

St. Paul's Church of Palmer



Unitarian Universalist

1060 Central Street
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Palmer, MA 01069

(413) 283-8185
StPaulUU1@verizon.net
www.uuchurch-palmer.org

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday 9am – 2pm
Wednesday 9am – 2pm
Thursday 9am – 2pm



JUNE Newsletter

One Minister's View

"Pay it forward." Those were the words of the late Jim and Dorothy Blaine in California when I expressed gratitude to them for their having helped me at a difficult time in my life 51 years ago.

My son, Bill, and I attended the memorial services for both, years apart, each of us deeply grateful to them both for what they were to us, and for what they did for us. Many hundreds of people filled the Methodist Church both times to capacity. All had hundreds of stories of what Jim and Dorothy had done for them. The Blaine's joy in life was contagious!

My difficult time was my seemingly unsuccessful search for happiness. They helped me to understand that happiness is not something for which we need to search outside of ourselves. It's inside here, not somewhere out there. It's a matter of our attitude, and our willingness to help others is one very important key. My son's gratitude to them included their having taken him into their home during his first few months of exploring Hollywood where he is now very successful as a manager at CBS Television. To us both, Dorothy and Jim said, "Pay it forward!"

Life is an adventure. Some do really good things; many others only watch. Ecclesiastes 11/1 urges us, "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."

CHURCH CALENDAR

June 5

Rachel Smith

Lay-Led Service

June 12

Rev. Bill Baughan

*The Jewish Prayer Of Jesus.
St. Paul's Annual Meeting*

June 19

Rev. Bill Baughan

*Growing Up As A Universalist
"P.K."*

Potluck after service

June 26

NO SERVICE

July 3rd, 10th, 17th

Rev. Bill Baughan

*Summer Union Services
hosted by St. Paul's*

All services at
10:00 am

In other words, if we help others to find happiness, what we call "the pay off" is our good and gratifying feelings if and when it works. We need nothing else in return. Hope of getting something in return should not at all be the reason why we do good things. When we donate to a worthy cause to help people we do not even know, just the knowledge of our having done something beneficial for someone is sufficient. And, it's the same with many entrepreneurs who innovate and build companies that employ others. Jealous people often wrongly think the founders did it to gain riches for themselves. Not so! Creators are courageous adventurers who "cast (their) bread on the waters," and made many personal sacrifices to bring a business into being. Nobody has ever been hired and employed by those who have done nothing.

Opportunities for us to help others occasionally arise. Here's one to strongly consider. Our fellow Unitarian Universalists in Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and Tennessee, need our help due to damage caused by storms, floods, and tornados, especially families in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, who lost their homes. To help, send a check, even if modest, to The **2011 Severe Storm Fund** at UUA's Mid-South District, 4605 Elkins Ave., Nashville, TN 37209.

However, there are many people in this world who seem to mistakenly live for money, and for possessions, and for honors. And they compare often themselves to others, as in a contest. Such people never seem to be satisfied. Many millionaires envy billionaires, and take pills to be happy. But, genuine joy is not found in getting and holding onto something. True happiness is found in our sharing, giving, doing, striving, building, writing, painting, creating, singing, teaching, cooking, and in helping others as others have helped us, "paying it forward."

Wrote John Dewey, "Such happiness as life is capable of comes from the full participation of all our powers in the endeavor to wrest from each changing situation of experience its own full and unique meaning."

According to a fable, a puppy said to a big dog, "I have mastered philosophy. I have learned that the best thing for a dog is happiness, and that happiness is my tail. Therefore I am chasing it, and when I catch it, I shall have it."

Replied the big dog, "I, too, have judged that happiness is a fine thing for a dog, and that happiness is my tail. However, I have noticed over the years that, when I chase it, it keeps running away, but, when I go about my business, it follows me after me wherever I go."

Rev. Bill Baughan



COFFEE HOUR



Please join us for refreshments at Fellowship Hour after service each week.

As always - a big THANK YOU to Verna Besaw for preparing goodies for coffee hour week after week. Thanks Verna, for making Fellowship Hour "sweeter" for all of us.



CHURCH GREETERS

Gordon & Irene Christiansen and Verna Besaw graciously serve as greeters on Sundays. If you'd also like to help greet, please see Gordon, Irene or Verna.



