

The NCC UCC *LIFELINE*

July/August 2017

Pastor's Thoughts

A Tale of Two Ministers

The first person called to be the settled pastor of the congregation meeting in our sanctuary was Rufus William Bailey. He was born in Yarmouth, Maine and attended Dartmouth College, receiving his AB in 1813 and a Masters degree in 1816. He also studied law under Daniel Webster and theology at Andover Theological Seminary. On October 19, 1819, the South Religious Society (as our congregation was then known) extended a call to Bailey, and on November 23, he was ordained. A year later, he married a young resident of Norwich, Lucy Hatch.

While he was serving our church, several instances of friction came up. One was around his other vocation, as Chaplain and Professor of Ethics and Belles Lettres at the military academy next door to the church (later Norwich University). The church asked their pastor to limit his teaching to no more than 2 hours a day and reduced his salary by 20%. Another was around his handling of church discipline. This was a hot topic in the early years of our congregation, and fueled the strained relations between this church and the one at the Center. As neighbors accused each other of sins such as selling "ardent spirits," allowing young people to dance, cheating in real estate transactions, and slander, the church congregation was seen as the natural arbiter of disputes. Having two churches in town made for some spiritual and disciplinary territorial war. Rufus Bailey did not come off well in these matters. He was seen as too zealous by some... though by our standards, perhaps all of our 19th century forbears seem like zealots. Rev. Bailey was dismissed by our church in 1823, and spent the next few years in Massachusetts.

Interestingly, the Maine-born and Dartmouth-bred Bailey soon became a southerner. He even managed to take on more Southern attitudes towards slavery. While in South Carolina, he became "intimately acquainted with the state of slavery." He wrote to a northern abolitionist society in 1835 to ask that the organization not send him any publications. He added, "So far as I know, not a single Northern man here sympathizes in the least with your sentiments." He later wrote that the efforts of northern abolitionists were unrealistic and that, if freed, the slaves should be returned to Africa through the work of the American Colonization Society (ASC).

Bailey went on to found and lead two academic institutions, one in Georgia and one in Texas. Wouldn't it be interesting to talk to him now, to "pick his brain" on theology, emancipation, and education?

Almost 100 years after the construction of our meetinghouse, another Dartmouth student came to serve as pastor. William C.H. Moe had already received a divinity degree from Bangor Theological Seminary, but was completing his B.A. at Dartmouth. He preached in Norwich from 1908 to 1910 to support himself while studying. A lot happened in those 2 years. Two new committees were added: the Trust Fund Committee and the Music Committee. A resolution about temperance as a prerequisite for membership was rescinded. And Rev. Moe rewrote the church covenant (which we still use with slight alterations). Here is how he described this rather enormous change coming from a student pastor in a sermon he gave years later at the 125th anniversary of the church:

"Some time after Mrs. Moe and I united ...with this church, several young people were considering joining on 'confession of faith.' The one young man... said. 'Mr. Moe, I would like to join the church but I cannot accept the old statements of belief.' I had not carefully considered them...but I said to him, 'I will investigate and see what may be done.' I read the old credal statement over and noted the

atmosphere of great age, with the smell of brimstone upon some of them.” (side note: these can be found in a tract with our 1820 Articles of Faith, published under Rev. Bailey.) “I felt very sympathetic with the inquirer, and as I talked the matter over with other members of the church, there seemed to be general agreement that a change in our statement was very essential, that we were not now living in the age when this Meeting House was constructed....Mr. Henry B. Olds and I were put on a committee to draft a new outline of Christian beliefs, acceptable to modern Christianity. Our report was accepted.”

We no longer use the creed that was drafted in 1909, but the covenant from that time is on the inside cover of every hymnal. Wouldn't it be interesting to talk to William Moe now, to "pick his brain" on church business and covenants? Even better, wouldn't it be interesting to be a fly on the wall during a conversation between Bailey and Moe, separated as they were by temperament, theology, and time?

