



BRANCHES

John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches."



Vol. 9, Issue 2 **Phippsburg Congregational Church (UCC), Phippsburg, ME** October 2016
"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here."
Rev. Holly Morrison, Pastor

From the Pastor

By Rev. Holly Morrison

"Why is there a bird on the cross?"

We were sitting at a church council meeting, when the question was relayed to me, and it was a good question—because it reminded me of one of the chief dangers of my profession: pastors tend to swim in a rich stew of metaphors and symbolism, forgetting that those metaphors may not connect with everyone else. So it's only fair that I give you a taste of the stew I've been in—so you know why the fire-colored paper bird graced our sanctuary cross from May to October.

I belong to a group known as a "Community of Practice." It's part of "the Pastoral Excellence Program," an initiative to support and educate pastors to reverse the high rate of burnout in our profession. For three years, we were guided by a wise mentor, Rev. Janet Dorman. Then, in October 2015, she was rushed into emergency surgery for a brain tumor. The prognosis was unclear, but treatment would include chemotherapy and radiation. There would be no visits and no calls, because she could not speak.

Autumn unfolded, and I watched the wild geese migrating. Janet loved the wild geese. She had been to Iona, where Celtic Christians see the wild goose as a metaphor for the Spirit of God. When she was taken from us, I noticed them all the more: the high, lonesome sound of their calls, the way their flying formation formed an arrow in the air, always pointing towards something beyond...

When I saw the wild geese sweeping in over the Kennebec in Spring, in the weeks before Pentecost, I thought of Rev. Dorman, and of Bob Cummings and Dill Paiste. My heart was full of high, lonesome, echoing calls. I saw the Holy Spirit everywhere, in wild grief and wild celebration. I wanted to share the Good News, that God's Spirit is with us in all things. And so, on the festival of Pentecost, this sanctuary was filled with a flock of paper geese in the colors of fire. For several Sundays, one "Holy Ghost Goose" kept flying: from the font to the doorway, from the lectern to the cross, where it lingered until the memory of the pageantry of Pentecost faded into the busy-ness of other seasons. Life does, after all, keep coming at you, each day tumbling into the next, somewhere between depression and delight. When it's not your profession, there's no particular pressure to stop and reflect on metaphors.

Last month, our Community of Practice met. Halfway through, there was a knock on the door. A thin woman with a headscarf stepped slowly into the room. We recognized her by her eyes, dancing with fire and life. Then Janet came and sat down in the black rocking chair we'd left empty for almost a year. And it felt like a bank of wind folded through feathers, an arrow of birds high in the sky, a raucous shared cry, a rush of wild wings.

Here in Phippsburg, wild wings have carried us through three seasons together. The occupational hazard remains: metaphors that have reached out to me through scripture and experience may not always speak to you. But humor me in this idea: there is still a bird on the cross. The Holy Ghost, that wild goose, is present wherever things come together. It is there at the intersection of daily activity and prayer, as our Christian witness touches people around us. It is there at the intersection of work and worship, as our prayers take form in action and service far beyond our sanctuary.

Each season brings its own deaths and resurrections, and the wild geese are on the move again. As you wrestle with your own questions of healing and wholeness, here is my prayer for each one of you: that the burden of the cross you carry will be eased, and that the Holy Spirit will meet you there, carrying hope and healing on its wild wings.

Know Your Neighbor

This month's "neighbors" are **Jeff and Ellen Parker** and **George and Dottie Swanson**.

Jeff and Ellen Parker

Jeff and Ellen live in Bath, in a big, old house that Ellen's parents bought back in 1969. It is on High Street, next to Mae's Café. The aromas from Mae's cooking perfume their days!

Jeff was born and raised in Lewiston, ME. Ellen was born in Bermuda and was raised on the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

They met while working met at BIW, fell in love and were married on 5/9/81.

Ellen's mother and brothers were born in Bath and since both Jeff and Ellen worked in Bath, living there seemed like the smart thing to do.

