

God Stuff Happening In Our Churches – August 2015

MISSIONS

- **United Baptist Church, Lakeport** recently had a campaign to support Church World Service's Blankets and Tools program. They also donated to Laconia's GOT LUNCH program and members of the Board of Missions helped pack lunches a couple of mornings.
- For 6 years a group from **First Baptist Church, New London** has participated in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. The group calls themselves "Jeff's Anglers Relay for Life Team," in memory of former pastor Jeff Zurheide, who passed away after a long battle with multiple myeloma. This year's goal is \$17,000 for a grand total of \$100,000 over six years. The team fully expects to reach their goal.

CHURCH NEWS

- Congratulations to **Mr. Lloyd Wiley**, who was locally ordained on Sunday, June 28 at **First Baptist Church, Lyme**. Revs. Ed Young and John Cerrato led the Call to Ordination, the Charge to the Ordinand and Charge to the People. Rev. Dr. Lori Wiley sang a beautiful song for her husband called "Here I Am". Rev. Amy Hayden, pastor of the Lyme Congregational Church, preached on Isaiah 6:1-9.
- **First Baptist Church, Bellows Falls** held its 2nd "healing service" on June 28th. It was preceded by 24 hours of prayer. Congregants and friends signed up for hourly slots, dedicating themselves to at least 15 minutes of intentional prayer for the church family, the community and the world beyond. They began with a special Bible study on prayer and parishioners prayed every hour for 24 hours.

The 24 Hours of Prayer concluded with a light breakfast and a time of sharing. Most of those who participated said that the time spent in intentional prayer was so nurturing and uplifting that they came away from the experience more awakened to the Holy Spirit's presence within them. Many of them also found that they spent 45 minutes easily on prayer without realizing how much time had passed.

The service that morning was a special healing service filled with song, prayer and the laying on of hands for all of these in need of physical, spiritual or emotional healing. Stories of healing were shared by pastors Steven and Terri Walton, & by former pastor, Rev. Chuck Friedman.



- **Mr. Rubin Jennings** has been called to serve as pastor of the **Plainfield Community Baptist Church**. He began at the beginning of July.
- **West Swanzey Community Church** has a Bible poster board at the back of the sanctuary. During the summer members are being asked to write their favorite Bible verse on a 3x5 card and tape it to the board. This "collage for the Lord" will become part of the fall Christian education program.

The members are also being asked to pray for the children and youth of the church during the summer. Specifically:

- For safety and spiritual protection.
- For family blessings of joy, peace and love.
- That they will see the Hand of God working.
- For them to have time to be a child!
- For them to feel the Holy Spirit moving.
- For them to hear the Shepherd's Voice.
- For them to believe in the power of prayer and the healing of our Savior.
- For them to desire to walk the paths that will allow them to grow into the Lord's plan and purpose for their lives.
- For their salvation and all those who will come to know Jesus Christ through them!

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- The Friends of Madison (NH) Library recently sponsored a special weekend of events honoring E.E. Cummings and his poetry. One of his poems, “i am a little church,” was written with **The Madison Church** in mind. Pastor **Sean Dunker-Bendigo** says, “I have been a part of The Madison Church long enough to realize I am living this poem and that has brought another level of understanding it.”

i am a little church (no great cathedral) – i do not worry if briefer days grow briefest,
i am not sorry when sun and rain make april

my life is the life of the reaper and the sower;
my prayers are prayers of earth’s own clumsily striving (finding and losing and laughing and crying) children
whose any sadness or joy is my grief or my gladness

around me surges a miracle of unceasing
birth and glory and death and resurrection:
over my sleeping self float flaming symbols
of hope, and i wake to a perfect patience of mountains

i am a little church (far from the frantic
world with its rapture and anguish) at peace with nature – i do not worry if longer nights grow longest;
i am not sorry when silence becomes singing

winter by spring, i lift my diminutive spire to
merciful Him Whose only now is forever:
standing erect in the deathless truth of His presence (welcoming humbly His light and proudly His darkness)

- The first week of July **Antrim Baptist Church** welcomed the Celebration Singers to Antrim. During their time in Antrim the group of teen singers from Atlanta, TX, offered concerts in the area or worked on projects around the church or in town.



- In September **First Baptist Church, New London** will be sponsoring “Life is a Journey – Let’s talk about it”, an end-of-life issues and discussion series. This series is free and open to the public. It is being held at the church from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesdays.

