



THE PROSPECT TOWER

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

January 2013

Vol. 74, No. 1

Pastor's Report

"For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn." ~ Isaiah 60:2-3



We have entered into a new year—a year filled with new opportunities and experiences. As a people we celebrate this moment by making resolutions, which we, more often than not, fail to keep. Similarly, television networks use this time to introduce shows while quietly dropping real clunkers. Their judgment is not always the best. I recently heard something that filled my heart with sense of great disappointment: "In the weeks ahead watch for new episodes of 'Here Comes Honey Boo Boo.'"

I have been reflecting on the New Year. Methodists have historically started on a spiritual note. Early Methodist societies would gather on New Year's Eve for a watch night service. The service would last for up to three hours. There would be singing of hymns, preaching and prayers. At the heart of the service was a prayer to renew the covenant between God and God's people in the Methodist Societies. It was their opportunity to start over again.

The actual Covenant Service prayer is too long for me to repeat it here in its totality. It reminds us of God's faithfulness to us and how we, no matter how hard we try, fall short of God's will for us. "Forgive my unfaithfulness in not doing your will, for you have promised mercy to me if I turn to you with my whole heart." It then goes on to state the Gospel promise of God's grace. "Before all heaven and earth, I here acknowledge you as my Lord and God. I take you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for my portion, and vow to give up myself, body and soul, as your servant, to serve you in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life." The service represents a second chance and a new future with God.



(Cont. to Page 2)

Prospect United Methodist Church

Founded 1834
99 Summer St., Bristol, CT 06010

The Rev. Dr. Bob Sorozan
Pastor

Rev. William S. Barnes,
Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. George E. Harris
The Rev. Robert E. Rhodes, Jr.
Ministers in Residence

Heidi Flower,
Director of Music & Organist

Phone: (860) 582-3443
Fax: (860) 582-9224

E-Mail Addresses:
pastorpumc@snet.net
(information meant only for the pastor)
prospectoffice@snet.net
(all general information as well as information necessary for the Church Secretary.)

Website:
<http://www.anewprospect.org>

Editor: Kathy Dube
Layout: Jeanette Baker

(Cont. from Page 1)

When we look at our lives, we find imperfect people with obvious flaws—and yes, I definitely include myself in this observation. We try to do the right thing, but we do fall far short of our own expectations, let alone God's. Yet John Wesley recognized that we could start over, and God would still be patiently standing with us in our efforts. What we need is to at least try to live a compassionate, committed, Christian life. We need that second chance.

So I am not asking you to make a resolution—I am asking you to start the year off by opening your life to God.

Grace and Peace,
Bob Sorozan

■ Ash Wednesday

Please mark your calendars because the year is moving ahead with blinding speed. We will hold our annual Ash Wednesday service on February 13th, at 7 p.m.

Beginning with Ash Wednesday and proceeding through Easter, all Christians are urged to pay special attention to their own spiritual life and remember what God, through Christ, did to redeem humanity.



■ Prayer In Light of Newtown - Bob Sorozan

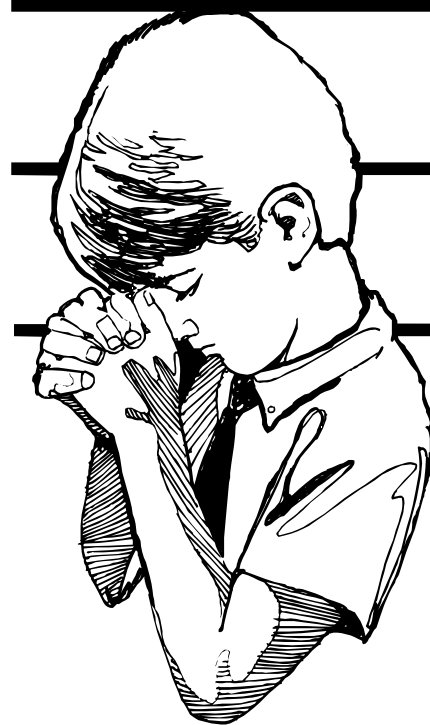
There are moments which are overwhelming. When we see suffering and violence we are often filled with anger and grief. And along with this, we often have a sense of helplessness. What do we do? It is at these moments that we need to be in prayer. There is a misconception that many people have about prayer. Many people feel that prayer is the least of things that we can do. We can't do anything, so we pray to make us feel better. For some, it is the spiritual equivalent of comfort food. I strongly disagree.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. ~ Jeremiah 29:11

There is a God and prayer matters! Even though I cannot tell you how our prayers shape our world, I trust in God and I trust that they will have an effect. "Therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective." (James 5:16) Prayer moves the unmovable.

I also believe that prayer is more than our making requests to God. I believe that God talks to us when we pray. While we are in prayer, God often brings to our attention new possibilities. God reminds us that we can work in our community to end violence and promote understanding between people. We are reminded that we can volunteer to make our schools safer and work with the city to get weapons off the streets. God speaks to us all the time pointing out how we can be involved to make our world, and our local community, a better place.

Prayer is not the least we can do to make us feel better in a hopeless situation. It is the start of a movement of God to reshape our world, starting with each and every one of us. We pray because we believe that God is active in our world—we pray because God will show us what we need to do to keep tragedies like Newtown from ever happening again.



Holiday Greening History

Anyone who attends Prospect Church during Advent season is aware of the beautiful greenery that decorates the interior of the sanctuary, but how many of us realize how it gets there? Thanks go to Barbara Fasci and her “elves” — several hard-working family members and friends!



