



Pass It On!!

PASTOR LEE'S PONDER

“Did you know you can reset your own password? Just...”

I’ve been on hold waiting for technical support for the last 20 minutes and I’ve heard the good news about easily resetting my password at least every one of those 20 minutes! Enough already! I’ll be hearing you in my sleep at this rate. And honestly, I’d rather my dreams be of things much more exciting. Oo – just heard “Currently there are two callers ahead of you.” Wonder how much longer I’ll have to wait.

Have you ever felt like that? Like you’re wasting time listening to something mundane and irrelevant? That it’s taking forever for it to be your turn?

What *are* you waiting for? And what are you going to do while you’re holding on for an answer, or for something new to come along? My mother always told me, “Patience is a virtue, young lady.” But I’m not always feeling virtuous – I can be impatient and edgy sometimes. Especially when I KNOW what is supposed to happen.

(Continued on page 3)

LOOKING FOR A SUNDAY MATINEE?

Confirmation Movie Afternoon—Open to All

Join us on Sunday, January 20th when the Confirmands will be watching the movie “Pay It Forward” as part of the confirmation program. We’ll watch the show, have some popcorn, and take some time after to talk about the movie. Who are the characters? Why’d we choose this movie? What’s the message? Did you like it? Why or why not? We hope you’ll join us! Come with your favorite pillow or slippers and get ready to settle in for a great time!



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Pastor Lee to Host “A Prayer and a Bead”
- Be Drawn In—New Worship Series to begin in January
- Pub Theology Coming to Clinton!



CHURCHES ALIVE CONGREGATION-WIDE CONVERSATION

Save the Date! On the evening of January 29, at 7pm, everyone from 9th grade and older is invited and encouraged to come to this important gathering. This is your opportunity to be involved in a beginning step toward revitalizing our church. Every voice is crucial to our success so we hope you'll make eve-

ry effort to attend. If you need child-care – let the office know. If you can't make it but want to share your input – let Pastor Lee know. If you need a ride—let us know.

As part of our Congregational Assessment, this Appreciative Inquiry will be led by Rev. Kelly Gallagher.

“Every voice is crucial! Every voice is our future!”

BE DRAWN IN—DRAWN IN CREATIVITY

Six Week Worship Series

God created the heavens and the earth... and called it all good!

Genesis

We spend too much time being “driven” rather than “drawn in.” We focus on what we “should” do rather than what we feel excited and compelled to do in our lives, in this world. During this series, we will connect with our inherent creativity and nurture this foundational aspect of being human, giving us renewed energy for passionate work, delightful play, and creative problem solving to make this world a better place for all.

Week 1: We'll **dream** about the creation of God, the will and intention for life to exist in the void. All we do is born out of desire, out of a dream and vision for the future. What brings you alive? What truly moves your soul in the deepest way?

Week 2: **Hovering** is the creative posture of taking a moment to see the “big picture.” We sometimes want to skip the step of paying quiet attention to the question: “What one thing do we need to focus on now?”

Week 3: God's act of creating all that is, God's act of entering our lives in the person of Jesus, God's everyday act of creating new life—all are acts of bringing that which is not into being. To create is to assert ourselves in a way that is risky. What can we do to risk what God has given us to expand love and grace in the world?

Week 4: **Listening** as part of creativity is about perceiving. We open our senses to see what is emerging. We'll learn to see moments of challenge as simply Co-Creator God inviting us to see new ways of moving forward in our lives.

Week 5: Everything that is created is in relationship with all other things. Nothing exists in isolation. Are we willing to re-integrate, re-vise, re-vision? New possibilities await if we are willing to offer ourselves fully and be willing to be changed by God.

Week 6: In the story of creation, God rested. And God's creativity is ongoing. So while the story said God was “finished” and then rested, really it was simply a pause to reflect, to observe, and to celebrate, and then God continued God's creative work among and with us.