FOOD SHARE

Many folks are still struggling to make ends meet, and the support they receive from Food Share has a big impact on their lives. Palmer Food Share is open on Tuesday and Friday from 10 am to 11:30 am. Those in need must register prior to receiving food, and then are eligible to receive food every 3 months. If you are able to support Food Share, please feel free to place your non-perishable items in the Food Share box, located near the coat closet in Fellowship Hall. You may even mail monetary donations to Palmer Food Share, 39 Walnut Street, Palmer 01069. If you'd like more information or if you'd like to volunteer at Food Share, please see Harriot Henrichon or Barbara Stone.



Anniversaries & Birthdays

June 03 Bob Faulkner
June 10 Jane & Art Alois
June 13 Amy Bacon
June 30 Sarah Balog

MY COMPUTER



My computer tells me that I'm too old
When I don't understand what I am told
About hard drives and floppies, CDs and RAM,
And can't figure out, when I'm in a jam,
What the directions tell me to do
With the computer acting as if I knew.
But the fact that I don't, I think it knows,
For it's all too ready to add to my woes.
It's obvious that I'm the butt of a trick
When the software says I have only to click
With the mouse: but I don't know where
Because the place it names just isn't there.
I give up.
I'm going in search, with quill and ink,
For a familiar language in which to think.

From: *Walking Backwards Towards Old Age*
Submitted by Barbara Stone

TAG SALE is now open every Saturday, 10am – 1pm, and open Tuesday through Saturday during Flea Market weeks (July 12-16; Sept 6-10). Donations are greatly appreciated (no clothing, toys, computers, televisions, mattresses or encyclopedias please). If you have some items to donate or if you'd like to help out on a Saturday, please contact Gordon Christiansen or June Bacon.



POT LUCK: A picnic pot-luck (weather permitting) is planned following Sunday service on June 19th. A Sign Up sheet will be available in Fellowship Hall.

COMMUNITY MEALS The Community Meal is on summer vacation! Community Meals are generally held on the 4th Saturday of each month at 5 p.m. from September to May. If you would like to help out with your time or contribution, please let Barbara Stone know.

From the Board.....

At its recent meeting held May 22, 2011, the following items were discussed:

The granite work on the Church building can begin in July if approved at the annual meeting in June.

Cathy Senecal and Jane Alois will be painting the Wayside Pulpit to correspond with the colors of our other signs.



Fundraising – The tag sales have taken in \$14,700 plus so far this fiscal year.

The Church received a letter from the Town of Palmer asking for a voluntary “in lieu of tax payment” from all properties with tax-exempt status in the town. This letter assessed our property at \$6,610.69. The Board voted to check the box “No, we respectfully decline”, sign the letter and return it to the Board of Assessors.

The Budget for Fiscal Year 11/12 was approved and will be presented to the congregation at the annual meeting.

Some of you may remember Rev. Bill Baughan’s daughter Cindy Gagnon and her friend, Rob Brooks as they often attend St. Paul’s when Bill is here. Rob is holding a workshop in Wilbraham & Cindy is taking reservations (413-348-2421). Please see their flier at right for more information.



A quote from the
Wayside Pulpit:

Laughter is the beginning of prayer.

—Reinhold Niebuhr

Join Us For a Plein Air Workshop With Wilbraham Fine Artist **ROB BROOKS!**



Date: Saturday, June 18, 2011
Time: 10:00am—3:00pm
Where: Undisclosed location in
Wilbraham (Will give info upon sign up!)

Learn something new! Develop your creative side! Get tips from the best!

Beginner artists as well as experienced artists are welcome! After Rob gives a demonstration on creating an oil painting, you will work at your own pace while he will be available for questions, critiques and support.

The cost for this workshop is \$100 per person and includes, a gourmet lunch, champagne critique and your own painting to take home!

The artist will supply the paint and canvases (gesso panels), but you must bring your own easle, palette, paint thinner and brushes.

The Artist reserves the right to cancel the workshop due to lack of enrollment or weather. A full refund will be given.

