

THE JOYBELL

The Baptist Church of Grafton

An American Baptist Church

Dr. Frank Armstrong, Interim Pastor

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May 2018

Message from Pastor Frank

I think I can safely say that winter is finally over! However, I would not encourage anyone to bank on that right now. Of course, I need to say that, in some ways, I will miss winter. And before you gasp in disbelief reading this after going through some really tough days, shoveled far too much snow, navigated slippery roads, icy conditions, higher heating costs (minus the loss of power for so many), and cancellations - let me qualify my sentiments.

Having lived and worked in NH for a number of years, I learned to make peace with the winter. In order to do that, I began to do things that connected me to the conditions that would be a nuisance and imposition to other people not so happy to see winter. I learned to love skiing, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing,

That was my way of adapting to change. Needless to say, we are being asked to adapt to many changes during this time of transition which at times can be very anxiety producing. It can also be a time to hunker down and just ride it out rather than make peace with it

C.S Lewis one wrote: *"It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: It would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you cannot go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad."* (Quoted in Good News, May/June 1995.)

For that to happen we need to embrace a faith that says no matter what we face in order to move forward in our search for a settled pastor, and to focus on outreach with a greater emphasis, *"we must be hatched or go bad!"*

My prayer and hope is that as we begin to spread forth new wings, we will find a peace

within the midst of change and conditions that may be a bit challenging.

With spring blessings,
Pastor Frank

Central Massachusetts Baptist Association Annual Women's Prayer Breakfast

On **Saturday, April 14** women from all over Central Mass gathered at our church for their annual Prayer Breakfast. It was well attended and an enjoyable morning. The key-note speaker was Dr. Mary Day Miller, the Executive Minister of the American Baptist Church of Massachusetts. Her message was "Five Women and a Baby" which talked about the important roles women have played in our church history. Without these five women the story of Moses would never have happened. If the names Shiphrah and Puah are not familiar to you, then know these are the women who stood up to Pharaoh when the Hebrew people were in captivity.

Diaconate Report

Diaconate Meeting met on April 23 and we accomplished many things.

- Thank you to all who worked to decorate the Sanctuary for Easter Sunday. The lilies were lovely and the shut-ins were pleased with their flowers and wishes.
- June Whitney will be the Diaconate representative on the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee to replace Meredith Christian who has accepted a position with the First Baptist Church of Fitchburg.
- We have finalized a church brochure to give to visitors and other guests which should be ready shortly.
- Diaconate will be focusing on out-reach to the community; this will be our main focus for quite a while.
- We will be meeting with Annette Smith in the near future. She has asked to become a member of our church. After a discussion with the Deacons we will ask for a vote of the congregation at a business meeting.
- Also, a reminder that recordings of recent Sunday services are available on our website for anyone to listen to, and the website has been updated so that these recordings now can be downloaded or played on most smart phones and computers. Use this link: <http://www.thebaptistchurchofgrifton.org/Services.html>

Mission Committee Report

Chair Garfield Atchue shared thank you notes from several of the missions that we support. There was also a letter from the Grafton Fire Department asking for donations for their new Canteen Truck, We voted to donate \$100 to this cause.

We discussed the visit and lunch on Friday April 5 with our Missionaries, Brian & Lynette Smith who are headed to Haiti. They shared a great deal of information about their lives, their call to be missionaries and about the skills that they will use to help out in Haiti. Information about them is available on the Mission table in RFH. We voted to support them with a pledge of \$100 a year for 5 years, thus helping them achieve 70% of their Partnership Goal.

Marcia discussed the plans for the **Mission Committee Fundraising Bake Sale and Luncheon** which will be held on April 28. The money raised will go to help fund our Mission Outreach.

Love Gift Offerings were collected and the funds will be sent in after the next meeting.

Seafarers Friend Mission Project: The collection box for Seafarers is in place to receive donations on the Mission table in RFH. Thank you to everyone who donates to this worthy cause.

Pastoral Search Committee

The Pastoral Search Committee continues its work. We have been assessing candidate profiles and have contacted several to determine their interest in our church. This is slow work, partly because the candidates are busy people and simply respond at different rates. Additionally, during the last month the Committee has reorganized in several ways. Chris Hoffman has taken a leave of absence from the search, Ruth Ballantyne has stepped down so she can focus her energy on leading the Diaconate, and Janice King has joined the Committee to represent the Diaconate. I am now chairing the Committee while Monique Charles continues as vice chair. The Committee continues to work diligently even as these changes have taken place.

The Committee now includes Diane Libbey, Morgan King, Patti Reichle, Bert Engvall and Janice King as well as Monique and myself. As always, please speak with one of us should you have any concerns.

David Libbey

Finance Committee Report

As of the end of March, the church's year-to-date Operating income was \$725 (3%) below budgeted expectations. The largest contributing factors were non-pledging envelopes, \$1,050 below budgeted expectations and loose offering, \$300 below the budgeted amount. The good news is that Operating expenses are \$1,900 less than expected.

