



November 2023

ON THE COMMON

Newsletter of Slatersville Congregational Church

A Few Thoughts...

BY REV. KORTE

Hello Slatersville Congregational Church,

We've got a few interesting things coming up and would love to hear your suggestions for other stuff you'd like to try. First, I would like to invite all of you to participate in creating an Advent booklet for use by congregants and friends during the Advent season. There are many wonderful daily guides available, but one of my favorite Advent experiences is creating your own. There is one scripture passage that folks will pray about and for which they will write a brief reflection.

It can be a powerful community activity to pray each morning together and reflect on the same scripture passages and reflections. Often people are concerned that their thoughts aren't going to be "spiritual enough" or well-enough thought out. The reality is that all you need to do is to be yourself and share your honest thoughts. It's not a research project and honestly there should be no "work" or research or deep thought put into it, it should just reflect a very simple moment of pondering sacred words.

The scripture passage may lead you to think about something in your own life or an experience that seems to have nothing to do with the passage or with Advent but it might be profound for you or for someone else. We never know. Trust whatever comes to you. God may speak to someone through your experience washing dishes, dropping a grandchild off at school, or baking banana bread. God speaks in many ways not the least of which is through each of us when we allow it, and sometimes, even when we don't!

Please let me know if you would be willing to think about a provided passage prayerfully and write a short reflection, that way I don't have to stalk you to get you to write one. If I see you more often than not on Sunday morning, please expect me to cajole you into this. You can save us both a lot of energy by volunteering! This activity does not require more than 20 or so minutes, don't overthink it.

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This Issue:

A Few Thoughts
PAGES 01-03

Missions Moment
PAGE 03

Fundraising News
PAGE 03

Spotlight: Bob Meo
"Thoughts From Abroad"
PAGE 04

November Happenings
PAGES 05

Stewardship
PAGE 06

A Grateful Voice
PAGE 07



2023 OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

- Jenni Hull, Moderator
- Ruth Mills, Clerk
- Jean Meo, Financial Clerk
- Margaret Hanoian, Treasurer

CHURCH STAFF

- Korte Yeo, Bridge Minister
- John Staples, Director of Music
- Jill Boday, Handbell Choir
- Hope Paul, Nursery Attendant
- Romeo Mendes, Sexton
- Donna Myers, Administrator

2023 COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

- Ruth Mills, Caring
- Michell Eskeli, Diaconate
- Alma Morin, Hospitality
- Bob Meo, Stewardship
- Martha Hunt, Music
- Rick Stelle, Property
- Gretchen Westhoven, Missions
- George Briggs, Christian Ed
- Bob Meo, Fundraising
- Bob Meo, Projects

DIACONATE

- Michell Eskeli, Chairperson
- Christine Bonas
- Marilyn Briggs
- Marsha Brodeur
- Richard Brodeur
- Sandy Gamache
- Martha Hunt
- Darlene Magaw
- April McAllister
- Stephen Wowk

A Few Thoughts... (Cont.)

BY REV. KORTE

We will put the reflections together and distribute them to all in the congregation, including folks at home who can't make it in. In that way they will be with us in spirit every morning when we all read the reflections.

Second, there will be an opportunity to try a daily practice together during lent. We will explore “One Breath at a Time: A Skeptics Guide to Christian Meditation” together. This is a 40-day journey that serves as a guide for simple daily spiritual practice. We will rotate through five different practices, meeting once per week via zoom to discuss our experiences. I will begin this journey myself in preparation for the Lenten group on Tuesday, November 20th. Anyone who would like to accompany me on this introduction to Christian Meditation would be most welcome.

There is a “Retreat style Service” at 2:45 pm on Sunday Nov 18th at “Agape”, a UCC Contemplative Church, located at Weston Congregational Church, 130 Newton St. in Weston, MA. I will be attending, again, anyone who would like to go as well would be welcome. Perhaps we can offer such a peaceful, lovely service to our church family in Slatersville.

The SCC ONA Core Team will hopefully have its first meeting the first week of November- wish them well!

As far as I know, TWELVE SCC folks have read all or much of “Crucial Conversations”. As a “big tent” congregation navigating differences as you try to move forward together into the future, hosting a group reading through this book together may be the most important thing you do together over the next year. I highly recommend not only reading this book, but inviting people who think differently/have differing opinions from you to join in going through the book together. This is the purpose of the book, to help people share different ideas. If you are a person who hasn't felt heard or has been unable to share your thoughts with a sense of safety, even at your beloved church home, this book and group are for you.

The book is extremely useful, even in a vacuum, but it is most helpful in a congregation where folks from different sides of an issue come together for the love of their church and one another.

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Missions Moment

BY ALISON PEIRCE

The Missions Committee thanks all of you for contributing to the success of our Community Missions Saturday on September 30th. Your generosity in donating supplies allowed the volunteers to quickly assemble 91 Blessing Bags that will be distributed to the homeless in the coming months. After the bags were packed, a group of twelve headed to Woonsocket to participate in the annual ShelterWalk organized by Community Care Alliance. It was a meaningful day for all that participated.

