



THE PROSPECT TOWER

Prospect United Methodist Church
A Growing Christian Community of Faith in Action

December 2012

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Pastor's Report

"For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy and its people as a delight." ~ Isaiah 65:17-18



I have been with you all for a little over one year. In that time together, we have faced natural disasters, financial difficulties and those personal problems that come from simply living. It has not always been easy, but we have come through. I have learned that the members of the Prospect United Methodist Church are talented, committed and deeply caring. It is a joy working with you all.

I would like to take a few moments to talk about our future. Prospect UMC is facing challenges and difficulties that many of our sister congregations are facing. We live in a time of over-extended lifestyles. Between work, school schedules and extracurricular activities which involve parents, there seems to be little time left for church. The information age has brought us new opportunities, but it has also brought with it the possibility of totally isolated lives. Every voluntary organization has to face this new reality.

In the past, it was possible to keep a congregation going simply by relying on family ties. People who would attend a church would be the children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and great-great grandchildren of past members. I was once blessed by officiating at a wedding of a family that was a part of the community since the early 1700's, and they all were loyal Methodists since it was legal in Connecticut to be a Methodist! But, times change, and this is now the exception and not the rule.

As painful as it may be, we have to change and reach out to new people in our community. We need to share Christ. We need to — using a word which terrifies members of mainline



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congregations — do evangelism. I know it sounds intimidating, but for Prospect UMC to survive in the future, we need to reach out to the families around us. We are called to move beyond our comfort zone for the sake of God's realm.

There are some very simple things that we can do which will produce much fruit, but it's not easy. There are three things which speak to a new generation: a relaxed and casual form of worship, music which they can relate to, and a message which applies to their everyday life. I have, during the past year tried, with varying degrees of success, to meet those new expectations. But it is important to recognize that we all have to work at it.

I believe our Vacation Bible School and Sunday School have been leading the way. The music that we sang in VBS made its way into our worship service and filled our hearts with joy. The messages shared with our children have touched a deep need in our children's lives and ours. And, let's face it, have you ever tried to be really formal with 20 children? The Sunday School has given us a little taste of our future and we need to build on it.

So here is our challenge. We are all asked to step out of our comfort zones for the sake of God's realm. We all have to be a little more flexible (and I'm not talking about the motions to "Father Abraham") as we deal with each other. We may, for

the sake of God's realm, have to show patience and understanding with the people who walk through our doors.

The test will come when we've had a busy week, and we are feeling really, really, drained. So, we drive off to church because it is a place where we feel safe and comfortable and at home. You sit down in the beautiful sanctuary and start to feel a sense of peace. And then the music starts, and it's a hymn that you've haven't heard before, let alone sang. And, there is a family seated in the pew immediately in front of you, and you've never seen them in church before. And, the children are starting to fuss and move around like ... children. What do you do?

When we do the good and decent and loving thing, we are doing evangelism. When we recognize that we are called to reach out in love to strangers — when we show patience and understanding — when we are willing to try new things — all because we need to reach a new generation, then we are doing God's work. It is, after all, exactly what the Wesley brothers did in the 1700's. We will face tests, both personal and as a congregation, but if we care about our church and God's realm, we will respond to those test with flexibility, compassion and love, and Prospect United Methodist Church will have a future.

Grace and Peace,
Bob Sorozan



Order Your Poinsettias

Orders are currently being taken for poinsettias. These flowers will adorn our altar on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning. The cost is \$10 each. For those wishing to take the plants home, they will be available after the worship service on Christmas Day.

This form must accompany payment. Please submit orders during worship service or to the office no later than December 16. Thank you.

In Honor of	
In Memory of	
Number Requested	
Given by	

PROSPECT IN EARLIER DAYS

[Editor's Note: The depiction of "The Advent Story" on page 5 was written by Anna (Mrs. Hans) Rangoon, a director of religious education at Prospect Church in the 1960s. It was published in the December 1962 Tower, 50 years ago, as was the Christmas Casualty vignette related below. Mrs. Rangoon may also have been an ordained minister.]

A Christmas Casualty

"Last night John Elzy, watchman at the Grand Eagle Department Store, while making his rounds of the bargain basement, found the body of a man lying under the counter. He was thin to the point of emaciation, apparently in his middle thirties, and was shabbily dressed. His pockets were empty and there were no marks of identification upon his person. Store officials believe that he was trampled in the Christmas rush and crawled under the counter for shelter. But they are unable to account for what appear to be nail wounds in his hands. The police are investigating."
~ *The Saturday Review*

To keep Christ alive in your Christmas observance Prospect church offers many opportunities for you to COME AND WORSHIP during the Advent Season. In addition to the regular Sunday morning services and the special programs of various groups, listed elsewhere, special attention is called to:

Communion Vespers

Family Vespers

*Christmas Eve
Midnight Service*



The Advent Story

A lovely Christmas custom comes to us from medieval times. To simple peasant folk it seemed that the birthday of Christ should be prepared for; and that his coming should be heralded long before his natal day.

On the first Sunday in Advent, each family would gather around its hearth. There would be placed as a symbol of life everlasting the ever fresh, ever beautiful boughs of the fir, the spruce, the balsam or the pine. In the center would be placed a tall gleaming taper, the Christ candle. Across the mantel the Advent candles of hope, of faith, of love and the unnamed candle.

