



# BRANCHES

John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches."



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Vol. 7, Issue 1     **Phippsburg Congregational Church (UCC), Phippsburg, ME**     May 2014  
*"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here."*  
Rev. Mark D. Wilson, Pastor and Teacher

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## *Goodbye*

Dear Phippsburg UCC Community,

Looking back over the last 16 years we've spent together, my heart is filled with gratitude for this walk of faith we have walked; grateful for the Lord who has graced us with every step. We have been good for each other because we have been open to the One God, who has been good to us. You saw me through Seminary, the Ordination process (including CPE in Lewiston, remember that summer?), and some personal transformations. You gave me a stole six years before I could wear one. You believed in me when I hardly believed in myself, and I will forever be grateful.

And look at you! From deciding to be open year 'round, to a bathroom in the church, a parking lot, a restored church building, a new meetinghouse, and growth, spiritually, which led to growth, numerically, you have come a long, long way in your witness and discipleship. Remember all of those Sunday School classes/fellowship hours/meetings/Bible studies in the narthex of the church? I do. You didn't want to sit by the drafty door in the winter! Looking back, I pray it is easy to see, as I do, what happened. Trusting in God's grace, every time you needed someone - a parking lot owner, kind neighbors who were willing to learn how to run a lobster bake or host meetings in their home, fundraisers, builders, a choir director, an organist (or two or three), an administrative assistant, people to chair committees and serve on them, or take minutes, or plant gardens, even an Interim Minister! - someone has been provided to you. Long ago, I gave up seeing these things as happy accidents or coincidences. God has so clearly and powerfully been with us the whole time, and this has been a wonder to behold.

As you move forward into the future God is preparing for you, please remember this, and take heart: trust in God's grace, and in each other. You have everything you need: the Gospel to proclaim, work to do, and good people to do it with. I pray your eyes will now be fully opened to what I have seen all along: you are good, faithful, capable people. You are a gift to this community, the light of the world, the "Beacon on the Kennebec." You are the Body of Christ. Be that body; be one in him, and there is nothing you won't be able to do.

The Gospel proclamation is, simply, this: death is not the end, but without death, there is no resurrection. We journey through loss to a new life, walking in the Way of our savior, Jesus. Let me go, as I am letting you go, so we can entrust each other into God's care. Let my leave-taking remind you that walking in the Way of Jesus and being open to the Spirit, which blows where it wills, is always a work in progress; always movement, growth, and change: for me, and for you. God, the One who causes to be what is, is a verb, not a noun. Be happy for me. I am happy for you! The Lord has given us both new dreams to dream, new opportunities, new places to go, and new discoveries yet to unfold. I'm excited thinking about where God is taking you next. And so it is with gratitude and some measure of pride I commend you into the capable hands of Rev. Allison C.G. Smith. She has my full faith and confidence, and my blessing. You will find in her a gifted healer, leader, and teacher. She is a grounded and deep soul.

The word "goodbye" is a shortened version of the phrase "God be with you." God be with you, Phippsburg Congregational Church. I will never forget you.

Good-bye, Mark

## *Greetings!*

I wanted to write and introduce myself! My name is Allison Smith and I will be serving as your interim pastor. Probably you have seen my three daughters, Cecelia, Molly, and Calliope as we became a part of the Phippsburg community when we moved back to Maine two years ago. I have been serving as the interim pastor at Christ Church in Kennebunk for the last two years. My time there came to a close this January and the Spirit has been at work in that now I will come to serve among you during this time of transition. I am originally from North Carolina but I married a Mainer! I have also served the First Congregational Church, UCC in Wilton, Maine and Bethesda UCC in Bethesda, MD as settled pastor, and the Winslow Congregational Church as interim pastor. I am excited about sharing this new chapter with you and look forward to getting to know you!

This is a big transition and transitions are not always easy! Mark has faithfully served among you for fifteen years, and with God's grace, working together you have expanded your ministry and presence in the community. Together you have experienced many significant moments. There is so much to celebrate and give thanks for! Mark has brought many blessings and encouraged much growth. And so I know for many of you, this transition brings grief in saying good bye to Mark. Part of my role as your interim pastor is to provide stability as you face this change. We each deal with change differently. Grief and disorientation are a natural part of this time. Please know that I am here and the church is in good hands with the Council and Deacons who are here for support. But even in this change I want to remind you to hold onto the hope of new possibilities. We are in the season of Easter and Pentecost is just around the corner. This is a time when the "heavens are telling forth the glory of God," and when the creation reminds us that new life and joy can and will come with time. After the resurrection, Jesus kept appearing to the disciples and reminding them to find peace in him. "*Peace be with you,*" he would say over and over again.

