

Congregational Connection



Pastor's Column

May God give you the eyes of Christ to perceive human need.

Church, we have such exciting days coming up! On January 26th, we launched our visioning process with our coach Rev. Paul Nickerson. This process has been a long time coming in the life of our church. We are more than ready to envision how God is leading us to “be the church” now and in the future. Our visioning team and Coach Rev. Paul will lead us through discernment over the next five months. We will have an overview of what we covered at our visioning retreat during our Annual Meeting on February 10th after worship.

Here is a short preface to our process from Rev. Paul.

What is the process all about? A vision/discernment process is about listening and determining how God is calling our church into the future. This work assumes that it is God’s church and God has a vision of what the church can be to the community and beyond. Thus, prayer, research and thoughtful conversation with the Vision Team and the congregation is essential.

3 Questions are answered in the vision/discernment process

- Why do we exist?
- Where are we going?
- How will we get there?

The hymn that is going around in my Mind is the one we often sing— Be Thou My Vision. Here is an excerpt. How blessed it is to envision with you.

With faith and excitement,
Gretchen

English version by Eleanor Hull (1912)
Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.
Thou my best Thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one....

Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.



From the Desk of the Deacons

We celebrated Advent during December with the lighting of the Hope, Peace, Joy and Love candles, finishing with the lighting of the Christ candle on Christmas Eve to rejoice in the Birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Thanks to everyone who took part in lighting these candles and assisting with the weekly readings.

Also thanks to those who purchased the lovely red, white and pink poinsettias that decorated our altar on Christmas Eve. They always add to the beauty of our Sanctuary.

Christmas Eve service was held at 6:30 p.m. and attended by friends and families both young and old. It is always such a blessed feeling when the only light is coming from illuminated candles, and we are singing Christmas carols together before heading home to celebrate this sacred holiday with our families.

On Epiphany Sunday, January 6th, we celebrated with the Little Christmas in Jackson Square concert. The Church was filled to capacity with people enjoying the music and performers.

On January 26th from 10 am – 3 pm everyone is invited to come together for a Visioning Retreat to talk about the values and mission of our Church as we move forward into the future. All opinions matter as we start this important process. We hope you can attend.

As we begin 2019, we continue to work together to bring peace, hope and love to our Church and community. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to East Weymouth Congregational Church.

Happy New Year from the Deacons, Nancy Haley, Bettyanne Lang, Tara Haley, Donna Eliasson, and Cheryl McMillan



From the Trustees

The budget is complete with the help of all the trustees and Donna. American Alarm did our annual inspection on 1/14/19.

We are waiting for a quote to fix the chimney on the back of the annex.

Hope’s Closet is doing a fundraiser in February and will be donating the proceeds to our church.

Trustees, Bob Crisswell, Tom Kosinen, Norman Fulton, Martha Webber, and Kathy Mosher



Notes from the Music Director

CHASE AWAY THOSE WINTER BLUES WITH GOSPEL! --- The Joyful Voices of Inspiration, a 40-voice gospel choir, will warm up our world on Sunday, Feb. 24. It is their second annual appearance, and they are thrilled to be returning.

The group, which has performed in Europe, South America and Central America, comprises people of all faiths, races and ages, from the 20s to people in their 70s and older.

The concert will be at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 24.

As for admission, we’re going to let the Holy Spirit guide us on this one: Suggested donation is \$10 for adults, \$20 per family.

WELCOME, SONIA CLAIR! --- Sonia is a new member of our church and a new member of our choir. She has lots of experience singing in church choirs and is lending her voice to the soprano section. It’s a pleasure to have her aboard.

HUMP DAY CONCERTS FOR LENT --- If you live or work near Jackson Square, join us Wednesdays during Lent, from March 13 to April 17, for piano and organ music for quiet meditation at lunch hour, from 12:15 p.m. to 12:40 p.m.

We'll have more about the program in March newsletter.

THANKS FOR YOUR (LITTLE) CHRISTMAS GIFT --- The 20th annual Little Christmas in Jackson Square attracted a crowd of nearly 300 on Sunday, Jan. 6.

Thanks to all who participated, including our Senior Choir and Christmas Kids' Choir led by Niamh Hogan, as well as the North River Brass Quintet and the Little Christmas in Jackson Square Great Choir. And thanks to all who help set up and break down before and after the concert.

We raised nearly \$1,600 for the Weymouth Food Pantry to feed the hungry in our town --- almost double that of last year. And you can still make donations to the food pantry online at www.weymouthfoodpantry.org.

SINGING IS THERAPEUTIC --- It's still the dead of winter, and we will soon begin our Lenten and Easter preparations. Now is a great time to join the choir! If you like to sing and can carry a tune, join us Wednesday nights from 7:45 to 9 p.m. for some serious singing and, occasionally, some serious silliness. YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOW HOW TO READ MUSIC.

