

THE PROSPECT TOWER

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

February 2014

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Pastor's Page



Good news, everybody! We're going to have a meeting with the District Superintendent, Rev. Ken Kieffer. Now I admit that usually a meeting with the D.S. is not usually associated with good news — our most common exposure to the D.S. is at our annual charge conferences, and that usually involves reports: lots and lots of reports. But this meeting is to talk about the long-range future of the Prospect United Methodist Church and what we can do now to make it a good one.

This meeting came about at the end of our last charge conference. A group of church leaders who were concerned about our finances (and the long-range implications of them) talked about various options for our church with Ken. To be blunt, we lost 21 members, including many of our congregation who represented the backbone of our membership, while taking in only eight new members. We need to change this trend if we are to have a future.



Ken was very patient with us and listened to some of the options we came up with. But then, Ken affirmed our members and our church, recognized the hard work that all of you do and said that he would rather "see you grow." And then our busy District Superintendent volunteered to help us brainstorm some ideas about how Prospect United Methodist Church can grow and attract new members.

Most of us know Ken as our District Superintendent. We know him as an Administrator. But there is another side to Ken. He was a very successful Pastor who did many innovative and creative things in his church and community. For example, did you know that he hosted a local radio program while serving as a Pastor? He has worked with the many congregations in his district and has gained many valuable insights regarding reaching out into the community.

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Prospect United Methodist Church

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One of the great benefits of being a connectional church is the access we have to all this experience.

We will meet Tuesday, February 18th, barring some snow storm or crisis in the conference, at 7 p.m. Ken will lead our discussion and help us to brainstorm new ideas about church growth. I cannot tell you what we'll come up with — between Ken, one another and God, I'm sure it will be very good.

One last thing: by now you must have heard about a super-secret meeting with the District Superintendent. Well, this meeting is open to anyone who is interested in the future of our church. The reason why it's "super-secret" — it got your attention, didn't it? So come down to the meeting and meet with "Mr. Big" ... I mean our District Superintendent. Our church will have a future because we will all work together to find one.

Grace and Peace,
Bob Sorozan

Calendar Reminder

Committee meetings, activities and programs are posted on the office calendar. Please check the calendar when planning events to avoid conflict with other events and do not erase any events from the calendar other than your own.

Bridal Gowns of Decades Past ... Memories Of A Special Day

Everything old is new again! On June 21st, Prospect United Methodist Church celebrates the brides of the past in a bridal fashion show featuring wedding dresses worn by members and friends. Spanning the decades, we'll model and narrate about the beautiful dresses worn by you or somebody close to you.

Enjoy special memories and be inspired ... and if you are planning to be a bride, what could be more wonderful than seeing the fashions of years past, and a dress that might inspire the perfect dress for you!

We invite you to share your wedding dress with us along with anecdotes that make it special. Was it specially made for you? Worn by your mother? Was the ceremony non-traditional? Dig out your dress and let the memories flow.

The event is sponsored by the History Committee of PUMC and The Middle Ages Group.

Contact Melissa Brown by email with subject line "Brides": mbrownct@sbcglobal.net or leave a message at (860) 583-4159 with your phone number, or see Melissa before or after services on Sundays.



■ CHARGE CONFERENCE WRAP-UP

On January 5th, The Rev. Ken Kieffer presided over Prospect's Annual Charge Conference. Rev. Kieffer led the opening devotion with a reading from Matthew 14: the story of Jesus walking on water, with Peter, who began to sink at the first signs of doubt. He followed that with asking those attending to tell him why they are excited about Prospect and what are they proud of. Read some of the answers in the minutes found at www.anewprospect.org. Highlights of the meeting included reports from committees, election of new Trustee members (Bill Thibodeau, Luisa Gladu, Mike Fasci, Eric Adams and Dori Posadas) and Pastor Bob talking about how the work done at Prospect touches peoples' lives.

Lenten Season



Lent is an occasion for us to journey with Christ ... into tomorrow. For you never walk with Christ long but when the dawn breaks, the sun shines and hope breaks through. —C. Neil Straight

■ ASHES

On Ash Wednesday, as Lent begins, worshipers' foreheads are often marked with ashes in the sign of the cross. The ashes traditionally come from burning palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday. In Old Testament days, ashes were a sign of mourning and repentance. Today, some worshipers wipe off the ashes before leaving church, to symbolize being cleansed from sin by Jesus' death; others wear the ashes the rest of the day, carrying the cross of Christ into the world. The speaking of Genesis 3:19 often accompanies the placement of ashes: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return"



■ LENTEN STUDY

Prospect will be offering a study during Lent, led by Pastor Bob. The study is planned for five Thursday evenings, beginning March 13th, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. A volunteer will provide child care during the study so parents with small children may attend.

The study will be based on the video, "Embracing a Life of Meaning" by Kathleen Norris. Ms. Norris is the

author of the best-selling book, "Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith". This Episcopal resource and the message it shares are really important.

This study is open to everyone and no prior preparation is needed. If you are interested or need more information, please speak with Pastor Bob.

■ WHAT WILL YOU GIVE UP?

During Lent, some Christians give up a luxury or vice as a form of self-denial or to practice self-control. Ultimately, such a sacrifice should benefit one's spiritual walk with Jesus, who gave everything.

A Missouri teenager decided to give up talking for Lent. Decklan Conway, 13, communicated through dry-erase boards, going through three markers in less than a week. Although he lost a few friends because he wouldn't talk, Decklan wrote, "I'm doing it for a greater purpose." He added, "God gave up his only Son for us. ... What are you willing to give up?"

