

THE BLACKSTONE VALLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Our Mission is to change peoples' lives
through a relationship with Jesus Christ

February 2009



From The Pastor's Heart

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

One of the first special days we tend to think about as we begin the month of February is Valentine's Day. Although it is a secular holiday, God and love are intricately bound together. In I John 4: 7-8 we read:

"My beloved friends, let us continue to love each other since love comes

from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and experiences a relationship

with God. The person who refuses to love doesn't know the first thing about

God, because God is love – so you can't know him if you don't love."

(The Message, Eugene Peterson)

You have heard the old saying that "Love is blind..." This leads us to believe that if we love someone we don't see their faults and weaknesses, that if we knew what they were really like inside we wouldn't love them. But I think that this popular saying is not accurate.

I think that rather it is hate that is blind. I think that condescension and cynicism are blind. I believe that instead of being blind, love enables us to see others more clearly. Love enables us to see things in others that have been there all along, but maybe were overlooked because arrogance, hate, indifference, or self absorption get in the way. Love opens our eyes to the

possibilities of others and allows us to respect each other even when we don't agree. Love enables us to always look for what we share in common rather than being divided by our differences. And love penetrates the barriers we might have set up that separate us from each other --- and from God.

Eugene Peterson writes:

"The two most difficult things to get straight in life are love and God. More often than not, the mess people make of their lives can be traced to failure or stupidity or meanness in one or both of these areas. The basic and biblical conviction is that the two subjects are intricately related. If we want to deal with God the right way, we have to learn to love the right way. If we want to love the right way, we have to deal with God the right way. God and love can't be separated."

(Living the Message, pg.52)

You see, for us Christians, Valentine's Day is an everyday kind of occurrence as we strive to love God with all our heart, soul and being, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Love and God are tightly woven together and by striving to live a life of love, our relationship with God will continue to grow and deepen --- as well as our relationships with each other. As we enter into the month of February, I invite us, as a community of faith, to let the celebration of Valentine's Day become our way of life!

Blessings,

Rev. Michele

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- Women, Work and Worship Update
- Women's day of reflection, Feb. 21



A Study Group: Momentum for Life

If you have a desire to build a momentum into your life that will help you to move forward into the kind of future God has planned for you --- then this six-week study is just for you!

Written by United Methodist pastor Michael Slaughter, this study “focuses on the biblical principles for sustaining physical health, personal integrity, and strategic focus in life.”

Together, through this study, we will learn the “five fundamental principles of D-R-I-V-E” that will help us build momentum to keep moving forward:

Devotion to God

Readiness for Lifelong Learning

Investing in Key Relationships

Visioning for the Future

Eating and Exercise for Life

There will be at least two different groups. One begins on Thursday evening, February 26 at 7:00pm and the other Friday morning, February 27 at 10:00am Sessions will continue through Lent, ending on April 2nd or 3rd. Each session is between 60-75 minutes long and includes a video presentation. If necessary, additional groups can be formed on other nights or days.

To sign up, call the church office (508-234-2275), email Rev. Michele pastor@blackstonevalleyumc.org or indicate your desire to participate on the Sunday attendance/registration pad! Workbooks for the class cost \$10. I ask that you pay what you can. I would like as many members of the faith community to participate as possible, regardless of ability to pay. There is a participant DVD journal also available but not required at an extra cost.

Rev. Michele

Women, Work, & Worship (formerly Craft Saturdays)

This WAS the once- a-month group that gathered on a Saturday morning to work on personal projects: knitting, crocheting, sewing, scrapbooking, quilting, embroidery, needlepoint. We always had devotions and we always had food. The best part was that we had fellowship! We also often had a craft that was easy enough for all of us to do. This event was labeled “Craft Group” for want of a better name.

Well, this group has a new name and an additional focus. We are Women, Work & Worship. We will continue to meet on the fourth Saturday of the month from 9am to noon. We will continue to have food and devotions. We will continue to work on our projects. In addition, there will be opportunities to lend a hand in the production of handmade gifts for “A Holiday Affair”, the clam chowder luncheon and holiday sale to be held in November. If there is interest, there will be planned projects for group effort.

We are still part of the Women’s Ministry at BVUMC. Bev Wheeler and Peg Codner are organizing the Saturdays. Come and join the fun on February 28th

Women's Ministry

Book Study: We will finish up "Having A Mary Spirit" on February 10. Keep your eyes open for our next book study to begin in March!