Currently, Rob is showing his art work locally at R. Michaelson Gallery in Northampton, two galleries on Cape Cod, Washington DC, Southport CT, and Vieques PR. He has been teaching art workshops for 15 years and has been a full time professional artist for 25 years. Most recently, this February he donated his time to a Reach for Success Program for High School Students in Vieques, Puerto Rico. If you would like to read his BIO or view some of his artwork, you can do so at www.rob-brooks.com

JUNE 5TH



The Flower Communion

Adapted from an article by Reginald Zottoli

The Flower communion service was created by Norbert Capek (1870-1942), who founded the Unitarian Church in Czechoslovakia. He introduced this special service to that church on June 4, 1923. For some time he had felt the need for some symbolic ritual that would bind people more closely together. So he turned to the native beauty of their countryside for elements of a communion which would be genuine to them. This simple service was the result.

The flower communion was brought to the United States in 1940 and introduced to the members of our Cambridge, Massachusetts, church by Dr. Capek's wife, Maja V. Capek. From this beginning the service has spread to many of our Unitarian Universalist congregations and has been adapted along the way.

Reginald Zottoli wrote:

"The significance of the flower communion is that as no two flowers are alike, so no two people are alike, yet each has a contribution to make. Together the different flowers form a beautiful bouquet. Our common bouquet would not be the same without the unique addition of each individual flower, and thus it is with our church community: it would not be the same without each and every one of us. Thus this service is a statement of our community."



People were asked to bring a flower of their choice, either from their own gardens or from the field or roadside. When they arrived at church a large vase stood waiting in the vestibule, attended by two young members of the Church School. Each person was asked to place their own flower in the vase. This signified that it was by their own free will they joined with the others. The vase that contained all the flowers was a symbol of the united church fellowship. The young attendants helped with the arrangement of the bouquet. Later they carried the vase up to the front of the auditorium and placed it on a table there. Dr. Capek then said a prayer, after which he walked over and consecrated the flowers while the congregation stood. The two attendants then took the vase back out into the vestibule. After the service, as people left the church, they went to the

vase and each took a flower from the vase other than the one that they had brought. The significance of the flower communion is that as no two flowers are alike, so no two people are alike, yet each has a contribution to make. Together the different flowers form a beautiful bouquet. Our common bouquet would not be the same without the unique addition of each individual flower, and thus it is with our church community, it would not be the same without each and every one of us. Thus this service is a statement of our community. By exchanging flowers, we show our willingness to walk together in our Search for truth, disregarding all that might divide us. Each person takes home a flower brought by someone else - thus symbolizing our shared celebration in community. This communion of sharing is essential to a free people of a free religion.

It's a small world....

September 1988
The Palmer Journal

Minister returns to Monson

By Sue Leavitt

MONSON — A familiar face will grace the pews of the Unitarian Universalist church in Monson beginning on Sunday, Sept. 11, when the Rev. William F. Baughan will begin a one-year stint as the church's part-time interim Reverend.

"I'll be doing all the types of things that a full-time minister would do," said the Rev. Baughan. "This includes meeting with people, visiting folks in their homes, counseling, meeting with young people and committees, and of course doing the Sunday service.

"I would like to be as active as possible," he added.

The Rev. Baughan lives and works in Pittsfield, Mass. He is a full-time social worker in the Child Protective Investigation Unit

of the Department of Social Services. This is his 21st year as a minister in the Unitarian Universalist church.

He has presided over parishes in Grafton, where he was the full-time minister for three years and in Pittsfield, where he simultaneously was the full-time minister at the Unitarian Church and Protestant Chaplain at the Berkshire County House of Corrections for eight years.

In 1977 the RRev. Baughan was the Minister at the Unitarian Church in Newport, R.I. In 1980 he began his current work as a full-time social worker and part-time minister, conducting services on weekends in North Adams and Glenn Falls, N.Y.

The Rev. Baughan has been a guest Minister at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Monson for the past



Rev. William Baughan

couple of years.

"The Church has been without a Minister for the past couple of years, and my hope is that together we can rebuild the membership.... I've decided to become much more involved with the Church in Monson because of their courage and ten-

acity in keeping the church alive, relevant and meaningful without a minister.

"There's a wonderful spirit among a small group of people."

Services are held every Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m., except for the last Sunday of every month, when services are held at 5:30 p.m., followed by a 6:30 Church Supper.

From the Ground Up...

"Let us treat men and women well; treat them as if they were real. Perhaps they are." Ralph Waldo Emerson

One afternoon during a summer heat wave, an elderly gentleman patient who had been receiving weekly medical treatments at the hospital where I work, stopped at my registration desk upon leaving and announced to me, "I'm going to go home now and have an ice-cold Piels," (old brand of beer).