Both worked in management positions at BIW and retired from BIW in 1995 (Jeff with 31 years and Ellen with 25 years of service). After BIW, they worked part-time – Jeff in real estate and Ellen in various clerical/bookkeeping positions.

Finally, in 2008, they both "fully" retired.

Jeff and Ellen have 3 grown daughters, 6 adult grandchildren, 2 great grandchildren and a 3rd great grandchild "on the way"!

Their daughters live in Lewiston, Sabattus and Monmouth and they are grateful that they live so close by.

Ellen and Jeff attended the Bath Nazarene Church at the beginning of their church lives together. Finding that their lifestyle and religious beliefs were not completely in sync with the Nazarene Church, they decided to search for a new church home.

They took a ride to Popham Beach one day and came back home to Bath via Parker Head. Stopping to look at the Phippsburg UCC church, they decided to try it out. Quoting Jeff, "the first Sunday we attended, we felt an immediate belonging." They became members on 10/31/2011.

Ellen enjoys mind games such as "Words with Friends" and solving crossword puzzles. In the summer, you will find her working out in her flower gardens to her heart's content.

Jeff is a Red Sox fan and, of course, a Patriot's fan. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Five County Credit Union and, until very recently, he was a volunteer driver for "SEARCH".

Ellen and Jeff both enjoy "working" for our church. Jeff is the current Chair of the Buildings and Grounds Committee. Ellen is a Deacon, as well as a member of the Budget and Finance Committee. She is part of the Pastoral Advisory Group and is one of the Church's Counters. From time to time, she assists the Assistant Treasurer updating the PowerChurch database.

We have two miniature poodles, Penny and Andy, and a toy poodle, Bear. Several church members know Bear because he has attended many book studies and church meetings with us. Our little dogs round out our lives.

As both Jeff and Ellen said "We feel very blessed to be a part of our Phippsburg Church Family!!"

George and Dottie Swanson

George and Dottie Swanson are long-time members of the family here at Phippsburg Congregational Church. They live in a beautiful home on Graffam Way in Bath. Dottie is an avid gardener and it shows in her beautiful yard and flower beds.

Prior to moving to Bath, George spent several years as a member of the US Air Force. When he left, he went to work as an "estimator" for Lockheed Aircraft Company in Long Island, New York. After leaving Lockheed, George and Dottie moved to Maine and George worked for Bath Iron Works. Their journey to Maine started as a honeymoon gift. They were given, as a wedding gift, a week's stay at a cottage on the coast in Georgetown. After that, Dottie and George returned to Maine on several summer vacations and fell in love with the area. They made the decision to make this their home and George quickly applied to and was hired by BIW. So, in 1969, with 4 children in tow (3 girls and 1 boy, they made the move to a wonderful old 17 room house on Middle Street in Bath.

Obviously, much of Dottie's life has been spent raising 3 daughters and 1 son. Along the way, she also spent many years teaching school. In addition to being proud parents of 4 children, they are also proud grandparents (of eight) and equally proud great-grandparents (of 7). And according to Dottie, more are sure to come. Their children all live in Maine (one 2 blocks away) except for one daughter who lives in North Carolina. There is lots of love in their family and, quoting Dottie, "we consider ourselves best friends".

They were members of the Bath Methodist Church at one time and enjoyed the strong youth program there. They were also members of Bath UCC for several years. At a point in their church life, both felt the need to reach out and see what other

churches offered. Part of that search led them to visit Phippsburg UCC. As they walked up the winding path to the church and crossed that worn threshold at the entrance, both felt that God was telling them that THIS is where he wanted them. Mark Wilson (a former student of Dottie's) was also a drawing card for them. They enjoyed Mark's warmth and his ability to be a teacher. At the time, the church was very small (less than 20 members) and both enjoyed the warm and inviting atmosphere. Since then, this has been their church home and both treasure it.

As their children were growing, George and Dottie and family enjoyed camping and exploring the beauty of Maine. They were very involved in Boy Scouts and are both very proud of their son Eric's accomplishment of becoming an Eagle Scout. Both have served in various positions within the church (deacons, board members, etc.) and both were volunteers for the Meals on Wheels initiative.