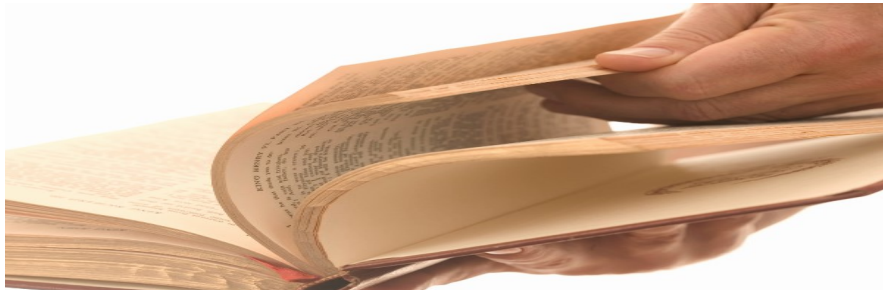
WOW!! WORKING on WEBSITE...

Attention Committee and Team Leaders. Please take a look at our website

www.clintonunitedchurch.org and let us know what changes to make to information related to your ministry in the church.

Attention all members and friends. We often take photos at worship and other church events. If you do not want your photo included on the website or our publications, please let the office know.

Everyone—please take a moment to share your feedback with us. What do you like about the site? What do you wish was there that you don't see?



PASTOR LEE'S PONDER (...continued from page 1)

"Come on – enough mulling it over. Let's just do it!" You know the saying, "poop or get off the pot."

I was on vacation last week from my church work. I didn't write any newsletter articles, nor plan any worship, nor get ready for the next vitality meeting. But I did spend a lot of time in contemplation. It's been a year since I began my ministry with you. The edgy part of me spent a lot of the week questioning why we aren't miles ahead of where we are in discerning who we are as this group of Christians here on Haskell Ave in Clinton Massachusetts – one small body of Christ, yet mighty in faith, determination, and anticipation of the future. "Where's our new worship? Where're the Bible studies and small groups and why don't we have a weekly youth gathering that's bringing in kids from the neighborhood and around town?! When's the mission trip? Girl, you haven't even gotten a group together to plan it!!! What's going on with you!?!"

In fact, when we voted to go ahead with the Churches Alive program through the Mass Conference UCC, I wanted to start right then. I kept asking Don – can't we do the assessment already? Why do we have to wait until January?

And then I hear Mom again – "all good things come to those who wait." Sigh....

After another 10 minutes on hold, a tech answered and helped me get my hospice iPad up and running again. And the time on hold actually wasn't a waste of time. I wrote this newsletter article – a good thing that came out of the waiting.

And the same will happen for United Church. I have no doubt. In God's time, we will revisit our Mission and Vision as we discern "why" we are The United Church in Clinton and what God wants us to do with our time, treasure, and talent. In God's time, there will be new things happening – not just for the sake of being a busy church, but for the sake of answering God's call wisely and faithfully. In God's time, we will go on a mission adventure – who knows where or for how long? But that isn't what matters.

What matters is that we take the time to journey forward at a pace that allows for quiet contemplation, for hearing the still small voice, for discerning all that we need. Let's do so, guided by God!

A BEAD AND A PRAYER

"I think our lives are saying that we need some sacred spaces and sacred things in them. We need some things that are as mysterious as the Mystery itself."

~ Robert Benson

Prayer beads are a tool to prayer. Just as a hammer is a tool used to construct a house, so prayer beads help us develop rich lives of prayer as we deepen our connection with God.

Join others on February 10th at 2pm to learn about praying with beads and to create your own set.

Enjoy camaraderie in this collective creative process, and discover a new way to pray. On February 17 & 24, and March 10 & 17, we'll gather after worship for a 4-week Bible study. Each week will include a scripture passage, a weekly reading, a prayer bead experience, and reflection questions.

RSVP to Pastor Lee if you wish to make your own prayer beads. Cost for the kit is \$15.

Although not required, a book is available for the Bible Study. "A Bead and a Prayer" by Kristen E. Vincent can be found at Amazon.

Youth Council News

December was a month to remember!