"Piels!" I exclaimed, "I haven't had a Piels since I was 4 years old!" The man was immediately taken aback, when it suddenly dawned on me as to why.

I'm certainly not advocating giving alcoholic beverages to minors; yet this is one of the pleasanter memories I have of my father—salting a beer while we both watched the head foam larger and larger until it almost flowed over the top of the glass. Then he would give it to me to drink. There are many other things we shared that most small children would have a revulsion toward—clams on the shell, anchovies right out of the can, sardines in tomato sauce, venison stew. And I remember him occasionally getting up early to fix us pancakes or in the kitchen late in the afternoon making homemade pizza for a Saturday night supper. In the fall when the weather turned cool, he would make some of the best homemade fudge I have ever eaten and coat apples with just the right amount of caramel. He was an avid gardener, and there wasn't anything he couldn't grow. We had fresh vegetables and flowers all spring, summer and fall.



A carpenter by trade, (a trade he learned in the Army during occupation in Japan following WWII), the bulk of his work year took place during the fair-weather months, so there was never enough time or money to take elaborate vacations. I can remember many day trips though, and often a "Sunday drive."

As a very little girl, back rubs in front of the television lulled me off to sleep on my father's lap. He would then carry me off to the bed which was part of a bedroom set he had made for me himself, (without power tools), which I still have today. I played on the floor around his feet in the evening, (often with toys he had made for me), while he sat in his favorite chair reading the newspaper, about which he made astute but profane commentary "to the air," as my mother was busy in the kitchen and paying no attention. When I got older, he spent hours in the cellar working on "my" school projects. He drove me back and forth to high-school functions, (a 9-mile drive from where we lived), and helped me buy my first automobile.

He was always a music lover, and as a thoughtless kid I may have hurt his feelings somewhat with my caustic remarks regarding our mandatory Saturday night vigils in front of the *Lawrence Welk Show*. The summer after I graduated from high school, I desperately wanted to attend a Leonard Bernstein concert at Tanglewood, and he was my only hope for getting there. So I bought my parents' tickets, as well as my own, and coerced him into going. Suit, tie and all— I think he really enjoyed it.

These are the good memories of my father. I had to dig deep to find them, past the memories that most immediately come to my mind; memories of dishes and other precious household objects flying through the air, of watching my mother being knocked to the floor because my father's handkerchief wasn't ironed, of watching my older brother get slapped across the face once a day for no good reason. I can remember being hit because I made too much noise coming in from play and being hit because I



didn't like what was being served for dinner, and being hit because I couldn't learn to ride a bike, all the while listening to the vile epithets he used when referring to me that eventually became my own description of myself. Alcohol was ever present. Our day trips often ended with hurt feelings, quickly overridden by the terror of sitting in the backseat of a car weaving and bobbing across the centerline toward oncoming traffic.

In the summer of my eleventh year, there was a top-ten song I often listened to on my transistor radio. It was a silly "chant," intended to be humorous, and my childish mind found it amusing. It was called "They're Coming to Take Me Away," about the men in the "white-coats" taking someone off to the "funny-farm." During that same summer, my mother, (perhaps taking a queue from the song), decided it was time to tell me the truth about my Dad's parents. Both of my grandparents were Italian immigrants, and my father was born into a family of 8 children. My grandfather died before I was born. I had always been told that my grandmother had also died before I was born, but that was not true. She died when I was 6, in Northampton State Mental Hospital, where she had been a resident for over 30 years. When my father was 10, she had tried to commit suicide and my grandfather had her committed. My father, as a little boy, actually witnessed his mother being laced into a straight jacket, placed in a medical "wagon" and driven away, never to return home again. I began to see my father's erratic and irrational behavior in a new light.

I was hired for my first, full-time job at the age of 17. Being a very shy person, adjusting to the adult working world a struggle for me. By this time, alcoholism had encroached more and more into my father's life and household fights became a daily occurrence. Threats were reinforced with the appearance of knives and guns.

Sitting on the edge of my bed at the end of a particularly trying work day, I watched the snow fall, circle around in an updraft, and drop again, all to the unbearable shrieking and shouting of yet another argument for which I felt personally responsible for guarding my mother's welfare. Past the limits of what I could tolerate, I stormed into the kitchen, grabbed every bottle of liquor I could get my hands on, opened the back door and flung them one by one, watching each one leave its imprint as it sank into the freshly fallen snow. I was numbed to the possible consequences of my actions. After all, what could happen to me that hadn't happened already?

