

THE PROSPECT TOWER

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

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Pastor's Page

Recently, I tried to preach a three-point sermon in under two minutes. The consensus was that it still took me three minutes, thirty seconds. What can I tell you — preachers love to preach! So, in case you missed it, here's the transcript of the sermon.



"When Jesus heard this he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, he said, 'I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith.'" Luke 7:9

Our Gospel Lesson for today deals with an interaction between Jesus and a Roman Centurion. Now to keep this in perspective, the Romans were the occupiers of the Holy Land. They were not welcomed. They were feared — they were despised — they were the enemy. This leads me to the first point of this message. How did Jesus respond to this enemy of the people?

And, let's face it: the Centurion was an officer in the army which occupied the Holy Land. He represented the forces of oppression. There were whole groups of people who were plotting to purge this pagan hoard from their sacred land. In fact, there were people who fervently believed that when the Messiah comes, he would come with a mighty army and destroy the Romans.

But we are told that this Centurion was a good man. He cared for the people — he helped build the local

synagogue — he loved his servant who was ill. And so Jesus decided to help the Centurion's servant. While he was far off, the Centurion sent word that he was not worthy for Jesus to visit him, but he trusted in Jesus' authority to heal his servant. And Jesus marveled at his faith and the servant was healed.

Which brings us to our second point:

Throughout history, people have written off whole groups of other people: whether it was Romans, or Pagans, or Protestants, or Catholics, or Infidels, or people who have green skin. Basically, when someone is not part of your own tribe, group or nationality, there must be something wrong with them, and "God must have a problem with them also."



I love to look at church growth articles or books to find out what I'm doing wrong. I have noticed that there is

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often a common theme: we need to identify our “target” demographic. And it’s usually the same demographic — married couples in their mid thirties, with two children and an upper middle-class income. But what about everyone else; what about people who don’t neatly fit into this demographic?

Which brings me to the final point: Methodism was born when we, as a people, reached out to other people that no one else wanted. It was a faith of coal miners and factory workers. The Methodist Circuit Riders preached in thousands of places that respectable people wouldn’t dare visit. You know, if Methodist Circuit riders would have been around 2,000 years ago and there was a crowd of Roman Centurions standing nearby, they would have preached to them.

So, moving beyond target demographics, who are the people we write off? Who do we forget? Who do we despise? And, would Jesus feel the same way?

*Grace and Peace,
Bob Sorozan*

P.S.: Following the service, Bill Barnes pointed out that the stained glass window in the balcony of our church tells the same story. John Humphrey Sessions, the major benefactor of our congregation, identified himself with the Roman Centurion and the grace that Jesus offered. When you have a chance, come down to the front of the sanctuary and have a look at the window. It is quite beautiful in the sunlight. Thanks, Bill!

Barbara Fasci Wraps Up Scholarship Work

Barbara Fasci is turning the reins of the Scholarship Committee, which she has chaired for 23 years, over to Diane Ashworth. Diane co-chaired the committee with Barbara this year to get acquainted with its responsibilities.



When Barbara first offered to serve on the committee 24 years ago, as a replacement for the late Betty Lowrey, little did she know that one year later she would assume the chairmanship.

The first scholarship was awarded in 1976, for \$250. Over the years, the committee has awarded over **\$50,000** in scholarships to college students with ties to Prospect.

Fundraisers, including the grinder sales in the fall and on Super Bowl Sunday, and the “bakeless bake sale,” which runs during May and June, all raise money for the scholarships. In addition, a number of members or friends of Prospect have included memorial donations to the Scholarship Committee in their wills.

Barbara recalls a retired school teacher from Bristol Central High School, while not a member, gave a significant amount of money in her will to the cause because of numerous visits by our pastor to her during her illness. This past year, some \$2,600 in profit was put into the Scholarship Fund after from the grinder sales.

“I’ve had the most loyal committee,” Barbara notes. The committee includes Ray Barker, Terry Parker, Don Titus, Liz Baker, Carla Heister, Deborah Fasci, Beverly Lovell, Diane Ashworth, along with Barbara.

She has had many helpers for the grinder sales, including Irene Taylor, her daughters Laura Taylor and the late Karen Rochelle, Barbara Blais, Lorraine Bulluss, her late husband Tony, son Michael, and Al Pelletier, to name a few.

The members meet three times a year to prepare sauce and sausage and to judge the applications they receive, which vary from one to five yearly. Applicants have to be members of Prospect Church. The committee tries to give something to all. A student is able to apply for scholarships for two of their four college years.