- ❖ Special thanks to those who volunteered to help run the children's Christmas greens table for the German Christmas Market!
- ❖ **"The light before Christmas"** was a huge hit! Thank you to our Sunday school children, confirmation class and congregation for their participation in the pageant. The show could not have gone on without you!
- ❖ Thank you for supporting our pageant Sunday Bake Sale, the money raised help cover the cost of the winter togs shipment!!!
- ❖ On December 23rd the children of our church wrote Christmas cards to our neighbors and hand delivered them. We hope to see some new faces. They also wrote to Timothy Bernard a local army recruit that wasn't able to be home for the holidays.

We have classes offered to children from pre-school age through grade eight. Classes are held during the worship service, following the Children's Message. The children are encouraged to become active members in the worship service by volunteering to be an acolyte. Please sign up on the bulletin board outside of the sanctuary.

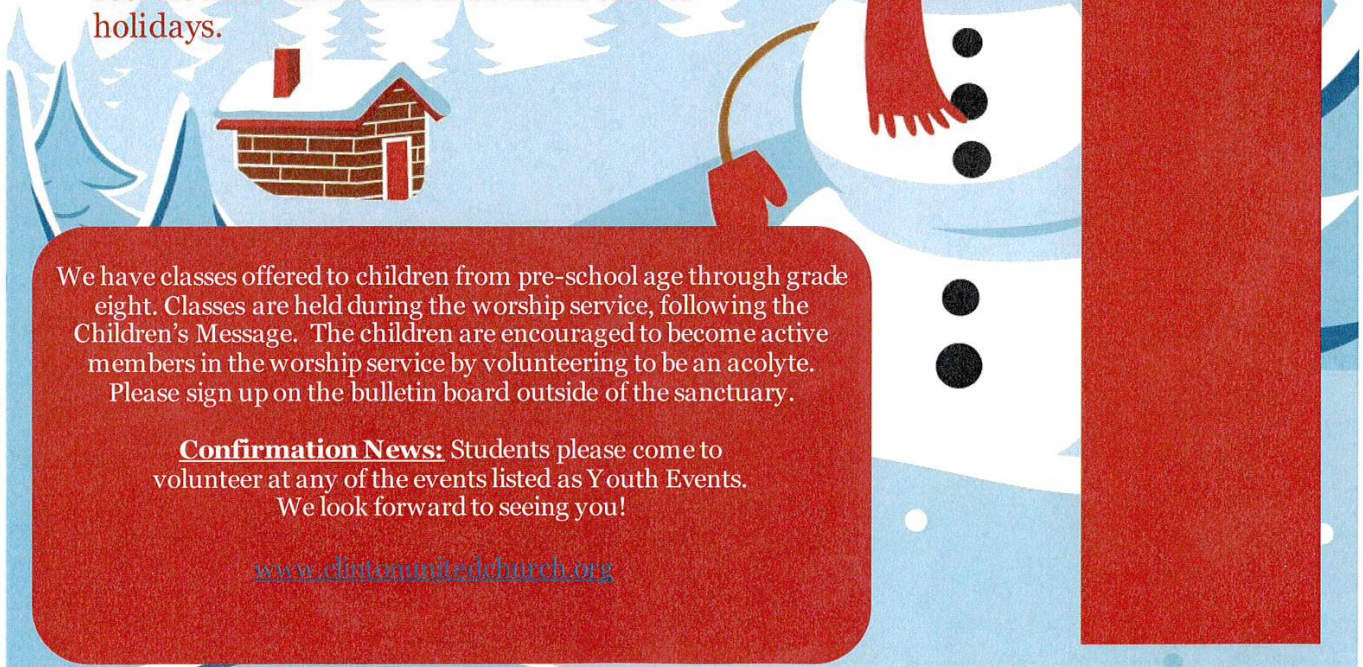
Confirmation News: Students please come to volunteer at any of the events listed as Youth Events. We look forward to seeing you!