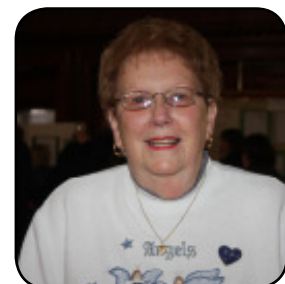
Barbara and her late husband, Tony Fasci, started the greening of the sanctuary in the early 1980s. Originally, Barbara and Tony cut live greens themselves, some from the yards of parishioners and others from the property of the order of nuns on East Road. They and other “elves” would transform the greens into wreaths and roping.

Sometime in the mid-1990s, when a church group called the “Better Half” disbanded, remaining treasury money was donated to purchase some artificial greens. Barbara Stevens, a church member who then ran Ruth Erickson Florist, donated the big wreath that graces the altar. John and Marion Hickman made the bows, which can usually last for two years. Since the wreath on the outside door was often stolen, it seemed to resolve the problem when that became an artificial one instead of a wreath made from live greens.

In recent years, Barbara has been assisted by her son and daughter-in-law, Mike and Rita Fasci, her daughter, Linda Nash, and others, including Louise and Fred Schaffrick, to do the actual decorating for Advent. The greens have to be fluffed out first, after which the actual decorating takes from two to three hours.

This year, she recruited Jeff and Shirley Paulette to begin to take over the project, “since I’m getting on in years, but I told them we will help out, too,” Barbara notes.

The greenery stays up for the 12 days of Christmas, after which they are taken down and stored in a designated cubicle over Sessions Hall.



Thanks, Barbara, for your many years of service in this regard and to all who have helped over the years. Thanks to the Paulettes who have agreed to keep the tradition going!

■ New Study Begins in February

“The Fast That I Choose” is a six-week Bible Study on Hunger from the Society of St. Andrew.

Throughout the course, participants will be challenged to change their preconceived ideas about hunger and poverty and be encouraged to take action as faithful followers of Jesus. The course ends with the recognition that hunger is an issue each Christian must address individually.

The study is presented in six units, with each unit having two lessons. This class is designed so that you may attend all or as many as you wish. You can start from the beginning or jump in at any point.

For more information contact Jeanette Baker.

Deaths

Fannie Colapietro

Ponda -

November 13

Thomas Thompson -

November 21

Karen Rochelle - December 4

Vera Holman - December 21

Baptisms

Abigail Aimee Lowd - December 9

Kali Rae Schonrock - December 9



Our Gratitude

Annual Covenant to Care, DCF
Foster Children's Christmas Party:

Thank you to ALL of the volunteers who helped make this party another success for the foster children: The Train Conductor who read the "Polar Express" to the children, Santa & Mrs. Claus, Police Explorers, decorators, activity volunteers, parking directors, "cleaner uppers", juice box and paper goods donators, and sugar cookie bakers and those who provided monetary donations. To the young adults, high school students, parents and the fun loving seniors who volunteered their time and compassion, your generosity of spirit was moving and kind. And for that, we all are blessed. Thank you.

Susan Lee

■ Kids Praise God

Rehearsals for Kids Praise God will begin in January following worship service in Room 208. Kids will have time to get a quick snack after Sunday School and then meet for a 20 minute rehearsal.

■ Palm Sunday Cantata

The Senior Choir will begin rehearsing "The Rose of Calvary" by Joseph Martin beginning Jan 9th. We will practice at 8 p.m. in Room 208. All voices are welcome! The cantata will be performed on Palm Sunday, March 24. Speak with Heidi or any choir member for more details.

Visit us online anewprospect.org

PROSPECT IN EARLIER DAYS - *Kathy Dube*

The December Tower reflected on happenings at Prospect reported in the December Tower of 40 years ago, including a special Advent article called "A Christmas Casualty" as well as a separate Advent story by Anna (Mrs. Hans) Rangoon, Director of Christian Education, on the history of Advent greening. Glancing at other stories in the Tower, we can see that some aspects of church life haven't changed despite the passage of time, although numbers, financial and attendance-wise, certainly have.

On Page 1, "That Old Attendance Record": "For the past two months attendance at Morning Worship has averaged 384. For a comparable time last year it averaged 336. That's an encouraging gain. Even so, on the average Sunday Morning at least 1100 members are absent."

Also on Page 1, "The Minister Will Call": "He (the Rev. Kenneth Grady) is calling much of the time. Naturally he gives priority to those homes where there is some special and immediate need. Not being clairvoyant, he will know of your need only as you inform him. Illness? A personal problem? A bone to pick? Don't wait until he accidentally stumbles on it. Forget your reticence."

On Page 2, "Official Actions": A special Quarterly Conference and Church Conference was held on November 27th, Dr. (former pastor Arthur) Tedcastle presiding. The Board of Trustees recommended that the Church purchase a house on Oehler Drive as the new parsonage. It is a brand new 8 room garrison colonial on a 100 x 175 lot and will cost \$30,000, of which \$13,000 is already on hand."

It was noted in the same article that Mrs. Rangoon had submitted her resignation to the Official Board. "It was accepted by the members with profound regret, effective as of January 1, 1963. She came to Prospect in the fall of 1959 and has carried forward a vigorous and fruitful program in the area of her responsibility."

**Imagine, total membership of close to 1,500?
Average Sunday attendance close to 400? And
purchasing a parsonage, plus land, for \$30,000?**

New Year Eve Kids' Party



**PROSPECT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
99 SUMMER STREET
BRISTOL, CT 06010
Dated Material - Please Do Not Hold**

Return Service Requested