In fact, our tradition and our contemporary life together **are** a series of conversations. In my reading in the archives of the Norwich Historical Society, I have heard the voices of the past: some inspiring, some conflicted, some downright small-minded. In the 200th anniversary exhibit in the Parish Hall and hallway, I see the changes in our building(s) that were the fruit of much conversation in the past. (side note: the changes to the sanctuary interior done in 1907-8, just before William Moe's pastorate, must have caused a firestorm of conversation!) In old newspaper clippings, I see the stances and mission projects our congregation has undertaken, fruits of prayerful deliberation and conversation, and the impact this has had on the world outside our walls. I see the way that church life has become "sidelined" to some extent: our church can no longer claim a privileged place in the eyes of many of our neighbors. But perhaps we can reclaim our mastery of difficult conversations: the ones that make us think more deeply, the ones that bring positive change, the ones that change hearts and save lives.

In my reading about Bailey and Moe, I have begun a certain kind of conversation with the past. I hope to continue to learn and the past, present, and future in conversations with all of you.

Mary

SAVE THE DATE!

*The Norwich Congregational Church, UCC
would like to invite you to our*

200th Anniversary

Homecoming Celebration

6 pm, Saturday, September 16:

Food, Song, Friends, Memories

10 am, Sunday September 17:

Worship

More details to follow -- Please come!

The 200th Anniversary Historical Exhibit is now up in the Parish Hall and hallway. Thank you to Deb Van Arman and Shari Gouwens for putting this together. Please stop by and have a look!

200th Anniversary Commemorative Hymns

Attention, all poets, lyricists and wordsmiths!

In honor of our church's 200th anniversary this year, we are seeking people who would like to try their hand at writing new words to established hymn tunes. We have chosen four tunes representing a variety of hymn styles and meters. Please feel free to express yourself, as you see fit, to add a new set of words to a hymn which we can sing in church this year.

Our organist, Tacy, will be featuring these hymn tunes throughout the summer, and she will be glad to play them for anyone who would like to hear them at a separate time. The tunes are:

St. Anne, #1 in the Pilgrim Hymnal (Our God Our Help in Ages Past)

O Waly Waly, #362 in the New Century Hymnal (When Love Is Found - also, many know the tune as The Water is Wide)

New Dimensions, #391 in the New Century Hymnal (In the Midst of New Dimensions)

Pisgah, from Kentucky Harmony 1817, Text by Isaac Watts 1707, Tune by J C Lowry 1817 (When I Can Read My Title Clear)

Copies of the hymns will be available in the church office.

Ordinary Time

The Christian Year is generally divided into Feasts – such as Christmas and Easter -- and Seasons. The cycle of seasons in the Church calendar begins with Advent (4 weeks leading up to Christmas), then moves on to the Christmas Season (the days between Christmas and The Epiphany on January 6), followed by Lent (the 40-day season of leading up to the Thursday of Holy Week), and Easter (the time between Easter and Pentecost 50 days later). As you can see, however, the cycle of seasons has some significant gaps in it, and these gaps are designated as “Ordinary Time.”

The Bible readings appointed for the Sundays of Ordinary Time focus not on the ‘high spots’ in the life and ministry of Jesus that are celebrated by the Feasts and Seasons, but rather are intended to draw us deeper into the way of discipleship to which the day-to-day ministry of Jesus invites us. The longest of these gaps carries us through the summer and fall, that is between Pentecost and the first Sunday of Advent (anywhere from 23 to 28 Sundays). Beginning with the experience of empowerment by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and ending with the vision of Jesus Christ the Ruler of the Universe on Christ the King or Transfiguration Sunday, this period of Ordinary Time invites us to explore the meaning of being a Spirit-filled Church and followers of the crucified and risen Jesus.