An interim time can be a time of many gifts. It is a time of looking back at where you have been, perhaps rediscovering how God has been with you in the past. It is a time of looking forward and discerning where the Spirit is leading you now. It is a time when new gifts bubble to the surface and a time of deepening connections to the wider church. We will spend time on each of these tasks in order to help you gain clarity about who you are now as a church and what kind of leader you will need for your next chapter. But for now, please know that I am here and available. Please share your concerns and hopes. Your voice and presence matters especially in this interim time.

You can reach me at home at 725-4335 or by cell phone at 841-0691. My email is [allisoncgsmith@gmail.com](mailto:allisoncgsmith@gmail.com).

May you "take peace" and know that Christ is leading us.... *Blessings, Allison*

## ***BUDGETS- What everyone loves to hate!***

At last winter's Annual Meeting we voted to approve a motion that the Church Council would prepare a comprehensive list of projects we anticipate in the next 3 -5 years and list them in order of importance. Secondly, the Budget and Finance Committee was directed to propose the best way to finance these projects. Both activities are reasonably new for us and the committees, but are very much part of a sound and responsible budgeting process.

In the simplest and most understandable terms, our budget is comprised of two distinct components. One component is the "operating budget." The other component, the one we call "capital projects," is typically the longer range improvements to our church, whether those improvements are building repairs, interior or other exterior needs, or more complicated maintenance issues that require more substantial expenditures of money. Each committee has its specific needs to continue our Church work such as Church School, hospitality, music, flower, building and grounds, etc. and is asked to list those needs in a "3-5 year" projection.

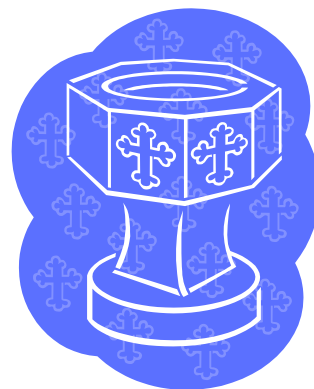
The "operating budget" typically is how many dollars we will receive and how we will spend them during the budget year. Included in "how we will spend them" is expected (budgeted) spending for each of the standing committees for the budget year. Enter now the long range, more costly expenditures, the ones we call capital expenditures; things like painting, roof repairs, new furnace, interior and exterior improvements. About a year ago each Standing Committee was asked to list these kinds of projects they anticipated coming up during the next 3-5 years, and the approximate cost. If the project was anticipated to be completed in the coming year, the anticipated cost would logically be more detailed and exact. This was new to most of us, but very helpful to all of us because we could now see what financial responsibilities were in our future. In addition it enables us to all start identifying which and what projects are most important to our future and how we might finance them. And to our credit most of the Committees are now responding with these requests very positively. A good example of how this works to our benefit is the approval of the

baptismal font at the Annual Meeting. We'd talked about it during the year, knew that the anticipated costs were in the "3-5 year" capital budget and the detailed design and cost was available for the members to see and understand. Consequently we voted to approve the expenditure of dollars to complete the project.

These additions to our budgeting process are very helpful to everyone, and it is reassuring that all our Standing Committees' wants and needs are being given full consideration as part of long range thinking and not on an "ad hoc" consideration where the most persuasive voice gets a project approved today with little to no consideration to more important or more necessary projects.

Finally, but equally important in this process, is that the Budget and Finance committee can now look ahead to understand how to finance these projects. For some situations, we have restricted funds specifically designated. For example the Thatcher Pinkham Organ Fund is for Allen organ repairs only. And we have the income from the 1802 Fund, part of which is included in the "operating budget" but part of which can be used for many of the longer, 3-5 year projects as well. Many thanks to all who have participated and helped make this process better and to ensure it helps us grow as a church.

Dill Paiste  
Long Term Planning



## *Deacons*

The Board of Deacons has filled its ranks with the arrival of new members: Ann Schroeder, Chip Simpson, Julie Peacock, Gregory Greenleaf (for a short stay) Mary Hartman and Ellen Parker.