George is happiest working with his hands – building potting sheds, dollhouse furniture for his grand-daughters, and even building a small cottage in the woods of Georgetown. He enjoys woodworking and mechanical “things”. Dottie spent almost a lifetime raising her children and is quite an accomplished seamstress – she made most of her children's clothes and has even made quilts for her children and grand-children. She is also a retired Bath schoolteacher and was a Girl Scout leader. Today she enjoys gardening, reading, knitting and exercising at the Bath YMCA pool.

We are very blessed to have George and Dottie as part of our family here at Phippsburg Congregational Church.

Community Activities

Concerts

SARA GREY & BRIAN MILLER. Friday, November 11. 7:30. \$12 \$8 students.

These phenomenal folk singers will offer SONGS FROM THE LOGGING CAMPS, a unique and wonderful program of songs that migrated from Ireland to the logging camps of New England, Canada, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

THE GAWLER FAMILY Friday, December 9. 7:30. \$15 \$8 students

The Gawlers return to usher us into the holidays! We are delighted to have this stellar musical family return to our stage. If you've been to one of their previous concerts you know what a special evening you are in for.

Helping Others

The Bath Area Food Bank held its' **First Walk for Hunger on September 11th**, which was very successful. We brought in nearly \$5000.00, for a 'first annual'. This is fantastic!

Volunteer staff for active work at the Food Pantry

Phippsburg UCC congregation volunteers are scheduled to staff the Food Pantry on Tuesday, **December 27th & Friday, December 30th**. Returning and new energetic food pantry volunteers are welcome. A sign-up will go up in the narthex in November. Please contact Ann Schroeder, alsflo@aol.com, if you are interested.

Bath Area Kitchen Table

Beginning in September, this is the new name for what was known as the Soup Kitchen. Everyone is welcome. Open hours Mon-Wed-Fri from 11:30-12:30.

Mini Food Pantry at Morse

Continued donations of canned pasta, canned tuna/chicken, spaghetti sauce, & boxed mac & cheese are always welcome, as these are easy items for children to prepare when they get home from school.

The Bath Area Food Bank has opened a **SECOND** mini food pantry at Morse. Canned pasta, mac and cheese and individual meals, cereal and cups of food are **VERY** popular with needy students. Donations specific for the Morse food pantries can be made to the BAFB with Morse written in the memo line. This is going to be an expensive endeavor, but we all feel it is important.

Volunteer for desk work

A volunteer is needed to do computer entry check-in of clients at the Friday Food Pantry at 150 Congress Avenue in Bath. Please call the Kimberly Gates at 650-3478, or 443-5052 if you are interested. If there is no answer, leave a message with your contact info.

Decrease in household food insecurity

USDA Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack reported that there was a decrease in household food insecurity in the United States in 2015 in his September message.

Please see Release No. 0189.16 at www.usda.gov for more details.

Thanksgiving and Christmas meal boxes

For the holiday meal boxes, the following donations are requested; **canned sweet potatoes, instant potatoes, boxed stuffing, canned veggies.**

Because children need quick & easy meals to prepare during holiday vacations; **boxed mac and cheese and canned pasta** are included in the boxes.

Pumpkin pies (frozen) may be delivered when the Food Pantry is open on Tuesday and Friday from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. If the pies are delivered fresh, they can be frozen at the pantry.

Holiday items for **Thanksgiving** need to be **delivered by 11/21/16**

Christmas items must be **delivered by 12/19/16.**

You may leave donations at UCC Phippsburg in the narthex, and Ann will get them to the Food Pantry. You may also **drop off non-perishable** items for the holiday meal boxes **at Coastal Glass in Bath.**

You can donate by **check** to UCC Phippsburg, and write **Bath Area Food Bank Holiday meals** on the **memo line**. Your donation will be noted on your annual charitable donation letter. Clients will receive a \$15.00 Shaw's gift card to be used for food only; such as a turkey, other meat or a vegetarian main course for their holiday meals.