But I had never prepared myself for my father's response, which shot straight through my heart with the weight of a cannonball. In a supplicating, almost childlike and whimpering tone he asked, "What did you do that for?"

At that moment, I realized that he truly did not know.



When my own kids were small, (my parents had separated by then), I would often take them to visit my Dad. I never told them any of my own history with my father, hoping they would connect with him in ways I never could; and I have an indelible memory of the four of us standing in a circle, lazily tossing a ball around.

Alcoholic dementia slowly and eventually overtook my father. My son and I cleaned his house, took him to the doctor, bought his groceries and set him up with social services, but eventually he required nursing home placement for his own safety. He was angry with me for initiating that decision, (I was his legal guardian), made all of his usual threats toward me and threatened the medical staff with bodily harm as well. But then there was one brief moment when his expression changed and with mental clarity he spoke to me from his hospital bed,

"I want to thank you for all you have done and are trying to do for me now," he said.

That was the last lucid statement I ever received from my father, and what a gift it was! It absolved me from all the guilt over my resentments toward him and my inability to bond with a man who was mentally ill.

My father passed away quite unexpectedly one night, shortly after falling asleep. His death shocked me to the very core. The door to achieving a genuine father/daughter relationship with my Dad was closed forever.

As I shelved his few belongings, I scanned through the 35- year hand-written journal he kept, logging every construction job he had ever held. The beginning of the journal was finely written documentation by a man proud of his craft. As I turned the pages, the handwriting degenerated into a barely legible childish scrawl as my father's priorities were eclipsed by alcohol, in the same way that our family life eroded more and more over time. I often wonder how different our lives might have been had there been the antidepressant and anti-anxiety medication available then that exists today. Mental illness is a trap. The real and genuine heart and soul struggles to free and express itself, but seldom gets the opportunity to emerge.

Where does a child go when the people who are supposed to protect him or her are the ones causing harm? Yet I always believed, and still believe, that my father would have unhesitatingly sacrificed his life to save mine. Is there a moral in this dilemma?

With all of our media forums extant today, we tend to view life circumstance more one-dimensionally than we did in bygone times. It's easy to look at the explosive culmination of a long, long chain of human events and pass judgment. We pigeon hole others into "good" or "bad" slots. We read a headline, or hear a sound bite and shake our heads and say, "How terrible!" effectively dehumanizing what makes us uncomfortable, by ignoring the preceding incidents that lead to a heinous act.



Because of my life with my father, I can look past the cage that encloses not only the mentally ill, but also all of us at times, and see through to the common soul that we share. Our lives are spherical, with breadth and height and depth, ever revolving and evolving. What rides around the surface, began somewhere in the past and will end somewhere in the future. What spins at the core is eternal.

My father taught me that. No one else could have.

Happy and blessed Father's Day,
Cathy

P.S. The elderly gentleman in the beginning of the story returned to the hospital the following week and handed me a brown paper bag. I'm not at liberty to discuss the contents, but it went well with pretzels, popcorn and the "lazy, crazy, hazy" days of summer!

Speaking of summer, I'm taking a break from FtGU until September. So now it's your turn! Have some good summer stories or old photographs of summers past? Get them to me, in any shape or form, by June 23rd. (Tracie can work miracles, and I have learned to use my scanner to good effect!). Let's celebrate the long-awaited fair weather together in our summer edition of St. Paul's Newsletter, and a happy summer to you all!

**NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL MEETING
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH OF PALMER
SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 2011**

You are hereby notified of the Annual Meeting of the members of St. Paul's Church of Palmer, Mass. to take place in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, June 12, 2011 at 11:15 a.m. or as soon as possible thereafter to act on the following:

- Article I Review and act on minutes of the Church meeting of Sept. 26, 2010.
- Article II Review and Act on the Budget for fiscal year July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012,
as prepared by the Board of Trustees.
- Article III Vote to move monies from Cash on Hand to the Maintenance & Repair Account.
- Article IV Vote to move monies from the Capital Fund Account to the Maintenance & Repair Account.
- Article V Hear and vote on the report of the deacons (Nominating Committee) for officers for fiscal year
July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012.

Your attendance is respectfully requested,

FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES,

June L. Bacon, Clerk