This month your Missions donations are supporting Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island. Dorcas International, based in Providence, has been empowering immigrants, refugees, and the underserved to thrive, succeed, and build self-sufficient and sustainable lives in our Rhode Island community for more than 100 years. Our gift of \$500 will support their growing services, such as education, help with resettlement, language development, navigating the path toward citizenship and immigration, and interpretation needs. Their integrated support system allows Dorcas International to meet people where they are and help and empower those in need to live the life they dreamed of in America. Thank you so much for your continuing Missions support.

A Few Thoughts... (Cont.)

BY REV. KORTE

Does that sound like you? Then you need to read this book and get yourself into this book group. The group will be facilitated by a congregant.

Last but certainly not least, there will be a sign-up after church throughout November to gauge interest in a Bible Study. The Bible Study will begin after the holidays when people have a bit more time available. This would likely be a hybrid group. This group will be facilitated by congregants, so we'd like to give them time to consider what they and others are interested in reading/studying and which guide they would like to follow.

Please contact me directly if you have any questions or would like to consider leading one of these groups. Be well, and God bless.

Fundraising News - Trivia Night #3 Update

BY JEAN MEO

The October Trivia Night was a lot of fun, laughs and groans (the latter due to "Punny" Dad jokes!!) Forty people enjoyed a chicken dinner with lots of yummy desserts, root beer floats, and popcorn. A new table of champions emerged and the winners were Richard Brodeur, Denise Brandenburg, George and Marilyn Briggs, Bert Cayer, Sharon Charette, Alma Morin, Bob Pepin, and John Villani. Congratulations are in order!

Many thanks to everyone who worked in the kitchen beforehand and helped clean up afterwards, and of course to Rick Stelle for all his work to make the evening a success. And to top it off, the generosity of those who attended added about \$400 to the fund for new choir robes!

Many thanks to all for a wonderful evening! And one final FUN joke to end the FUNdraising event: What's the one thing that Adam and Eve didn't have in the Garden of Eden that everybody since then has had? If you think you know the answer, tell Bob Meo!



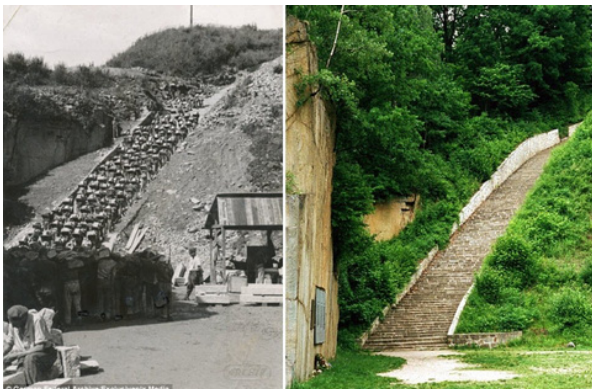
Spotlight: Bob Meo

Thoughts from Abroad...

(EDITED BY JEAN MEO)

My wife and I recently completed a lovely European cruise up the Danube River from Hungary, through Austria and ending in Germany. The charm and peacefulness of the towns and cities along the river were breathtaking with castles and churches adding to the beauty along the way.

On the sixth day we arrived at the quaint market town of Mauthausen, a picture-perfect Austrian location. On top of a hill overlooking this peaceful sight was one of the most brutal Nazi concentration camps in existence at the time, a symbol today of history at its savage worst. We saw the rock quarry where prisoners labored; their crowded barracks – at least 4 people to a bunk; the infamous “Stairs of Death”, the 186 steps that prisoners were forced to climb with huge slabs of granite from the quarries (weighing at least 110 pounds) on their backs; the gas chamber; the books of logged names of those who were killed – all a very sobering reminder of man’s inhumanity to man.



What surprised me was that this camp, responsible for the murder of more than 150,000 people, was not hidden deep in the woods but it sat atop a beautiful hill overlooking a picturesque town less than half a mile away. I asked our guide how all this horror could happen so close to the town and no one did anything to stop it. Her response was clear: No one had the nerve to question those in power for fear of repercussions which could lead to their downfalls, namely torture and death.

They knew that trains came in, people were marched up the hill never to be seen again, while ashes from the crematories fell on the streets, but no one said a word or did a thing.

This graphic and tragic reality of WWII made me think about what is happening in America today. How is it that we have not learned lessons from the mistakes of the past? Why do we remain silent and allow people who act like demigods to pursue their personal agendas? We must encourage good and honest people to take positions of authority, people who put our nation before themselves or their party.

President John F. Kennedy said in his famous inauguration address, “Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.” It was a call to action for us to contribute to the betterment of our country and society. Everyone has a role in shaping the future of our nation, and everyone should work together towards a better future for all.

America, we must wake up, take stock of all the good in this country, and ask ourselves how we can make a difference. It’s time to act before our country is reduced to ashes



November Happenings...

East Blackstone Quaker Meeting House Service

Our own Senior Choir from Slatersville Congregational Church is taking part in the Ecumenical Service on November 12th at 2pm being held at the East Blackstone Quaker Meeting House. Come hear them sing and spend some time in this historic location as area churches come together to worship in unity.

East Blackstone Quaker Meeting House
197 Elm Street
East Blackstone, MA 01504

Globe Church Corporation Annual Meeting

Globe Church Corporation, the legacy Not-For-Profit that is part of the history of our church merger in the 1980's, will be holding it's annual meeting virtually on Sunday November 19th at 7pm via ZOOM. If you would like to participate, please email Corporation Secretary, Darlene Magaw at dmagaw@coxnet or call her at (401) 568-8424 for the Zoom Link.

NS Food Pantry Thanksgiving Basket Pick Up

The North Smithfield Food Pantry is holding it's Annual Thanksgiving Basket Pick-Up this year, on Saturday November 18th at 10am.

NS Food Pantry for November

The dates for November's pantry are:

Saturday the 18th @ 10am
Tuesday the 21st @ 5:30pm
Tuesday the 28th @ 5:30pm and

(Only 3 Distribution Days in November)

This month we are asking for beans, tuna and soup.



Church Council Meetings

Meeting Minutes from the Monthly Council meetings are available to all. Copies can be found in the Manilla Envelope on the Bulletin Board in the lobby.



OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS

...are with the people of Lewiston, Maine and all of those affected by the recent mass murders. May God soothe their hearts.

...are with Sue Carlson's son Eric and his wife Kathy as they mourn the loss of a best friend who died in his sleep. He was 59 years old.

...are with Joan as she recovers from eye surgery.

...are with our church leaders and the Search Committee.

...are with Ruth's friend Lorraine as she begins chemo.

...are with Jada, a girl on George's track team who was run over by a tractor and is now in the hospital.

...are with Yvonne Piette, as she struggles to walk and receive the medical services she so desperately needs.

...are with those struggling with mental illness and trying to navigate an impossible system. Special prayers for Rev. Korte's cousin who was discharged to the street. With gratitude for those who are willing to help him and who pray for him.

...with joy for Sharon as she has been cancer-free for 29 years after receiving a bone marrow transplant from her sister Bev.

...with joy as the Brodeur's celebrate their 54th anniversary and for their beautiful family.

...with joy for the fun and laughter we had at the Harvest Dinner and Trivia Night we had yesterday.

Stewardship Kickoff

BY BOB MEO, CHAIR OF STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

(PRESENTED TO CONGREGATION 10/29/2023)

Shortly you will be receiving our 2024 Stewardship letter talking about the fact that PROBLEMS are not really problems but rather OPPORTUNITIES to grow by solving. This morning I want to take pause and thank all of you for your continued financial and, more importantly, faithful support of this church. As stewards, everyone has done a great job of taking care of each other and our church.

We indeed have many OPPORTUNITIES to deal with in 2024 and they will be detailed in our upcoming letter and pledge request. Suffice it to say, like last year, our “Little Engine That Could” will need to keep chugging along saying, “I think I can, I think I can, I KNOW I can”.

Right now I'd like to acknowledge a few of those little engines that have really kept us going through these opportunistic times: Jenni, for accepting and solving numerous challenges with dignity and grace; Michell, who is always there to oversee and make sure everything works; John, who has filled our sanctuary with the beauty of his music; and Rev. Korte, for being a breath of fresh air in our continuing spiritual search to be followers of Christ.

Thankful Sunday will be November 19th. Please review the information that will be sent to you and know that the church appreciates your continuing support.

Thank you.



A Grateful Voice From the Past...

A heart-warming phone call was received in the Church office recently from Claire Gaus of Commerce, Georgia. She is 92 years young. She lived in her Grandmother's Boarding House for the first 10 years of her life, just across the street from Slatersville Congregational Church, from 1936-1945. Her Father and Grandfather both worked at Slaters Mill. A boarder, who lived with them for a time, Mr. Bishop, drew a lovely picture of the Church. It currently hangs on her wall. She was gazing at the picture that morning with such vibrant, memories flooding back, of her happy childhood living across the street from the lovely white "Church on the Green." She said, she just had to reach out to see if it was still there.

She described herself as a child, "no more than 5 years old", with her nose pressed up against the cold windowpane, on winter evenings, peering down on "the Green", at the church in the moonlight, waiting for the bells to ring. She said she remembers struggling to stay awake as late as she could each night so that she could hear the bells ring as many times possible.

"Do they still ring?" She was delighted to hear they do. They still chime every hour upon the hour. "Oh... I'm so happy to hear that."

Claire asked to express to the congregation, how fond her memories are of her early childhood years, spent living so close to the Church, including warm remembrances of the Reverend and Mrs. Eastman, "who played Santa and Mrs. Clause" each year. Her family later moved to Miami and Georgia, and many years later, she retired from teaching after 40 years in the classroom. She now calls Georgia, home. But no matter how far away she moved, or how many years have passed, those memories of the "Church on the Green" and its bells still warm her heart.