Please email Ann Schroeder at alsflo@aol.com, if you have questions.

Did You Know?

For years, our congregation has been enjoying the tasty coffee prepared each Sunday morning by a group of dedicated people. Did you know that in the past few years, we have switched over from "regularly produced" coffee to "Fair Trade" coffee? What in the world is Fair Trade coffee and why should we be concerned about it? The following article describes what it is and how it is helping us care for this beautiful creation that our God has entrusted to our care. I hope you enjoy the article and I hope it will encourage you to look for ways that you as an individual consumer can make a difference.

7 Reasons You Should Buy Fair Trade Coffee

by Dr. Edward Group DC, NP, DACBN, DCBCN, DABFM Published on June 17, 2010, Last Updated on October 9, 2015

We have all heard much buzz lately about buying fair trade and organic products, particularly in reference to daily commodities such as coffee. But what does "**fair trade**" actually mean? And why is it so important to buy fair trade, organic coffee?

What is Fair Trade?

Fair Trade refers to the system of buying and selling goods and commodities in a way which the local producers and communities involved in the growth and production of the commodity are honored and paid a fair wage. Fair trade also may include policies that honor the local natural environment involved in the production, as well as the promotion of people-to-people connections, fairness and sustainability.

Almost 85% of Fair Trade Certified™ coffee is also organic. And although organic, fair trade coffee is usually more expensive. The list below will offer some great reasons why you should consider supporting the international community of fair trade coffee producers, despite the slightly higher price per bean.

1. Supports Environmental Sustainability

When you buy fair trade, organic coffee you also support environmental sustainability through organic practices that reduce and/or eliminate the use of harmful toxic agrochemicals, pesticides and other chemical additives. What is more, many fair trade coffee farmers work with sustainable production methods to help keep the natural environment thriving for generations to come.

2. Fair Price

You support a fair price for products. Certified fair trade coffee has been given a base price, which is set by the international Fair Trade Labeling Organization. Therefore, you don't get ripped off, but neither do the workers that produce the beans.

3. Supports Local Communities & Workers

When you buy fair trade, organic coffee you help the workers, organizations and communities involved in the production to receive a living wage. This is a direct support against commodities practices that leave workers without the minimum salary required to have basic food, shelter, medical care and education.

4. Invests in Local Community Building

When you buy from a fair-trade producer, you also invest a small amount of your money in that local community. Whereas many coffee producers move into villages and towns and take-over local customs and culture, many fair trade coffee operatives reinvest revenues back into the local business and community.

Even more importantly, fair trade producers continually offer back a social premium to specific community development initiatives in the realms of housing, healthcare, education, leadership training and women's programs.

5. Tastes Better & Healthier For You!

Fair-trade, organic coffee is better for your health and tastes better. As the demand for global coffee increases, methods of mass-producing coffee lead to lower-quality produce. Sustainably grown organic coffee is often grown slower, and under rain-forest canopy. It is also grown without chemical fertilizers and pesticides, allowing the coffee to keep all of its nutrients.

During the pressing process, organic coffee is processed without the use of the harsh chemicals commonly used on non-organic beans. What is more, organic coffee plants create soil that holds its complex nutrient base. These plants can then feed nutrients back into the beans at a slow and steady rate, adding a robust, smooth flavor to the beans. It also allows the native soil to retain its complex nutrient base (as compared to the depleted soils commonly found on full-sun coffee farms).

6. Help Increase and Preserve Biodiversity

Many birds in the U.S. move to "coffee country" in the winter. Unlike mass-produced coffee, which sometimes robs animals of their natural habitat, traditional fair-trade coffee plantations offer some of the last remaining bird habitats in countries like Colombia and Mexico. In fact, studies in these two countries show that organic "shade-grown" coffee plantations have up to 95% more bird life than large-scale, rain-forest-stripped "sun-grown" plantations.