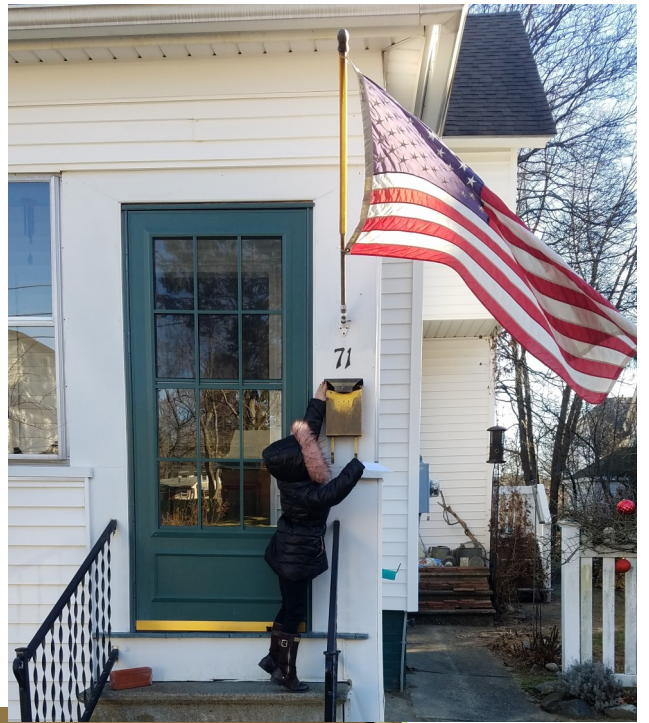
www.christianunitedchurch.org

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

January 13th – Will kick off the collection of non-perishable food items for the "Souper Bowl of Caring" the collection will run through Feb. 3rd.

January 20th – Intergenerational Sunday Service





A NOTE FROM SHADOW



Hi everyone! Mom asked me to write a quick note to you about my training. Guess what? I passed my level 3 test and we just heard that I'll probably be able to take my final test in just a few weeks! And then I'll be a certified service dog!

Lots of people ask her if they can pat me cuz I guess usually you're not supposed to. The best way to know is if I'm wearing my vest that says "Service Dog" on it. When I have that on, it means I have to focus ONLY on my work and you can't interact with me. Most of the time when I'm at church though I don't think I'll have it.

Another question people ask is what I do for her and what's the difference between an emotional support and a service dog. All of you who are dog lovers already know how a dog can be an emotional support – you get happy and relaxed! To be a service dog is more than that. I'm being trained to do some things that help a disability. Three years ago mom couldn't work cuz of what was happening. She's doing better now, and I'll be doing things to help be sure that doesn't happen again.

Wish me luck!

COMING TO THE CROSS OF CHRIST WOMEN'S RETREAT

Pastor Lee will lead this weekend retreat on March 1–2 at the beautiful Saint Mehodios Faith and Heritage Center in Con-toocook New Hampshire.

Author Tom Muldoon says, "Life in Christ demands the same kind of vigilance, preparation, and training that a person undertakes as an athlete." This Lent you are invited to become a more powerful athlete at this retreat that will prepare us for the journey of Lent.

In addition to worship, we'll learn prayer practices, join in group discussions, and pray for one another. There will be time for

laughter and time for Bible study, time for journaling, and time for building community.

We'll answer questions such as What is Lent? Why do people give something up at Lent? Should I? What is forgiveness? And what forgiveness is *not*!

For more information see Pastor Lee. To hear from someone who has been to one of Lee's retreats, talk to Katie or Charlotte Gill.



Be An Athlete for Christ!!

COMMUNITY BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

Did you know that Pastor Lee is a Death and Dying Coach? After working in Hospice for many years, she knew her passion for helping the dying and the bereaved was something she couldn't ignore. Yet her hospice chaplaincy didn't seem the best way to bring this passion to life. That's when CoachRev @the CrossRoads came to life and Lee acquired specialized training in the area of Death and Dying Coaching.

