurrection. Ascension Day, forty days after Easter, is celebrated to affirm that Jesus Christ is Lord of all times and places.



THE FOUR SPIRITUAL LAWS

Just as there are physical laws that govern the physical universe, so are there spiritual laws that govern your relationship with God.

- † *God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life.*
- † *Man is sinful and separated from God. Therefore, he cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life.*
- † *Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin. Through Him you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life.*
- † *We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives*

You can receive Christ right now by
 Faith through Prayer

God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:

Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.

In Jesus' Name, Amen



Leviticus

“God seems so far away...if only I could see or hear Him.” Have you ever felt this way – struggling with loneliness, burdened by despair, riddled with sin, overwhelmed by problems? Made in God’s image, we were created to have a close relationship with Him; thus, when fellowship is broken, we are incomplete and need restoration. Communion with the living God is the essence of worship. It is vital, touching the very core of our lives. Perhaps this is why a whole book of the Bible is dedicated to worship. After Israel’s dramatic exit from Egypt, the nation was camped at the foot of Mount Sinai to listen to God (Exodus 19 to Numbers 10). It was a time of resting, teaching, building and meeting with Him face to face. Redemption in Exodus is the foundation for cleansing, worship, and service in Leviticus.

The overwhelming message of Leviticus is the holiness of God – “Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy” (19:2). But how can unholy people approach a holy God? The answer – first sin must be dealt with. Thus the opening chapters of Leviticus give detailed instructions for offering sacrifices, which were the active symbols of repentance and obedience. Whether bulls, grain, goats, or sheep, the sacrificial offerings had to be perfect, with no defects or bruises – picture of the ultimate sacrifice to come, Jesus, the Lamb of God. Jesus has come and opened the way to God by giving up His life as the final sacrifice in our place. True worship and oneness with God begin as we confess our sin and accept Christ as the only one who can redeem us from sin and help us approach God.

The final emphasis in Leviticus is celebration. The book gives instructions for the feasts. These were special, regular, and corporate occasions for remembering what God had done, giving thanks to Him, and

rededicating lives to His service (chapter 23). Our Christian traditions and holidays are different, but they are necessary ingredients of worship. We, too, need special days of worship and celebration with our spiritual brothers and sisters to remember God’s goodness in our lives.

As you read Leviticus, rededicate yourself to holiness, worshiping God in private confession, public service, and group celebration.

Vital Statistics:

PURPOSE: A handbook for the priests and Levites outlining their duties in worship, and a guidebook of holy living for the Hebrews.

AUTHOR: Moses

ORIGINAL AUDIENCE: The people of Israel.

DATE WRITTEN: 1445 – 1444 BC.

WHERE WRITTEN: In the desert during Israel’s wanderings, somewhere in the Sinai Peninsula.

SETTING: At the foot of Mount Sinai. God is teaching the Israelites how to live as holy people.

KEY VERSE: “Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.” (19:2)

KEY PEOPLE: Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, Ithmar

KEY PLACE: Mount Sinai

SPECIAL FEATURE: Holiness is mentioned more times (152) than in any other book of the Bible.

THE BLUEPRINT:

Worshiping a Holy God (1:1 – 17:16)

Instructions for the offerings, the priests, the people and the altar

Living a Holy Life (18:1 – 27:34)

Standards for the People, Rules for Priests, Seasons and Feasts, Receiving God’s Blessing

Life Application Study Bible, New International Version; Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, Wheaton, Illinois, and Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1997; Page 154