These themes are carried through in various ways. Ministers often wear green stoles during Ordinary Time, green being the color of new life and continued growth. If Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost are the “peaks” or mountaintops in the life of faith, Ordinary Time is the verdant “pasture” where the Christian flock is given the nourishment of the Spirit and the Word necessary for its ministry.

In the early Middle Ages, the Church used these days to incorporate various pagan agricultural festivals into the calendar, for example the Blessing of the Fishing Fleet (29 June), the Feast of the Savior of the Apple Harvest (August 19), and the Blessing of the Animals on St Francis Day (October 19).

Susan White

DRAFT Church Council Minutes - June 18, 2017

Present: Ryan Calsbeek (Chair CC), Willemien Miller (VChair CC), Brittny Calsbeek (Ed.), Terri Ashley (Outreach), Christopher Ashley (Worship), Mary Brownlow, (Pastor)

1. Updates from the Four Missions:

-MWor&Care: There are 2 proposed initiatives regarding music and worship:

1) The Senior Choir will advertise with the goal of increasing membership in August.

2) A different approach will be tried for the Children's Choir next school year. Instead of a weekly rehearsal commitment and monthly singing on the second Sunday, younger singers will "practice" during Church School (led by teenager volunteers) for specific limited singing opportunities on a few Sundays. It is hoped that families will find this reduced commitment more user friendly.

-MRelEd: Mary explained that due to low expected numbers of children this summer there would not be Church School coverage during the service. Activities for the children to do in the pews would be provided.

2. Pastor's Report:

-Mary discussed partnering with the Unitarian/Universalist Church in a program they have used successfully this past year, OUR WHOLE LIVES (OWL). It is a relationship based sexual education program that has content for grade ranges from K-1 to high school. The program will be voluntary and offered during the week. Mary is planning to check for interest in families with children in the grades 4-6 age range.

-Mary reported that the necessary funds for the repair and refurbishment of the stained glass window had been received following the letter to the Congregation. The planning/fund raising for the refurbishment of the clear Sanctuary windows is proceeding with the possibility of asking for Woodworth and Vermont Historic Preservation Trust funding.

3. Old Business:

-Nancy Brown, Congregational Workshop on Healthy Communication. Following discussion of her proposal, the consensus was that this would be a worthwhile opportunity for a Saturday in the fall; preferred choices were Oct 28th or Nov 4th. The 5.5 hour workshop would cost approximately \$1400, with food costs additional. The Church Council will make a Woodworth Grant request for funding. Ryan will coordinate with Mary to plan the event and complete the Woodworth request. Willemien will contact Nancy Brown to set the date.

-Sanctuary Configuration, Carpet Replacement, Pew Upgrades, Survey:

After a discussion the Church Council decided to delay action on possible changes to the Sanctuary. We plan to develop a process this summer to gauge the Congregation's opinions following an effort to inform them as to the variety of possibilities for the Sanctuary. The impact of the choices: configuration of the pews, possible movable pews, carpet/ bare flooring will effect the Sanctuary for decades to come. The Church Council plans the roll out of this effort for September; a power point with examples was thought to be an effective method to use.

4. New Business

-Church Council Roles and Agenda:

Following a clarifying discussion, the Church Council agreed that Ryan and Willemien would set our meeting agenda after consulting with Mary and the 4 Ministries. Our agendas will be based on a template:

1. Church Council Minutes
2. Ministry Updates, Minutes, Questions
3. Pastor's Report
4. Old Business (continuing items from previous meetings)
5. New Business

-Daily UV: Mary had been approached by a member of the Daily UV (a local Upper Valley news website and discussion page) regarding using content from NCC's digital newsletter and weekly emails. Mary will gather more information before any decision is reached.

5. Next Meeting: August 6, 2017

Outreach Ministry - July & August 2017



This is the story of PeaceTrees Vietnam

Lt. Daniel Cheney was a US Army helicopter pilot killed during the Vietnam War in 1969. Dan was also a son and brother. His sister, Jerilyn, committed herself to honoring his memory. When relations were reestablished with the country in 1995, Jerilyn and friends realized this commitment by traveling to Vietnam on a mission of peace and compassion. Their idea was simple: **Clear the land of the scars and remnants of war. Plant trees and fresh hope in their place.**

This hope is created through PeaceTrees Vietnam's work to create healthy futures for the children and families of Central Vietnam, beginning first with ensuring that **Quang Tri Province**, one of the poorest and most war-torn regions of the country, is a safe place to live. **Even today, more than 40 years after the war's end, nearly 85% percent of the land remains unsafe, riddled with landmines, bombs, grenades and other unexploded ordnance.**

Healing the Land

PeaceTrees' work begins with healing the land and making it safe for children to play, farmers to till the soil and families to build their homes. These efforts include clearing the land of unexploded landmines and other ordnance, as well as teaching people to be aware of the threats and enable them to live more safely in the midst of these hazards. On an individual level, PeaceTrees Vietnam recognizes the economic devastation resulting from injuries and death from landmine explosions and provides victims and their families with direct aid and scholarships for children.

Building Community

Beyond creating safe land, PeaceTrees Vietnam's work branches into building community by constructing homes, libraries and kindergartens. These structures contribute to a vibrant sense of community and empowerment, and serve as tangible landmarks of the intention to invest in a safe and healthy future for the people and children of Vietnam.

Planting Futures

PeaceTrees Vietnam is planting futures with the people of Quang Tri province. Making land safe, restoring the environment, and creating new educational and economic opportunities collectively heals the enduring wounds of war that linger for both the Vietnamese and American people. Through PeaceTrees Vietnam, fresh hope is planted, grows, branches and blossoms.

The war in Vietnam ended over forty years ago, but the residual negative impacts are still a part of everyday life, especially in Quang Tri Province. Please consider making a donation to PeaceTrees Vietnam by using the yellow NCC Mission Offering envelopes in the pews during July and August. For further information on this organization, see their website:

<http://www.peacetreesvietnam.org/>



PeaceTrees™
VietNam

Healing the Land • Building Community • Planting Futures

NCC Member Jeff Nielsen served in Vietnam and has returned several times to visit and work on different projects. He is currently funding the construction of a preschool. These pictures are from a recent trip



Norwich Rummage Sale

The annual 5-church Rummage Sale is coming up the weekend of July 7, 8 & 9. The grand opening is Friday, July 7 from 11 am to 9pm; Saturday, July 8 from 9 to 2pm and ½ price sale from 2-5 pm; and Sunday, July 9 from 10 to 1pm, bag sale. Please drop off your donations at Tracy Hall from Monday, July 3 through Wednesday, July 5, 9 am to 7pm, and Thursday, July 6 between 9am and 5pm. Help is needed with sorting during donation hours and sorting during the sale hours.

Village Harmony at NCCUCC

Come experience Village Harmony Teen Ensemble in concert at the Norwich Congregational Church on Saturday, July 15 at 7:30 pm. Featuring songs of struggle and community, American gospel and shape-note, Georgian and Corsican songs, and original spiritual songs. Village Harmony is the umbrella organization for a diverse range of choral, world music and harmony singing activities under the direction of Larry Gordon and Patty Cuyler. Our ensembles include *Village Harmony*, *Northern Harmony*, *Boston Harmony*, the *Brooklyn World Music Chorus*, the *Chicago World Music Chorus*, and our many Village Harmony Summer Camp ensembles.

Windows Project

Most of you have received a letter about our plan to restore the Sanctuary windows. In order to help us with our planning, those of you who choose to give can contact the church office with a donation or any questions. We would like to have received all donations by July 31. Thank you for your support of this project!



Picture from the July 11 Children's Sunday and 200th Anniversary Play

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Non-profit
Organization
US Postage
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Norwich, VT
Permit No. 1



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**AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION
WORSHIPING ON SUNDAYS AT 10 AM**