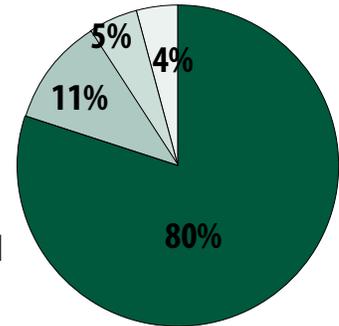
Applicants have to submit an essay in order to be considered. This year’s topic was what historical figure, excluding Jesus, they most admire. The three recipients this year: Megan Delano, who received the Prospect UMC Scholarship; Estelle Franck, the Elizabeth Seery Scholarship; and Sarah Hart, the Carl E. Mason Scholarship. Estelle and Sarah were able to attend the June 2nd 10 a.m. service when the scholarships were awarded. They read their essays during the service. Estelle’s selection was Nelson Mandella and Sarah’s was Marie Curie.

Job well done, Barbara, who hopes to help serve on the committee but not chair it!

CHURCH FINANCE 101

Hello, this communication is intended to raise your awareness of how Prospect United Methodist Church funds its day-to-day operations and how you can become a part of this exciting ministry.

Let's start with the income side of the equation: 80% from member giving through pledges and offerings, 11% from bank and investment income, 5% from donations for use of the building (e.g., Freedom Fellowship, Bristol Brass & Wind Ensemble, and several 12-step self-help groups), and 4% from small group ministry contributions (e.g., Fair Committee and Middle Ages). Our total 2013 income is estimated at \$162,275.



Next, let's look at our expenses for 2013: 47% to staff a full time pastor, a music director, and two nursery workers; 32% to heat and power the church and parsonage and maintain the buildings; 10% to support Annual Conference and worldwide ministries through apportionment payments; 6% to office and administrative costs; and a mere 5% to fund our local church work area ministries (e.g., education, nurture, and outreach). Our total 2013 expense budget is \$205,138.

The charge conference in 2013 accepted an unbalanced budget with expenses outweighing estimated income by \$42,863. Looking at the proposed budget, the realization was clear that we, at Prospect, do not have a spending problem. The challenge is one of revenue to support the ministries and mission of the church.

Lastly, let's look at our member giving and options before us. Currently, we have received \$132,000 in pledges, short of the targeted \$164,000, which is 80% of the expense budget of \$205,138. The pledge amount includes \$118,000 for the General Fund and \$14,000 for the Building Fund. Contributions to the Building Fund are only used for selected budgeted expenses, most of the contributions are held by the Trustees for non-budgeted repairs and capital projects. In light of this shortfall, the finance committee is closely examining income and expenses to determine next steps. On the plus side, PUMC has a growing, committed, and supportive congregation. We are committed to our ministries and spreading our faith in action despite meager funding sources. The stock market has been favorable in recent months allowing for additional interest income from restricted endowment funds. Our endowment fund, PUMC's nest egg, continues to grow. On the minus side, the endowment fund cannot be our solution for funding. This fund has set restrictions for use. Our next step is to turn to PUMC's members. Research indicates that the person in the pew is the one that gives to charitable causes. Next time you are asked to donate to a local charity, consider gifting that donation to the church instead.



Stewardship
a way of life

Through your giving, we can make a difference. Look what happened in the life of PUMC in recent months. . .

- Foster children joyfully received Easter baskets through your generosity and commitment to Covenant to Care. Susan Lee continues her leadership in this ministry.
- Stephen Ministries, a way to offer emotional and spiritual support to people in and around our congregation, has begun. Diane Ashworth completed her training as our Stephen Ministries leader.
- Beautiful music filled our sanctuary during Lent and Easter. Heidi Flower was the guiding force for our Rose of Calvary cantata, bell choir music, Kid's Praise God singing, and brass ensemble offering.
- The Fast I Choose, a small study group, explored what the Bible says about hunger. Jeanette Baker orchestrated the hosting of this reflective study. Everyone that participated has walked away with new perspectives and meaning in their own life.
- A Masked Ball was held with tremendous opportunities for fellowship and community connections. Gary and Luisa Gladu brought forth their energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to the life of the church by organizing this event.
- Our pastor has provided care for those persons in time of need or celebration. Funerals, baptisms, weddings, new members, home visits, hospitalizations, and so much more.

Just think, what has PUMC's ministries done for you? What can we continue to do? Right now, we need assistance in keeping the operational ministries of PUMC alive. Should you have any ideas of how we can increase our operational funding then contact me and share your ideas. Together we can keep Prospect a Growing Christian Community of Faith and Action.

Yours in Christ,
John Rioux, Chairman
PUMC Finance Committee

UMCOR Special Offering

Recently, the congregation took up a special offering for the victims of the tornadoes in Oklahoma. We raised about \$250 during our recent worship services. There is a lot of work that still needs to be done to help people recover. If you missed the recent worship services and you would like to help, you can send in a check to the church office. Make the check payable to the United Methodist Church, and write UMCOR on the memo line. Please remember, every dollar you donate to UMCOR goes directly to people in need.