7. Remove the Middle Man

That \$4.00 Vente Mocha Latte you buy every day may have gone through the hands of up to ten different farmers, exporters, brokers, processors, roasters and retailers before it reached your lips. Fair trade coffee attempts to eliminate these costly middle men through working directly with cooperatives of small bean farmers.

Cooking Corner

Recipes from the “Favorite Recipes” Cookbook

Crunchy Broccoli Toss

Sharon L. Bond

1 Bunch broccoli (separated into florets and chopped) ½ Cup chopped pecans or walnuts
6 Slices bacon – cooked and crumbled 1 Cup good mayonnaise
¼ Cup chopped sweet onion ½ Cup sugar
½ Cup dried cranberries (or golden raisins if you prefer) 2 Tbsp. CIDER vinegar

Combine broccoli, bacon, onion and cranberries. Make a dressing by mixing the mayo, sugar and vinegar. Pour dressing over broccoli mixture and toss well. Chill at least 1 hour before serving. Makes 4-6 servings.

American Chop Suey

Jean Flink

1 Large onion, diced 1 ½ lb. good chopped beef
1 Green pepper, chopped 1 ½ Cup elbow macaroni
2 – 15 oz. cans crushed tomatoes 1 – 1 ½ Cup shredded mozzarella cheese
1 Red pepper, chopped olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

In large pan, saute onions and peppers in oil until soft. Add beef to pan and saute until lightly browned. Cook macaroni in large pot per package directions. Drain macaroni when cooked. Add tomatoes and macaroni to the cooked beef, onions and peppers. Mix well and turn into oven proof casserole dish. Top with shredded cheese. Bake at 325° until bubbly. Serves 4-6.

Deacon's News

A Deacon's Perspective

10/14/16

Our worship and special events year has been one of change, challenge and fellowship. Holly's entry into our pulpit has welcomed a new age for our church life. As a deaconate, we have worked with her to get acquainted, learn the ropes of the day to day, and supported events – large and small- in celebration of things familiar (Lobster on the Lawn) and new (Summer's End Farm Picnic).

The addition of contemporary language bibles to our church is an important step in our vitality efforts to be inclusive and welcoming to those who are not familiar with traditional resources or seek modern interpretations of the words of the prophets and apostles. This project has been on the discussion table for years. Holly led us through the many choices available. We dedicated 2 new editions of bibles on September 25. In addition to the KJV which will always be there, members and visitors to our church can become acquainted with The Contemporary English Version (CEV) produced by the American Bible Society, and The Message—written by Eugene Peterson. Orders will be taken throughout the year for those who wish to purchase one of these bibles for gift giving, personal use, or to memorialize a loved one with a dedication plate in the front of a pew bible. An order form is available from the church office or online.

Buildings and Grounds will be heading up a project to improve access to the sanctuary for special needs individuals. The congregation vote in favor of this change put into motion this long overdue adaptation on the west side of the church interior.

What crystalized the vision was a visit to a summer deacons meeting by Amy Leighty of The Bath Housing Authority. She put us in touch with a consultant in the field of accessibility who came to our church and did an evaluation and plan. When complete, this change will help not only those who come to worship, but guests to concerts and special services. Three capacity crowds at funerals this year proved we must be ever vigilant in *providing* welcome...not just saying it. There is a special piece in this issue of Branches about the Bath Area Food Bank. However, let me just raise awareness that school food cupboards are growing and on-going. Stay in tune with the program and specific needs on our website and bulletin board in the narthex. Do you have childrens' books to donate to the book cart at the food bank? Sally Gray is the one to contact for that.

The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. He took Bill Cummings, Dill Paiste, and Jane Morse over the past months this year. We celebrated their lives together in special services and continue to offer comfort to their loved ones as a church family. Celebrations also include the wedding of Vanessa Gutierrez to Tyler Webber. We welcomed the Murphy family into associate membership: Emily, David and their children Julia, Henry and William. William was baptized Oct. 9th.

Several church members visit on a regular basis those who are ill, hurting, or in the hospital. This is an on-going mission that is a special calling for Christians. Talk to Holly if you feel called to comfort those in pain but need some help getting started or would like to be a part of duo.