And if you can't make the Wednesday night rehearsals, that doesn't mean you can't sing with us. You can be provided with rehearsal CDs or mp3s that you can use to learn the music, and you can then join us on Sunday mornings from 9:30 to 9:50 for vocal warmups.

If you want to know more, call 781-974-3503.

Victor DeRubeis
Director of Music



Church School News

When you think of our Sunday School children it's not hard to believe in small miracles. At the end of each year we tally up the children's collection taken each week in Sunday School and we donate to Heifer according to what we have collected. We had collected \$183 over the year, then some of the children were given \$20 for Heifer in honor of their birthday and then when I mentioned at Coffee Hour that our children just want to feed the world a very generous donor added \$40 more dollars to help purchase more for Heifer. So whether you call that a small miracle or a great miracle down by small hands we ended up sending a share of a heifer, school of fish, seedlings, 3 shares of a goat, 2 shares of a pig, a trio of rabbits, a flock of chickens, which we send each year because the kids love chickens, and a share of a llama. How's that for a blessed miracle!

This year we will be celebrating Candlemas on Sunday February 3rd. This is a traditional Christian time that marks the presentation of Jesus at the temple for the first time. It reflects the words of Simeon's prayer which state "He is a light to reveal God to the Nations." Mary and Joseph brought the infant Jesus to the temple to be blessed by Simeon and Anna, upon seeing the Messiah he gave thanks to the Lord. Luke 2:29-33 The children will be making a traditional rolled beeswax candle and will ask for them to be blessed during the worship service. After church they can take them home and share in lighting them with their families as the Christmas season ends.

Sunday, March 3, Annual Lenten Pancake Breakfast

All are welcomed to share in the fun and fellowship of the Lenten Pancake Breakfast (Feast) where we gather immediately after church to share in a homemade meal together before continuing on our Sunday sojourns. There are pancakes, sausages and many different egg casseroles prepared by the CE and Teachers. Then the fun begins with the meal, but then becomes a battle for the fastest pancake runner amongst the children. We pair up all contestants by age then send them running around the Chapel to try to be the fastest. In the end everyone is celebrated for trying and it usually means a candy prize!

One more element to the day is the burning of the palms from the previous year. We gather in the parking lot with a metal bucket full of the dried palms and we burn them to the cheers and laughter of the children.

When the flames and smoke are gone the ashes will be used for Ash Wednesday services where we gather to let go of our troubles and turn to Christ as Lent begins.

Prayer Pals

The children will continue to include their Prayer pals each week during their class prayer time. We encourage each other to lift up our prayers to God whenever you feel the spirit.

Help me love, help me care, help me smile, help me share. Help me give, help me grow, help me laugh, help me know. *L.Cain7/06

Kerry Mortland, Church School Superintendent
Seek Joy!



Can You Picture the Goal?

Stephen Covey in his famous book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, spoke about having "the end in mind". His point was that every day we should be doing the most important things that will produce the kind of life we envision. By seeing the goal of our life, we align each day to that goal and consistently move toward it.

This dynamic is extremely important for churches that want to connect with people who don't have a church home. We need to picture what it will look like when we see people come to the faith, to see lives changed, to see healing, hope, purpose and meaning abound. When we can picture what it will look like, when we "keep the end in mind", we can consistently make the efforts, day by day, to reach that end. Without such a sense, it is easy to get lost or give up or get discouraged. I see many churches give up trying to reach new people just when they are on the cusp of making a difference. They lose sight of the goal.

Debra Searles rowed across the Atlantic Ocean by herself. It took three months, rowing through storms, sharks, whales and loneliness. She said that what kept her from quitting was that she would "Run the Movie"; she had a clear picture of what it would look like when she crossed the finish line. The goal kept her going.

If you are in the midst of trying to connect with people in a culture that is more and more secular and you are getting discouraged, take heart. Get a clear picture of the "end in mind" and "Run your Movie" of what it will look like as new people are transformed. That will give you the energy and courage to keep moving out of your church and into the neighborhood.



Upcoming Pastoral and Preacher Coverage

February 3 – Pastor Gretchen Elmendorf
February 10 – Pastor Gretchen Elmendorf
February 17 – Rev. Gary Ritts
February 24 - Pastor Gretchen Elmendorf



Birthdays

Skye Merlino
Sue Bose
Dianne Ritchie

February 1
February 2
February 24



In Our Prayers

Bob
Joe & Donna
Chickie
Michael B
Jack
Servicemen & women

James
Chris
Kristin
Lynn & Dave
First Responders
*Kelly

Kaycee
Sandy R
Angela
Wendy
Michael F
Caden
Anita
All God's creatures
Family of Nancy Y
*Mary C
Dave
Jada-K
Tanya D
Barrington C
Joe K
Barbara M

Brenda
Vets
Bette
Val & Dave
Debbie P
Frank
Dave
Family of Janie F
Mary
Linda D
Shirley
Tameika D
Brian C
All our governing officials
Maryanne H

Pray the compressor station does not pass



From the Office

Please have your March submissions to me no later than February 20th.
Thank you.