



The Chimes

Bar Harbor
Congregational
Church, UCC



April 2017

BAR HARBOR CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

LOVE IN ACTION

IN THIS ISSUE:

Pastor's Letter

We are not alone

If you can believe it, this time last year we'd already celebrated Easter. We'd gathered at Schooner Head Overlook, singing and warming to the glory of Christ's resurrection. We'd gone back to the church for breakfast, and later we'd celebrated Easter with great joy.

Not so fast this year. I much prefer Easter in April, but ... for me March has been way more lion than lamb. From fierce winter storms, to the cacophony of busy-ness, to swirling illnesses, it's been a rough time.

This Lent we've had good traveling companions: other eager, hungry Marchers on Mt. Desert St.; our fellow United Churches of Christ on MDI (Seaside UCC in Northeast Harbor, and Somesville Union Meeting House); and the meditation group that meets weekly in our parlor. We have become more conscious of our fellow pilgrims.

In times of burden, stress, and worry, it's tempting to think that we're going it alone - that it's all up to us, or that it's all on our shoulders. Even when we know better; even when our faith longs to wake us up from this delusion.

But now we have met our neighbors anew; our sense of "we" has expanded. And, I hope (and pray), the knowledge that we are never alone - not here in this community, not *anywhere* where God is - seeps in past our walls of isolation and angst, to warm and sustain us.

Is it too early to proclaim that the stone has begun to roll away, letting the light of Easter dawn in the darkness of the tomb? I hope not. This year I find I *need* Easter; how about you?

Blessings and peace,

Rob



Inward Journey: *The Call of Change*

Flags of prayer and peace wave even in the midst of change. Where do we see God's Spirit at work in these windy times?



Outward Journey: *Healing Love in Haiti*

As Friends of Haiti we seek to be walk alongside those who both endure and alleviate suffering, including Partners in Health, an NGO we profile this month.

THE SPIRIT'S PRESENCE AMONG US



CURLING

A gentle and focused delivery, encouraging teamwork, and friends who smooth obstacles along your path – that's curling. And we had a blast trying it again this year !



MORE CURLING

If only it were actually as easy as it looks ... but with the help of our Belfast Curling Club coaches, we were up & curling in no time. Thanks to everyone who participated and cheered us on. How about again, next year ?!

Inward journey

The Call of Change

by Marjory Bankson

When we arrived at The Church of the Saviour, we had read all of Elizabeth O'Connor's books, and we eagerly anticipated a small, close-knit worshipping body that we could join. Instead, we found a rolling boil of change. The Church of the Saviour was giving birth to an unknown number of smaller churches. It seemed we had arrived just in time to bury The Church of the Saviour, and we were horrified!

At that time, worship and classes at the headquarters building sustained the inward journey, while the Potter's House was spawning missions via countless conversations around the tables. Nobody knew yet if the new little churches would become centers for spiritual formation or mission outposts. For some, it felt like death. For others, it was a time of new birth.

The original Church of the Saviour commitment statement did not give a list of prerequisites, rules and regulations. In fact, all that was required was that we have the kind of gratitude that inspires generosity, inclusiveness, largeness of heart. Listen to some of these promises:

- *I unreservedly and with abandon commit my life and destiny to Christ, promising to give him a practical priority in all the affairs of life;*
- *I commit myself, regardless of the expenditures of time, energy and money, to becoming an informed, mature Christian;*

- *Because God is a lavish giver, I too shall be lavish and cheerful in my regular gifts;*
- *I will seek to be loving in all relations with other individuals, groups, classes, races and nations and will seek to be a reconciler, living in a manner which will end all war, personal and public.*

Maybe it takes being forgiven much to make these kinds of lavish promises. I know that every year, when we are back in recommitment season, I am shocked at the wholehearted commitment it requires to say 'yes' once again: 'yes' to Jesus' life and teachings, 'yes' to Jesus' death and whatever is dying at Seekers Church, 'yes' to resurrection and new forms of being church in this time and place. The good news is, God's renewal plan involves death - and the promise of resurrection in a new form.

Endings do not trouble God. Death is part of the story. Death can be embraced. It took immense courage recently for the Potter's House Church to lay down a fifty-year-old call. It was a real experience of death and ending. Too much focus on the disciplines of our commitment can keep us from seeing when it's time to let something die. The disciplines can keep us from an intimate encounter with Christ rather than supporting us in growing closer.

Deep commitment brings deep healing, and deep healing brings deep generosity. Commitment allows us to take the lids off the jars that are our lives, and helps us to embrace even drastic change.

Outward journey

Healing Love in Haiti



UPDATE FROM HAITI by Deb Wade

I recently joined a conference call with Partners in Health, an NGO that has been working in Haiti for over 30 years. Three staffers - a nursing administrator, chief medical officer, and head of infrastructure - explained PIH efforts to assist public sector health services and increase Haitian self-sufficiency. They have focused on training health care providers and making available modern medical equipment and treatments.