In closing, I say a heart-felt thank you to Chip, Sandy, Berenice, Julia, Brad, Ann B, Ann S., Ellen, Mare, and Bill for their constant efforts to be where they are needed, lead with faith, flexibility and patience, and deal with my short comings and quirks with loving kindness. It continues to be a busy year and both current and alumni deacons have pitched in at all levels of need.

Kathy Totten

Co-Chair, Board of Deacons

Committee Reports

Ways to Give to the Phippsburg Congregational Church Betsy Morse, Treasurer

How many ways can you give to our Church? As we begin our fall stewardship campaign it might be good to consider the several options. Of course, the standard option is to sit down and write a check or put cash in an offering envelope each Sunday and put it in the collection plate. You could also put cash or a check into a white envelope with your name on it and put that into the collection plate. Pretty standard stuff.

What I am really talking about here is that we have an increasing number of members and friends who are paying some or all of their pledge each year with appreciated stock. The gift of appreciated stock to the church is beneficial to the donor because it allows the gift to be made to fulfill a pledge while the donor does not have to pay any capital gains tax on the stock shares donated. The transaction is really pretty easy to accomplish too. The donor just tells his/her broker to transfer shares equaling the pledge amount or part thereof to the Phippsburg Congregational Church's account at Bath Savings Trust Company. Bath Savings Trust then notifies the Treasurer of the Church that the shares have been transferred. At this point the Treasurer will have cash equaling the value donated stock transferred from Bath Savings Trust Company to our operating account at Bath Savings Institution and your pledge is paid on our books. No muss no fuss! However, it is always a good idea for you to tell the Treasurer that the transaction is in the works so she can be on the lookout.

As always, we appreciate any and all gifts to the life and wellbeing of our community of faith. We are tremendously fortunate to have members and friends who are willing to give so generously of their time and treasure so we can be a Christian witness in our time.

New Property Committee John G. Morse, IV

Early this summer I heard via the grapevine that John Totman wished to sell his piece of land beside the church. I called him up and asked if the church had first refusal to buy it and was informed that "no, we didn't but as of that moment we did". So we started doing some research about the property lines and the tax valuation. Meanwhile he had talked to a Real Estate broker about a value and was unhappy with his estimate. On his own John had decided he wanted \$65,000 for the property.

At this point I decided to get a group of people from the church together to see what they thought about the price and whether or not the church should buy it. There was unanimous consent that the church could not afford not to buy it.

"We cannot do without that parking area."

"It could be the spot for our future filter bed sewer system."

"That is the only place we could expand the Linden Tree Meetinghouse if necessary"

"Besides, we owe John for its free use all these years."

So this was the basis for deciding that John's price was reasonable.

Meanwhile John had a soils scientist dig some test pits on the site that confirmed that a filter bed system could be placed on the lot. This was assuring to us that we could indeed use part of the lot for that purpose.

On Sunday July 17th a congregational meeting voted the following:

"To authorize the purchase of the John and Jan Totman property which is immediately south of the church lot for the price of \$65,000 plus transaction fees. Also that the Ad Hoc New Property Committee be authorized to handle all negotiations for the purchase."

October 4th, Peter Stackpole, our Moderator signed a purchase and sale agreement and \$2500 in earnest money from Memorial funds were used for the payment. Finally on October 14, 2016, Peter signed a lot of papers and we became the owners of the land. \$25,000 in the 1802 Fund left to the church by the estate of Dil Paiste plus a \$5000 anonymous donation to the Memorial Fund for this purpose was used to pay for the first half of the cost of the purchase.

Between now and the end of March we will need to raise and/or take from our endowments the remaining \$32,500 to fulfill the rest of our obligation to the Totmans.

Website: www.phippsburgucc.org
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Office: pccoffice1@gmail.com
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***Sunday worship is at 10 a.m. through the end of April
Sunday worship is at 9 a.m. June, July and August***

10 Church Lane, Phippsburg - just 1/3 mile down Parker Head Road from Route 209

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED