



The Witness

Spring 2018 Edition

WINTHROP CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

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Pastor's Reflections

This year, Ash Wednesday was on Valentine's Day. Across my friend and family groups and social media feeds, people wondered how they would manage celebrating the people they love alongside the beginning of Lent (and the fasting that many people undertake as spiritual practice during that time). People asked, mostly in jest, if they should purchase that heart-shaped box of chocolate for their sweetie or forgo the treats all together for a more somber celebration. A man named Josh Lawlor even designed some very silly, very funny Ash Wednesday/ Valentine's Day cards that I saw being shared on Facebook. The cards said things like:

"Ashes to Ashes/Dust to Dust/If you're not my valentine/my Lent will be crushed"

"Hey, Girl, Let me be there 4 U while U contemplate UR mortality"

"Hey, Girl, You know the martyrdom of St. Valentine was actually pretty gruesome, so this Ash Wednesday date is kind of appropriate"

"Hey, Girl, How about for Lent I give up anyone else but you"

That is certainly one creative way to bridge the gap between these two holidays that, at least in the ways we commonly celebrate them in the US, seem very different. I'd like to suggest that there are probably a few more connections, too, but they are not quite so pithy as to fit on a greeting card.

Valentine's Day is often marketed as a day for a very specific kind of romantic love, a narrow vision that ignores so many realities of human life. To have Ash Wednesday fall on the same day this year is to both temper the excess but also widen the scope of the love. Remember, God's love is for all. God's love is the root of our connectedness. And, Jesus said love, that is love of God and love of neighbor, is the center around which all of our spiritual journey revolves. On Ash Wednesday, all of us in the service were marked with ash, and we were blessed with these words, "Remember, you are God's beloved dust, and to dust you shall return." Our loves are both beloved and fleeting. Let us never forget to embrace both the love and the great responsibility of our creatureliness. We are created in love. We are called to live out our whole lives in love.

As you read (and I write) this article, we are in the midst of Lent, a time of reconnection and renewal of our commitment to journey with Christ. While this period of time is so often associated with suffering (because fasting from caffeine feels awfully bad for some people), I think it is more helpfully associated with the kinds of sacrifice and intentional winnowing that leads to a fuller, deeper connection with Christ. This is the kind of sacrifice born out of love, not shame. You see, Lent does need to be about pain. It does need to be about commitment, repentance, and a willingness to change. It's pretty hard to love, or at least, love well, without those things, too.

I hope this season helps you to rest more deeply in Christ love. I also hope you can discern more ways to live out this love in your daily interactions with the rest of creation.

We are dust. We will return to dust. In the middle, we will love.

Pastor Chrissy.

SPRING EVENTS

- † Wednesday February 28th - **Crafty Ladies** 10am – 2 pm
- † Sunday, March 4th - **Worship Service** 10am
- † Friday, March 9th - **Fish Chowder** 11:30 am-12:30 pm
- † Sunday, March 11th - **Worship Service** 10am
- † Wednesday March 14th - **Crafty Ladies** 10am – 2 pm
- † Sunday, March 18th - **Worship Service** 10am
- † Tuesday, March 20th - **Church Council Meeting** – 6:30 pm

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- † Sunday, March 25th - **Palm Sunday**
- † Wednesday March 28th - **Crafty Ladies** 10am – 2 pm
- † Thursday, March 29th - **Maundy Thursday Service**
- † Sunday, April 1st - **Easter Sunday**
- † Wednesday April 11th - **Crafty Ladies** 10am – 2 pm
- † Friday, April 13th - **Fish Chowder** 11:30 am-12:30 pm
- † Tuesday, April 25th - **Church Council Meeting** – 6:30 pm
- † Wednesday, May 9th - **Crafty Ladies** 10am – 2 pm
- † Friday, May 11th - **Fish Chowder** -11:30 am-12:30 pm
- † Sunday May 13th - **Mother's Day – Blanket Sunday Offering**
- † Tuesday, May 15th - **Church Council Meeting** – 6:30 pm
- † Tuesday, May 15th - **Summer Newsletter Deadline**



From the Treasurer

Great news was shared at the Church's annual meeting. Once again, we ended with a positive cash flow and in a much better position than projected. Not only were we able to meet our financial obligations, we were also able to accomplish the following:

- Continue to take care of our beautiful Church building that is used not just by us but our community
- Support our missions that are so important to us
- Help our neighbors when they most needed it

We couldn't have accomplished all this without everyone's generosity, support and extremely hard work. We ended 2017 with total income of \$87,161, total expenses of \$76,299 and a net surplus of \$10,862

Highlights of the Annual Meeting

Members in attendance at the annual Meeting on January 28th approved the annual reports of the Officers, Boards and Committees of the Church. A balanced budget for 2018 was presented and passed. Members elected Officers and members of Boards and Committees for 2018. Members gave approval for the Board of Trustees to begin work on the Roof and Steeple portions of the Capital Funds Drive, borrowing funds from Church Savings as necessary to do this.

Middle Eastern Cooking Show

Sunday **March 18th from 3-5pm** at the Winthrop Congregational Church, UCC

Participants in the LETC (Learning English Through Cooking Class, hosted by Capital Area New Mainers Project and University of Maine Cooperative Extension) will be cooking up a delicious ethnic meal and presenting their dishes in Fellowship Hall. It's a great way to get to know new Mainers and to share about food and culture, all the while helping some industrious women practice their English.

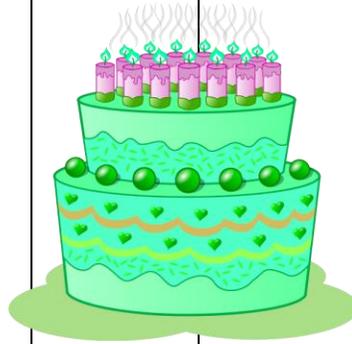


Limited to 20 guests, priority to Winthrop Congregational Church and guests. \$15 minimum donation/pay at door (all profits to the chefs!) **Please RSVP by Sunday, March 4th to: Kristin McLaren: krisml05@gmail.com, 859-0729**

Next Newsletter Deadline: Tuesday, May 15, 2018

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

| March Birthdays | | March Anniversaries | |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 3 | Peter deWolfe | 3/5/88 | Peter & Lisa deWolfe |
| 10 | Kris Hatfield | 3/20/92 | Dina Blodgett & Sandra Smith |
| 15 | Mike Burns | | |
| 25 | Kristin Brown | | |
| 28 | Carol Ellingwood | | |
| April Birthdays | | April Anniversaries | |
| 1 | Eric Conrad | 4/28/79 | Alice & David Anderman |
| 7 | Matthew Dennis | | |
| 8 | Corinna Coulton | | |
| 9 | Julia LaCrone | | |
| 13 | Peter Hatfield | | |
| 15 | Nick Burns | | |
| | Carol Whittier | | |
| | Jeff Brown | | |
| 17 | Sharon Coulton | | |
| 19 | Mike Mayette | | |
| May Birthdays | | May Anniversaries | |
| 3 | Alice Darlington | 5/17/80 | Jeff & Wendy Dennis |
| 4 | Jean Doughty | | |
| 5 | Connie Mayette | | |
| | Rebecca Lazure | | |
| 7 | Barbara Pray | | |
| 9 | Becky Gillespie | | |
| | Shirley Rollins | | |
| 10 | Linda Rollins | | |
| 20 | Emma Conrad | | |
| 21 | Kelly Dooling | | |
| 22 | Jeff Dennis | | |



Wi-Fi available at WCC- contact the church office for details



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<http://tinyurl.com/WCCUCC>

We are an Open and Affirming Church