The Finance Committee continues to work with the Property Committee to determine potential financial plans for paying for parsonage repairs and updates when recommended to the congregation. The committee also continues to communicate frequently with the Pastoral Search Committee to develop a compensation package to offer to prospective settled pastors.

If anyone has questions about giving to the church, please contact one of the members of the Finance Committee: Bert Engvall, Chair; Chris Hoffman, Financial Secretary; David Libbey, Treasurer; Cyndy Engvall, Member.

Thank you to all who financially support the Baptist Church of Grafton.

Property Committee Report

Property Committee met and discussed the following at its April meeting:

- Insulation of the parsonage has been done. Thanks to those who helped including removing boxes and Styrofoam from attic to be recycled.
- Baptismal Pool
 - Instructions for the filling and draining of the pool have been created complete with pictures and pipes in the furnace room labeled.
 - There is a leak somewhere that still needs to be investigated.
- New speakers have been installed and are working well.
- Organ repair is done and Pat is very happy with the results.
- New and improved lighting at the church
 - Total cost will be \$1,404. The money will be taken from the Building Fund and the Operating Fund.
 - Donations from the church members are also being accepted. Checks should be made out to the Baptist Church of Grafton specifying the Lighting Project on the memo line.
- Parsonage renovation project is on hold until the Committee gets a better idea of what a settled pastor would need it for housing.
- Spring Clean-up – there is a task for everyone!!
 - Date to be set and announced in Church. Deacons will be asked to call people to remind them that their help is needed.
 - Proposal is to begin replacing the boards on the handicap access ramp with plastic planks.
 - Mulch will be purchased for the gardens and spread after weeding
 - Clean up behind the shed is on the list as it has become a dumping ground.
 - Pews and windows need to be washed,

- Walks to be edged
- Bert Engvall has agreed to mow the church lawn for one more year.

Christian Education News

Christian Education met and discussed the following at its April meeting:

- Spring yard sale to support our Campership Fund
- Children's Day will be June 10 with a picnic/cook-out after Worship on our side lawn.
- Donna Nichols is hoping to recruit more people to share the Children's Message. Please speak with her if you are able to share a moment with our youth. She has several books, websites and ideas for stories. Share your light!!
- Tuesday Bible Study class is finishing its study of Isaiah. Meredith is continuing to lead this group and will do so until September when she resumes her classes.
- Committee is continuing to work on plans for a Vacation Bible School to be held at our church this summer. Donna has reached out to the other churches in the surrounding area to see what children and adults might be available for a high-energy and catchy bible based program.
- Adult Sunday School Class will be available starting May 6. Donna will have a short video available which will be followed by a discussion. She is proposing to start the program at 9 am.

Campership Yard Sale and Mission Luncheon and Bake sale

Congratulations to the hardworking people who set-up, baked, prepared food, acted as salespeople and then cleaned up after our very successful Campership Yard Sale and Mission Bake Sale/ Luncheon. Susan Fleming, Marcia Kamilewicz and Everett Beaman were the chairs this year and did a wonderful job.

Thursday and Friday there was a flurry of activity as the tables were covered with a wonderful assortment of donated items from small to big for the yard sale. There were toys, games, household goods, craft items, clothing, hats and bags, linens and much, much more. On Saturday, under beautiful sunny skies shoppers arrived seeking bargains and treasures. Saturday afternoon a dedicated team packed away the remainders and helped deliver them to a variety of places that could use them. The Christian Education Committee added \$865 to the Campership Fund and the Mission Committee added \$515 to support designated missions.

Congratulations to everyone on the hard work and the amazing results! When we all work together we can certainly create miracles.

Moderator's Corner

This has been an exciting several weeks at Church. We have welcomed two new members into our family with the possibility of a third in the new future. We have had an Easter Service with toe-tapping music and an inspirational message. We have had a baby dedication and a chance to renew friendships with Ryan Nichols and his family. This is indeed a busy place and one that reaches out in love.

Our next Board of Directors' meeting will be on June 4 which is a new date. Just a reminder that these meetings are open to all. If you have a concern or something you would like to share with the Directors and cannot attend a meeting, please seek out one of the Members at Large [Kathy LaFlamme, Marcia Kamilewicz, Sherri Bicknell, Elaine Hewey, Steve Reichle, John or Gloria Renaud]. They will be glad to present your ideas.

Richard's Swedish Meatball Dinner

On Saturday, May 19 our chefs will be offering you a wonderful down-home dinner of Swedish Meatballs with all the fixings. This, of course, will be accompanied by our famous and delicious dessert buffet. The donation remains the same – just \$12 for adults. We will begin serving at 5:30 so be sure to be there promptly to get a seat. Please call the church office [508-839-4911] to make your reservations or sign-up on the reservation sheet in Russell Fellowship Hall. As with all our events, reservations are critical to enable us to provide adequate food for those attending.