Sept. 8 – “Ethical Challenges/Dilemmas Regarding End-of-Life Decision-Making”

Sept. 15 – “Death Café” (small group conversation opportunities)

Sept. 22 – “Advanced Directives & Physicians Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment ‘POLST’”

Sept. 29 – “Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End” (Book review and discussion)

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- For 40 days this summer a number of folks from **First Baptist Church, Keene** are part of a prayer, devotional group following the “Jesus Creed,” (loving God and people). They are reading a devotional book called *Forty Days Living the Jesus Creed*, by Scot McKnight, as the church prepares for its 200th anniversary with God’s guidance. There will also be two group meetings during the 40 days to share with each other.
- 100 years ago the Baptist, Methodist and Congregational Churches of Hinesburg merged to form **The United Church of Hinesburg**. To celebrate, the church is embarking on an oral history project of the church. They will begin by constructing a church timeline of events dating back to 1789 when the Congregational Church was formed. Beginning in the fall they will be asking people of all ages to tell the oral history of the church. The histories will be recorded and shared with the congregation.
- After stopping construction for the winter, work began again in the spring on the new meeting house for **First Baptist Church, South Londonderry**. Exterior work is expected to be done by the end of the summer. No timetable has been set yet for when the congregation will be able to begin meeting in the new building. They continue to worship in the Town Hall.



- Good things are happening at **First Baptist Church, Nashua**. They have been busy this spring completely renovating their kitchen and reroofing part of their building. On the spiritual side of things a new Singles Ministry is being birthed that will include social events, opportunities for spiritual connection and possibly a book study or two. This summer they are experimenting with moving Vacation Bible School to the afternoon.
- An open letter to our ABC/VNH Churches from Rev. Karen Heavey

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I have been following Dale Edwards’ commentaries concerning the church for the last two months and have commented directly to him on one occasion. I would like to share some insights the Lord has shared with me.

For many, many years I have accepted and seek to address the needs of the small church. When God decided I was prepared, God blessed me with a new church start in Boston/Quincy, Massachusetts - amongst severe daily opposition. It was over nine years that the Lord greatly established and sustained a ministry that “touched” the untouchables! With approximately 2,000 transient occupants living there on a daily basis, several programs offered assistance to the homeless: female and male detox; youth DYS housing; locked psychological services and others. This was my congregation.

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Dale expressed in June's newsletter how he learned much from listening and sharing with the young people. Based upon these conversations, Dale asks all of us if there are new ways we can discuss "church" together with them that will open our doors to younger adults and families. Dale was correct when he told us that our younger generation speaks a different language and has different needs today. I support Dale's compassionate challenge, but I do so adding another, different perspective.

Grace and Hope Community Church's mission seeks to bless those who are so angry; those who have surrendered completely in remaining lost, and those with the belief they are totally abandoned by God and the church. In all my years of conversations, listening and ministry, I still hear the same words spoken today: "God is dead. What do I need God for?" "Jesus doesn't care about me. I'm proof enough aren't I?" And the most painful: "The church stinks. I've never been hated more than from them!" So, I can identify and agree with Dale's discussions and to the challenges churches face today with shrinking and dying churches. I am also aware of our growing population's diversity of needs.

So, what can churches do? Dale has certainly opened the door for some to explore ways of changes within our churches. I would like to add another tried and true ministry. Friends, get out of your cathedrals and go into the streets. Not the main streets and malls, but like Jesus did: the side paths, narrow footpaths, poorest winding areas and where the rejected all tread. The Lord provides us with "eyes with which to see" and when you see as Christ sees there is before us a world full of hunger, poverty, shelter, jobless, single parents, abuse of many sorts, and much more. Again, what do we do that really changes lives? Sadly, this reality is growing faster every day!

Truly, it's not wise to "jump on out there" unprepared, unaware and before prayerfully seeking God's direction for you. Developing the right listening, physical/emotional and speaking gifts to offer us to others is crucial. I would be humbled to spend time with you to share and discuss this very contemporary Christian outreach/mission.

Dale continues to compassionately and knowingly share the insights God has placed upon his heart. I, too, share mine. May we take all this into our hearts and prayers and listen for the Lord's direction.

Rev. Karen Heavey, 1st Vice President, Ministers Council of ABC/VNH and Senior Pastor (I've got lots of white hair - smile) of Grace and Hope Community Church, PO Box 219, Andover, NH 03216