Grouped around the Advent boughs the family stood. From its honored place the family Bible was taken, and from one of the Christmas stories the head of the family read the ever-new account. At its close he crossed to the tall taper, the Christ candle. As the family sang one of the loved Christmas carols the candle was lighted. A sense of expectation filled everyone. The singing ceased. A short silence followed. Then all joined in the Advent prayer. So ended the first part of the Advent ceremony.

They all knew, however, that this ceremony was only a beginning. The next Sunday would bring another Christmas



story, another carol, another moment of prayer and then some other member of the family — perhaps the grandmother — would kindle the first Advent candle from the Christ candle. So it would go, each Sunday in Advent, until only one candle remained. This, the unnamed candle, would be lighted on Christmas Eve. At its lighting each would then name it by himself, calling it by whatever name the deepest desire of his heart might be.

Now in this year, the church again begins the blessed Advent season. We hope the Christ candle will be lit in your home on your family worship center — perhaps on the Advent wreath you and your children made at the Christmas family workshop — using the Advent worship service your children will be bringing home each Sunday from church school.

Let us pray God to touch our eyes with beauty, our minds with vision, our hearts with love as (we) 'prepare Him room'.

■ Parsonage Open House

The Sorozan family invite you to the Parsonage for their annual Christmas Party. It will be held on Sunday, December 23rd, starting at 6 p.m. It will simply be an informal gathering of friends and neighbors, so mark the date on the calendar and we will see you there.

■ Christmas Caroling Planned

Music Director Heidi Flower invites members of the congregation to share the joy of the season with Christmas Caroling for shut-in friends on Sunday, December 23rd, at noon. Pizza will follow back at the church. All are welcome! Please sign up outside Room 208 so we can plan ahead.

■ Stewardship Notes

Carla Heister, Stewardship Committee Chair, reminds members to mail or hand in your 2013 pledge card. Carla notes, "It is through your support that we have successful church programs."

Christmas is preeminently a time of generosity. God set the example when he gave his own Son; the wise men followed it when they gave their gold to the Christ child; and in proportion to our share of the Christmas spirit, we are walking in their footsteps. ~John T. Faris

■ Giving Thanks

"I guess that Santa's busy, cause he never comes around. I think of him when Christmas comes to town."

The above quote is from a song in the Polar Express. Although it is just a song in a kid's movie, it depicts what many children who live in poverty experience at this time of year. While those around them receive gifts and rejoice in the season, the mentioned children are forced to hold on to nothing more than the hope that Santa will come this year. Oftentimes this hope fades quickly, resulting in children losing that last bit of innocence that they should have the privilege of holding on to.

On that note, I say thank you. Thank you on behalf of the Department and its staff, but mostly thank you on behalf of the children who will get to believe for one more year that there is a Santa; that they are not doomed to unhappiness during this season just because of their circumstance.

*Sincerely,
Michael Brzankalski
Social Work Supervisor*

Sunday Schedule

8:30 a.m.	Chapel Service
10:00 a.m.	Sanctuary Service
10:00 a.m.	Church School
10:00 a.m.	Nursery School
11:00 a.m.	Fellowship

Sunday School News

■ Sunday School Pageant

The Sunday School Pageant will be on December 16th during the worship service. Everyone should come hear the children tell the story of "The First Christmas."



■ Luminary Bags

Sunday School will once again be selling luminary bags to light the PUMC sidewalks on Christmas Eve. Cost is \$1 per bag.

■ Christmas Ornaments

Christmas Ornaments hand painted by Sunday School students will be on sale during Fellowship Hour from now until 12/23 or while supplies last. Proceeds will benefit the Heifer International Project.

■ Family New Year's Eve Party

Save The Date for Prospect's first annual Family New Year's Eve Party, which will be held in Sessions Hall on December 31st from 4-7 p.m. All are invited to attend; however, activities will be most appropriate for families with children pre-K to Grade 5. There will be make-your-own-pizza, make your own ice cream sundaes, New Year's crafts, games, stories and more to ring in the New Year. Please see Christa Zalvidar or Heidi Flower to sign up or for more information.

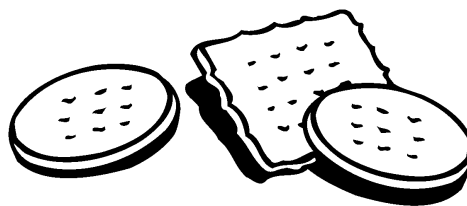


Spread a little cheer

This holiday season, "spread" some cheer by giving a yummy treat that can be spread on crackers, bread or apple slices.

What you need:

- ½ cup chopped, crushed candied pecans
- ½ cup chopped fresh basil
- ½ cup chopped dried cranberries
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 8 oz. goat cheese log
- Decorative plastic wrap



What you do:

1. Combine the first four ingredients on a flat surface.
2. Roll the cheese log firmly in the nut mixture, coating all surfaces.
3. Wrap the log and give it, along with a box of party crackers, to neighbors, teachers and so on.

**PROSPECT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
99 SUMMER STREET
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