Beginning February 5th, and every first Tuesday thereafter, Lee will be offering an on-line grief support group. If you or someone you know would like to learn more about how you can be supported in the roller-coaster of grief, let her know. You can call at 508-308-7116 or email her at Lee@CoachRev.com.

You can also sign up for the Daily Grief Support Email. When someone you love dies, grieving that loss can take a long time. As in any emotional journey, there are rough spots to be weathered, and moments when you catch a glimpse of peace. These daily emails provide encouragement and gentle reminders of the recovery process. Sign up by going to <http://eepurl.com/gdKYe9>

Important Dates in January and February

January 13

8am Bible Study
9:15 Ensemble
10am Worship, Veterans of the Cross Offering
11:15 Vitality Group

January 14

8am Stewardship

January 18

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins

January 20

8am Bible Study
9:15 Ensemble
10am Intergenerational Worship
2pm Movie Afternoon - Pay It Forward

January 27

8am Worship Committee
9:15 Ensemble
10am Worship - Draw Us In Series
11:15 Confirmation Field Trip

January 22

7pm Pub Theology

January 29

7pm Churches Alive Congregational Gathering

February 3

7:30am Confirmation
9:15 Ensemble
10am Worship - Cons. Steward Communion
11:15 Souper Bowl of Caring

February 10

8am Bible Study
9:15 Ensemble
10am Worship - Cons. Steward
11:15 Valentine Bake Sale Confirmation
2pm A Prayer and A Bead

February 17

8am Bible Study
9:15 Ensemble
10am Worship - Cons. Steward
11:15 Prayer Study

February 24

8am Worship Planning
9:15 Ensemble
10am Worship
11:15 Prayer Study



January

04 - Julie Dietel
13 - Michelle O'Toole
15 - Jennifer Arsenault 1
7 - Teresa Sontag
18 - Sarah Erickson
20 - Shane Wheeler
23 - Sarah Irvine
24 - Donnie Dobeck III
24 - Justin Newton
25 - Amanda Smethurst
27 - Lauren Crossman
28 - Samantha Kirby

06 - Jacob Chetwynd

10 - Janet Lamy
11 - Susie Hoag
13 - Jon Sidney Sawyer
13 - Sydney Furman
15 - Melissa Braconnier
16 - Jacqueline Wuth
16 - Laura Garceau
16 - Colton Bradbury
17 - Natalie Burgos
18 - Kevin Wuth
19 - Connor Gilcrest
21 - Bonnie Clark
22 - Justin O'Toole
24 - Bob McTague
25 - James Erikson
26 - Steven Jacobson
27 - Christine Dobeck
27 - Jack Lewis

February

03 - Bob Norwood
03 - Michael Khanoyan, Jr
03 - Bryan Titus
05 - Laura Golas Facendola

14 - Alan & Grace Baer

17 - Betty & Michael Khanoyan

26 - Heidi & Eric Furman

26 - Donna & Allan Mueller



THE UNITED CHURCH OF CLINTON

A federation of the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church, we are a church home for people from all backgrounds, and we rejoice in each person who comes our way.

Our goal and hope is to help all to see faith and spirituality as a vital part of everyday life. Our worship is meaningful, friendships are significant, care is compassionately encouraging, and prayer is practiced as continuing communication with God.



PUB THEOLOGY—A NEW WAY TO TALK FAITH

People have been gathering in pubs and public spaces for ages, talking about life, philosophy, faith, and deep questions of meaning. People all over are rediscovering the pub as a safe, open space where they can explore and express their own doubts & questions, learn from others, and engage people of varying religious traditions. In our increasingly fractured society, these spaces are not only welcome, but needed.

Come bring your questions, your curiosity, and pull up a chair.

The format is simple: beer, conversation, and God. Be ready to engage with people of varying religious traditions, philosophical perspectives and life experiences. You'll be able to share your own wrestlings and thoughts while learning something new along the way. Join us on January 22nd and the 4th Tuesday every month at The Old Timer Restaurant, 155 Main Street in Clinton.

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