Kitchen & Hospitality Committee

Thank you to the Kitchen Crew Cooks and Helpers, Dessert Buffett Cooks, and the Clean-up Crew for all that you did to make our March Oven Fried Chicken Dinner a big success! The Dinner raised \$906 to support the on-going work of our church.

Coffee Time Sign-Up Sheet is available on the Clock Table. We have a new and improved Sign-Up Sheet and the Committee wants to recruit more helpers to team up with and help others provide refreshments, set up and or clean-up at Coffee Time and also after the church dinners. Please look for the sign-up sheets for coffee time. Spreading the workload helps everyone have a better time and is a wonderful opportunity to serve our church members and our visitors

As part of the push to make more space in our church and present a tidier appearance, the Committee is divesting the kitchen of the green melmac dishes, serving platters and bowls and many other items that we no longer use for dinners. These will be available at the Indoor Yard Sale. We will be using the space to properly store our good china and make room in the cupboards for things that are needed during suppers and other events. Come to the In-door Yard sale and take home one of our old kitchen treasurers.

Important Dates for May

1	Tuesday	~	5:15-6:15pm AA Reflections Group
		~	7:30pm Bible Study with Meredith Christian
3	Thursday	~	9:30am Prayer Time in the parlor
5	Saturday	~	Memorial Service for Dorothy Maynes
6	Sunday	~	9:00 am Adult Sunday School Class starts!!
		~	10:00am Communion Sunday Worship Service to God's Glory, Sunday School classes for our children and youth. Coffee Fellowship following Worship.
		~	11:30am Choir Rehearsal with Pat Knowlton
7	Monday	~	7:00pm Long Range Planning
8	Tuesday	~	5:15-6:15pm AA Reflections Group
10	Thursday	~	9:30 am Prayer Time in the parlor
		~	7:00 pm Property Committee with Steve Reichle
12	Saturday	~	9:00 am-2:00pm Quilt Class with Paula Moore
13	Sunday	~	10:00 am Worship Service to God's Glory, Sunday School classes for our children and youth.
		~	11:30 am Choir Rehearsal with Pat Knowlton
14	Monday	~	10:00 am Mission Committee with Garfield Atchue
15	Tuesday	~	5:15-6:15 pm AA Reflections Group
		~	7:30 pm Bible Study with Meredith Christian
16	Wednesday	~	3:00 pm Crescent Manor
17	Thursday	~	9:30 am Prayer Time in the parlor
19	Saturday		5:30 pm Richard's Swedish Meatball Dinner
20	Sunday	~	10:00 am Worship Service to God's Glory, Sunday School classes for our children. Coffee Fellowship following Worship.
		~	11:30 am Choir Rehearsal with Pat Knowlton
21	Monday	~	7:00 pm Deacons Meeting with Ruth Ballantyne
22	Tuesday	~	5:15-6:15 pm AA Reflections Group
24	Thursday	~	9:30 am Prayer Time in the parlor
		~	7:00pm Christian Education with Donna Nichols
27	Sunday	~	10:00 am Worship Service to God's Glory, Sunday School classes for our youth. Coffee Fellowship following meeting. Undie Sunday
		~	11:30 am Choir Rehearsal with Pat Knowlton
29	Tuesday	~	5:15-6:15 pm AA Reflections Group
		~	7:30 pm Bible Study with Meredith Christian
31	Thursday	~	9:30 am Prayer Time in the parlor

- **Worship Service to God's Glory, 10:00am**, with Childcare and Sunday School Classes for children in Nursery through High School. Church Family Fellowship Time with refreshments following the Worship Service.:
- **Deacons of the Month for May:** Ruth Ballantyne and Chris Hoffman
- **Tellers for the Month of May:** Engvall and Hoffman Families
- Church Office Hours are Monday – Thursday 9:00 am–11:30 am.
- Call the Church office for the Pastor's hours.

Joybell Delivery Changing!

This is the first month that our Joybell is being sent by first class postage and with an increased number sent in electronic format. Our goal is to improve service to our “customers” and reduce production and mailing cost to the church. We will have extra copies for guests and friends available in RFH. If you got your Joybell by mail and would like it **by email**, please let our Church Secretary know. If you got it by email and would prefer to **return to a paper copy** please let our Church Secretary know. If you didn't get a copy at your home [and are reading a copy that you picked up at church or from the website] please let her know so we can ensure that you receive our newsletter directly.

Graduate Search

We are planning to **celebrate our High School, College and Graduate School Graduates in the June *Joybell***. Please help us to collect the names of the graduates in your family, both near and far away. Here's what we need to know about each student:

- **Graduate's name,**
- **school from which she or he is graduating,**
- **degree being received if at the college level,**
- **college choice/ future plans.**



Sunday, May 13 is Mother's Day! Bring your Mother or a special person who has been like a mother to you to church that day to celebrate mothers and all they do for us! We will save a seat for her!



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