And please remember the words of our Bishop, Martin D. McLee:

"In the aftermath of the recent tornado, we are called to pray for the victims, the first responders and for the city of Moore, Oklahoma. In the New York area we have experienced similar natural catastrophes and we can testify that prayer is helpful. I invite you to pray."

PROSPECT IN EARLIER DAYS

Camp Ground Sale Discussed - Kathy Dube

The June 28, 1956, issue of The Prospect Tower signaled a turning point for churches in the New Haven District of the former New York East Conference of the Methodist Church, including Prospect. The headline revealed: "Steps Taken Toward Sale Of Methodist Camp Grounds At Plainville."



The previous Wednesday, directors of the Camp Ground Association, which included Prospect's pastor, the Rev. Arthur Tedcastle, voted to sell "with the proviso that the interests of the cottage owners at the camp be taken into consideration first." The district planned to search for a new camp near a body of water.

The Camp Ground had been organized 80 years previously, occupying a sizable tract of land on Camp Street, straddling the Bristol-Plainville line. The property included a caretaker's cottage, dining hall, some church cottages and private cottages. The actual sale wasn't accomplished until two years later, on July 20, 1957, at a cost of \$14,000, to the Plainville Campground Association, Inc.

When first formed by area Methodist churches in 1865, it was designed to be a religious revival camp with tents for itinerant preachers and fellow Methodists. The tents were replaced with cottages in 1895, described in a Hartford Courant article in 2007 as "carpenter gothic style identified by elaborate scroll and jig-saw work on the porches and gables." The cottages were in a circle that included an open air auditorium that could hold up to 1,000 people.

In addition to Methodists, the Camp Ground was used by other denominations and groups, including the Chautauqua Institution, an educational program originally started as a training camp for Methodist Sunday School teachers.

The 100th anniversary of the Camp Grounds was tied to the conversion from tents to cottages in 1894. At that time, 19 of the original cottages remained. While the Camp Ground was a social gathering place in the 1940s, it also was in a state of disrepair. Nearly dismantled, it was saved after being placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

A book entitled "The Heart Strangely Warmed," written by Arthur Pope and published in 2006, related the history of the Plainville Camp Ground. The late Virginia Wall, who died last summer, had fond memories of time spent at the Camp Ground and the cottage that once "belonged" to Prospect.

■ Life's Railway to Heaven

(Words: Eliza R. Snow, 1890; Music: Charles D. Tillman, 1891)

*Life is like a mountain railroad, With
an engineer that's brave; We must
make the run successful, From the
cradle to the grave; Watch the curves,
the fills, the tunnels; Never falter,
never fail; Keep your hands upon the
throttle, And your eyes upon the rail.*

PUMC's choir recently sang these lyrics during a Sunday service. The words remind us of how to become better equipped for daily living as faithful disciples.

*You will roll up grades of trial; You
will cross the bridge of strife; See
that Christ is your conductor On this
lightning train of life; Always mindful
of obstruction, Do your duty, never fail;
Keep your hands upon the throttle,
And your eyes upon the rail.*

On June 15th, everyone at Prospect was invited to a hand-on opportunity to contemplate these metaphors and have some family fun while touring the Trolley Museum in East Windsor.

Special tours were conducted by our own Pastor Bob! Members and friends of all ages were invited to join the fun.



■ Railroading Hobbies

Interesting that both our current pastor, Rev. Bob Sorozan, and pastor emeritus, Rev. Bill Barnes, are both into the railroading hobby. Here's how they got attracted to trains:

Pastor Bob: I "got into" railroading at a very young age. I grew up in eastern Long Island. It was so far east that the last passenger stop on the mainline of the railroad was near our home. During the summer, when my bedroom window was open, I could hear the sound of diesel locomotives sound their horn at the grade crossing. When I would walk to school, I would cross railroad tracks and usually have to wait for a train to pass. When my grandfather took me out for a haircut, it would be at a barbershop across the street from the railroad station. And often I would accompany my grandfather down to the station to pick up my father after a day of work in "the city." I suppose my interests in railroading stems from a desire to hold onto the good memories of my childhood.

Pastor Bill: (younger brother) Jim and I grew up absorbing CSB's (our father, Clarkson Seth Barnes) interest in railroads — traveling by rail whenever possible, checking timetables to see when various trains would arrive at the station and for over a decade during our childhood building the Lionel 0-gauge model railroad that's now with Jim in Colorado. A special thrill for me a few years ago was the opportunity to drive a real steam engine on the Essex Railroad for four miles (with a real engineer at my shoulder, of course) in the railroad's "Hands on the Throttle" program.

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