Twenty years ago PIH started a teaching hospital in Mirebalais. When the 2010 earthquake struck, the government hospital in Port Au Prince was severely impacted so the Mirebalais hospital provided care. But U.N. soldiers from Nepal (where cholera is endemic) were sent to help with earthquake recovery and brought cholera to Haiti.

In October 2016, Hurricane Matthew hit Haiti's southwest corner, affecting thousands: 1,000 lives lost, 15,000 people displaced, and a sharp spike in the number of people needing health care - including those with cholera. PIH had a surge capacity to help the Les Cayes Immaculate Conception hospital by repairing the roof, purchasing a generator, and funding the hospital's clinical and support staff who hadn't been paid in months. PIH also moved doctors from less-impacted hospitals to Les Cayes, including neonatal nurses and surgeons.

After the Hurricane, new cholera cases jumped to 65 per week. PIH worked

with the Ministry of Health to oversee administration of 800,000 cholera vaccine doses in southern Haiti. Later in 2017 there will be a larger vaccine push for the rest of the country.

Looking ahead, PIH wants to increase their emphasis on teaching Haitian M.D.s, healthcare workers, and "vaccination crews." PIH also hopes to address children's diarrheal diseases exacerbated by unsafe sanitation, form a cholera eradication plan for the whole island (with UN funding), improve traffic safety, and help treat chronic illness like cancer and heart disease. Remaining large-scale challenges are: drought, climate change, and working to increase farming productivity.

**Notes shared from the conference call and the PIH Winter 2017 newsletter*

***Friends of Haiti made a \$1000 donation to Partners in Health in 2016*

The **Friends of Haiti** group promotes our connection with *Institution Univers* in Ouanaminthe, Haiti, and its partner organization, COCINA, by:

- Mission and service trips (upcoming in March, 2018).
- Hosting top IU students for a two-week summer exchange.
- Staying informed about Haiti and sharing this information with our church & community.
- Responding to financial need through COCINA and others (like Partners in Health).

The next **Friends of Haiti** brunch is **Saturday, May 6th, 9:30am at BHUCC**. There is also a **Home & Away supper on Friday, May 12th at Somesville Union Meeting House** to learn more about our efforts. All are welcome.

FOLLOWING GOD'S CALL TO SERVE

Christian Ed Assistants Needed

As we move towards fully implementing our Safe Church practices requiring two adults to be with our children at all times while in their classrooms, **we are looking for caring Assistants** to help out in the Nursery and with Sunday School. Nursery Assistants will have the joy of tending the youngest among us (~infants to age 5), and will work with our wonderful Nursery Caregiver Katie Skeate. CE Assistants will coordinate with Sunday School teaching teams. Please sign up in the parlor.



To order Easter lilies or tulips, please contact the church office at 288-3280 or see a flower committee member. Your plant will be placed in church for our Easter service and then you can take it with you afterwards. The cost is \$15.00 each, checks payable to Bar Harbor Congregational Church. Please submit your form and payment by **Monday, April 3rd**. For questions contact Roxie Brechlin or another member of the Committee.



One Great Hour of Sharing: In March we raised **\$1460** for OGHS, including a \$480 match by the church. *Thank you!*

Our April special offering goes to Local Solutions: long-term, supportive housing for local adults with developmental disabilities, now nearing completion at the former Parish House behind St. Saviour's. Our church matches total contributions up to \$480. Please give as you are able.

<https://localsolutionsformaine.org>

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Tuesdays @ 12pm:** Bible Study
- **Wednesdays @ 6pm:** Choir
- **Fridays @ 8am:** Morning prayer
- **Thursday, April 6th @ 5:45pm**
Lenten Supper @ BHUCC (*Living Buddha, Living Christ: a dialogue w/ Laura Neal & Rob Benson*)
- **Sunday, April 9th @ 2pm**
BHUCC goes to see ACT's musical "Shrek" at MDI HS
- **Thursday, April 13th @ 5:30pm**
Maundy Thursday service @ BHUCC
- **Friday, April 14th @ 6pm**
Good Friday service at Seaside UCC (Northeast Harbor)
- **Easter Sunday, April 16th**
Sunrise service @ 5:45am at Schooner Head Overlook, with breakfast afterwards; Easter Service @ 10am at BHUCC
- **Friday – Sat., April 29th – 30th**
Middle School Youth volunteer overnight at Pilgrim Lodge
- **Saturday, April 29th (morning)**
BHUCC helps w/ the Friends of Acadia roadside cleanup



*Many hands making work lighter -
a glimpse of our elusive Chiming angels preparing
our newsletter for mailing.*

The Chimes

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*an open & affirming
congregation*