A day of reflection, "Four R's for Women", will be held on February 21 from 9AM - 4PM in Faith Hall. Lunch will be provided. The day will include rest, relaxation, reflection and rejoicing. Please RSVP to Lee Ducharme at dndwilson95@aol.com or 508-883-2654 by February 13.

Northbridge Association of Churches Sponsors Rev. Bert

Mashall's

"The Gospel of Mark" at BVUMC

On Sunday, March 1 at 6:30 p.m., Rev. Bert Marshall will present "The Gospel of Mark" in our sanctuary at BVUMC. Rev. Marshall, the New England Regional Director of Church World Service, committed the Gospel of Mark to memory in 2003 and does presentations throughout the country. In addition, Bert, a singer and songwriter, includes some of his songs as he tells the Gospel of Mark. One church member said, "To hear Rev. Marshall proclaim the entire Gospel of Mark from start to finish is to partake of a sacred experience that lifts us out of ourselves and links us to God's heart." An offering will be taken. The public is invited and refreshments will be served.

The event is sponsored by the Northbridge Association of Churches. For more information, go to www.GospelofMarkalive.com.

Prayer Shawl and Blanket Ministry

Prayer Shawl will meet on February 1 and March 1 from 4:30 PM to 6PM in Faith Hall.

Christian Love & Sympathy

To Bev Wheeler and family on the death of her mother Lucille Bidwell.

One Dress at a Time

This is a mission project that Bev Wheeler and Peg Codner are truly passionate about. The project has begun and the hope is that this will eventually grow and become an active mission project for Women's Ministries at BVUMC.

This program was the brainchild of Toni Pugliano of Arizona. There are little girls in our country who have never worn or owned a dress, let alone had a new one. These girls often live in poverty. Poor families do not usually buy dresses. Their clothing purchases need to be of the unisex clothing that is more practical. Jeans are long wearing and can be worn by a boy or a girl. Sewing a dress for a child will not fix the family's financial situation, but it WILL make a little girl feel very special.

One Dress at a Time requires no meetings or membership dues. The patterns, fabrics, and trims are the responsibility of the seamstress and her buddies. Sew the dress, put it on a hanger, and put a One Dress at a Time Tag on it. It is then our job to connect the dress to a child through the church, the school, Salvation Army, etc. We really never expect to meet the child. Our satisfaction is the connection of the dress to the child.

This is a long range project...One Dress at a Time

For more information, contact Peg Codner or Bev Wheeler.

Blue Bag Sunday is February 1

Sunday, February 1st is Blue Bag Sunday. Our "Blue Bag" program is a food collection program for the Food Banks in the Blackstone Valley, and this month's donated food will go to the Mendon Food Pantry.

Specific items needed are: cleaning products, laundry detergent, paper goods, cereal, juices, snacks for children, canned meats, beef stew, and canned ham.

Items not needed are tuna and pasta.

So remember your bags and place them in the large baskets in the ladies' parlor or near the entrance of Faith Hall!

Good and Faithful Servant

We give our thanks this month to all the wonderful folks who help us teach Sunday School. Some have already given their time this year and some are about to do so.

Our young people are indebted to you as are all of us in the community. So, thank you, good and faithful servants:

Tina Beauchaine, Heather Brown, LuAnn Belseth, Karen Colonair, Ann Cook, Becky Brower, Brandon Brower, Laurel Plourde, Carolyn Mitchell, Bonnie Mochun, Shannon Wheeler, Susan Wood, Vicky Warner, Bev Wheeler.

A Holiday Affair: Saturday, November 14, 2009 from 11am to 2

**Luncheon, live music,
and handmade gifts available for purchase**

We will be having a clam chowder luncheon and holiday fair on November 14 of this year. The goal is to introduce and welcome more of the local community to our new space. Thus, the event is a social one, not a major fundraiser.

We have a fairly extensive list of ideas for the creation of merchandise. Hopefully, we will engage many women of our faith community. We plan to work individually but also hope to work in groups. The women of our church are building special and meaningful relationships and this will offer another way of working together.

We are also going to offer holiday shopping for the youngest members of our faith community with their own special spot offering on-site wrapping.

This program is being led by Bev Wheeler, Barb Fortin and Peg Codner, and will be a success with the prayers and support of our faith community.

Congratulations

To Mike, Audry and Baron Sherry on the birth of Caroline Theresa Sherry, born on January 24th. Caroline weighed 6 pound, 4 ounces and was 20 inches long.

Central Mass District Announces Spring 2009 Lay Speaking Courses

Each course will meet on three consecutive Saturdays - April 18, 25 and May 2 - at 1:00 to 6:00 PM

Location: Blackstone Valley UMC; 61 Linwood Ave, Whitinsville, MA 01588

Fee: \$35.00

Registration Deadline: April 10, 2009

Description of Courses

Lay Speaking Ministries Basic Course

The Lay Speaking Ministries Basic Course focuses on the many ways lay speakers are called to be in ministry through such things as preaching, leading, teaching, serving, proclaiming the gospel, discipling, storytelling, and growing through personal spiritual formation. Completion of the Basic Course is required for Lay Speaker certification.

Lay Speakers Lead in Mission Outreach - Advanced Course

This advanced course helps lay speakers understand the role of mission outreach in relationship to the vision and ministry of the church.

A Ministry of Caring – Advanced Course

Christians are called to a ministry of caring and can learn ways to show their deep concern for others. This advanced course will help you better prepare people in the church for the challenge and the call to care for friends, neighbors, and all who cross their paths.

Important Reminder A refresher course is required every three years to remain a Local Church Lay Speaker. To become a Certified Lay Speaker and serve outside your local congregation, you must take one advanced course and continue by taking at least one advanced course every three years. All Local Church and Certified Lay Speakers must submit an annual report of activities to their respective charge conference.

**Registration Form - Central Mass District
Lay Speaking Ministries Spring 2009 Courses**

Course Dates/Time: *Each course will meet on three consecutive Saturdays – April 18, 25, and May 2 - at 1:00 to 6:00PM*

Location: Blackstone Valley UMC; 61 Linwood Ave, Whitinsville, MA 01588

Fee: \$35.00/class

Registration Deadline: April 10, 2009

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ **Email:** _____

Local Church: _____

Pastor's Signature: _____

Administrative Board/Council Chair Signature: _____

(Required only for the Basic Course)

Course Enrollment:

Basic Course

___ **Basic Layspeaking** - Instructor: Bruce Denson

Advanced Courses

___ **Layspeakers Lead in Mission Outreach** - Instructor: Judith Sandberg

___ **A Ministry of Caring** - Instructor: Janice Myers

___ **I am taking the Basic Course to become a Local Lay Speaker.**

___ **I am taking an Advanced Class to renew my certification.**

___ **I am taking an Advanced Class for audit purposes only.**

Is your church interested in hosting future CMA District Lay Speaking Classes?

___ **Yes, Have someone contact me about this.** ___ **No**

Please mail registration form and your check - (payable to the New England Conference) to: Charles Frasier – 6 Wildlife Drive, Hopkinton, MA 01748

Telephone: 508-561-2360 Email: chas.frasier@verizon.net



Celebrations



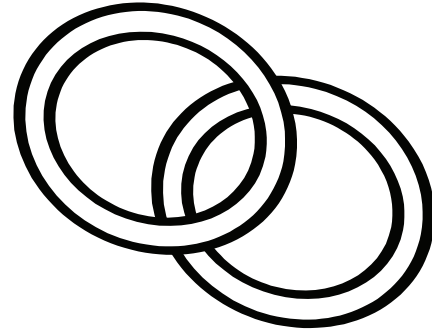
February Birthdays

- 7- Arielle Wilson
- 8- Tina Beauchaine
Amy Muscatell
- 13- Joyce Bergeron
- 14- Marion Grassi
- 15- Janet Bisson
- 16- Dot Ellis



February Anniversaries

- 10- Bev & Paul Wheeler
- 14- Dixi & RayTalke
- 17- Rev. Michele & Charlie Ewers
Bette & Bob Marseglia



- 17- Amanda Daigle
- 18- George Ellis
Andrew Leighton
Bonnie Mochun
- 19- Jeff Beauchaine
- 20- Russell Pimentel

- 22- Bernice Andrews
Erin Boudreau
Becky (King) Brower
- 24- Bethany Cammarano
Dianne Stevens Thibodeau
- 27- Steven Belle
Derek Plourde
Hayden Plourde
- 29- Adele Gentry
Marie Henderson



Please help the Communications Team keep the Birthday/Anniversary list up-to-date. Should you notice an error or omission, please let us know.