A worthy corollary to that question is "What will you take on?" What can you do for God's kingdom during this season of reflection and recommitment?

History Corner

PROSPECT IN EARLIER DAYS - *Kathy Dube* *Lenten Season In 1954*

As Prospect prepared to start the journey of Lent in February of 1954, observances were planned on both the local and national levels in keeping with the season. Locally, the Council of Churches and Ministers' Association planned a series of Sunday Evening Services to be held at different churches in Bristol.



They included the First Congregational Church; Zion Lutheran Church; Bethesda Lutheran Church in Forestville (no longer in existence); Trinity Episcopal Church (no longer in existence); Bristol Baptist Church; and lastly, Prospect Methodist Church. At the April 11th service at Prospect, united church choirs were to present their annual Palm Sunday cantata, "The Holy City." At the same time, the Bristol Religious Youth Council announced a series of Lenten services to be held each Wednesday and Friday morning for high school students.

Another observance announced in the Feb. 19, 1954 Tower, was a plan to join Methodist churches throughout the country, and other Protestant churches, in the "One Great Hour of Sharing" program. The week of February 28th through March 7th was dedicated as "The Week of Dedication." Prospect Church had always shared generously in the offering for the spiritual adventure of Lent.

A special offering was to be received on Sunday, Feb. 28th, "to give concrete evidence of our self dedication to the Christian life," according to the Tower. The Council of Bishops chose a series of projects for which the monetary gifts would be used. The first \$100,000 received would provide scholarships for outstanding foreign Methodist students to study in the U.S.

Prospect also scheduled mid-week Lenten services to be held each Thursday night following covered dish suppers supplied by different divisions of The Woman's Society. The theme for the weekly Lenten program was "Living Our Discipleship." A hymn sing was held around the tables following the suppers as a prelude to the programs.

Outreach

■ “SOUPER” BOWL OF CARING

“I tell you this: whenever you saw a brother or sister hungry or cold, whatever you did to the least of these, so you did to Me.” Matthew 25:40.

Before Super Bowl XLVIII, PUMC kids became champions off the field by tackling hunger in their community.



The kids took part in a nationwide campaign to feed the homeless. It's called the “Souper” Bowl of Caring.

Souper Bowl of Caring is a national movement of young people working to fight hunger and poverty in their own communities around the time of the Super Bowl football game. In the weeks leading up to or on Super Bowl Sunday, young people take up a collection (many use a soup pot), asking for one dollar or one item of food for people in need. They give 100% of their donation directly to the local hunger-relief charity of their choice.

Last year, over \$10 million worth of food and money was collected to help people in need, all done on Souper Bowl Sunday and all led by youth. When we all come together to help people, we can make really good things happen.

■ HOW TO BE A “RHINO” STEWARD

Rhinos are unique creatures.

Weighing up to 5,000 pounds, covered with inflexible plates of thick skin, a rhinoceros can run as fast as 30 or 40 mph. When a rhino perceives a threat or is irritated, it charges with enormous power. The rhinoceros is single-minded when it comes to doing what God made it to do — protect all members of its herd, especially the young ones. And the rhino does it immediately, without thought for itself.



Perhaps the rhino can teach us a thing or two about stewardship.

Shouldn't we be quick to serve God's kingdom as stewards through the use of our talent, time and treasure? And shouldn't we put the full force of our convictions behind our actions? Such dedication would be rhino-like in its immediacy, persistence and perpetuity.

On-Line Giving: You now have the opportunity to give your tithes, offerings and other contributions on line. You may elect to make a one-time contribution, or set up your giving to be repeated. Also, you may designate your giving to a specific ministry of the church. If you have any questions, please contact John Rioux. Thank you for being faithful to God's work.

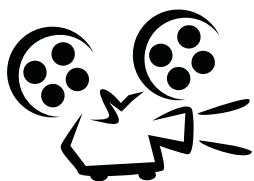
Youth Corner

■ ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- MYF (Methodist Youth Fellowship) for youths in grades 6-12 meets the second Sunday of every month from 4-6 p.m. in the Youth Room. The leaders are Terry Sorozan, Tammy Pelletier, and Ericka Plourde.
- Confirmation Classes for interested young people in the 8th grade and up are encouraged to meet with Pastor Bob on Sunday, February 9th, at 6 p.m. at the Church.
- Storytime will be offered the last Sunday of every month in the Library after worship, for little ones to enjoy stories, songs, games and prayers.

■ Movie Night

The Women of Prospect's annual Baked Potato Movie Night will be Friday, February 28th at 6 p.m. Movie to be announced. Baked potatoes will be served with many different toppings, such as sour cream, bacon bits, broccoli, chili, butter, shredded cheese, salsa and more. The menu will also include hot dogs, popcorn and desserts. Bring your blanket, chair and your favorite snacks.



NEVER-ENDING GIFT

Seven days a week, remind someone special about God's love, the gift that truly keeps on giving.



What you need:

- Large plastic pill box with a compartment for each day
- Construction paper
- Craft glue
- Black permanent marker
- Heart stickers
- Scissors
- Bible
- Pencil
- 7 small treats (fish-shaped crackers, small candies, trail mix, etc.)



What you do:

1. Glue paper onto the container. Write "God's Love" in permanent marker. Decorate with heart stickers.
2. Cut seven slips of paper. On each slip, write out one Bible verse about God's love. (Examples include Psalm 63:3; Psalm 100:5; John 3:16; John 15:12; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9.)
3. Fill each compartment with a different treat. Then place a folded slip atop each treat.
4. Give away the present. Tell the recipient to open the correct day for a week — and then refill the treats and verses and "regift" God's love to someone else.

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