Gregory has encouraged greater involvement in the morning worship through his nurturance of lay readership during the service. This is an ongoing opportunity for Church attendees to read the weekly Scripture, other readings, or a poem in coordination with the minister and has already provided an array of new voices and Bible selections to the Pulpit.

Twelve readers joined Pastor Mark D. Wilson in reading Bible passages and several participated in the traditional foot washing ceremony at the Maundy Thursday Service, sometimes called the Service of Darkness in the somber, darkened sanctuary. It was a very meaningful service with the heightened sadness and emotion felt by those participating as Mark served communion.

The Deacons have met as a community of friends reaching out to each other to walk together through the journey of Mark's departure. Our mission to select and gather the Interim Pastoral Search Committee has been accomplished and through the dedicated good work and heartfelt endorsement of Peter Stackpole, Jean Flink, John Morse, Marcia Beach and Ellen Parker, Reverend Allison C.G. Smith was selected to bring forward to the Church Council. She will begin her interim ministry on May 25<sup>th</sup>.

The Diaconate is sad at the departure of Mark, but recognizes his calling to serve a new church and share his gifts, talents, motivation and faith with that new community. We embrace this time of transition as an opportunity for reflection on the history of our Church, its growth, vision and shared ministry. We believe our ministry to and with each other are enforced through our strong bonds of unity and faith. We have been nurtured through Mark's teachings and lessons of the never ending love and presence of God.

We will always be available to anyone who wishes to talk about the impending transition, seeking comfort and understanding.

Board of Deacons: Mary Hartman, Berenice Knight, Sylvia Leuteman (Co-Chair), Ellen Parker, Julie Peacock, Bob Reyes, Ann Schroeder, Chip Simpson, Sandy Stenquist (Co-Chair), Kathy Totten, Tina Tucker, Kyle Yacoben



### *Our newest members!*

Many folks have joined our Church in the last few months. Please introduce yourselves and help them feel welcome!

Susan Brew  
Beth Brewer  
Bruce Greenleaf  
Carol Sue Greenleaf  
Julie Peacock  
Sally Haggett  
William Haggett

Leslie Kalisz  
Steven Kalisz  
Brenda Kohler  
Rev. Jill Small  
Charles Small  
Brad Hart  
Suzanne Hart

## *Social Justice Awareness* (Gregory Greenleaf)

At the last Social Justice meeting, we discussed many issues. One of them was the steady increase of the rising sea level and the impact higher levels will have on towns in Maine, including Bath and Popham, and our nation. After reading more about the issue from a number of sources, I made a Found poem using only words and phrases from the articles.

### **Found Poem**

The results are incontrovertible

About 8 inches since 1880

2-6 foot sea-level rise is possible  
over the next several generations.

Floods

Threaten

an enormous amount of damage

Five million people

2.6 million homes

the Maine coast will experience

every 10 years

a 100-year coastal flooding event

By 2100

A six-meter rise will inundate more than 128,000 acres

will destroy 380 miles of roads

Many parts of Route One will need to be  
completely rebuilt and re-routed

17% of Bath underwater

infrastructure destroyed,

marshes, beaches and other needed habitat

destroyed

Our fishing industry at risk

Even maple syrup

We still have an opportunity

to avert

the most serious impacts

We need to work

Together

Cleaner cars

Green buildings

Renewable energy

We need citizens to get involved

in local efforts

to examine their own lives

to reduce global warming pollution

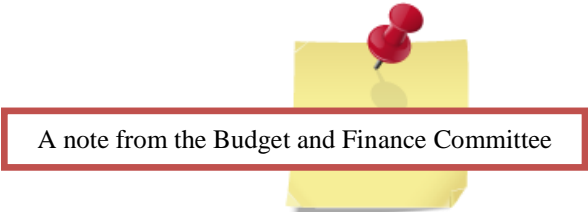
a lot depending upon

how much more heat-trapping pollution

humanity

puts into the sky.

Sources for *Found Poem*: "Maine marine geologist: No mistaking rising sea level" *Forecaster*, July 18, 2013  
nrcm.org  
sealevel.climatecentral.org



A note from the Budget and Finance Committee

**When mailing any funds to the church Post Office Box 301,  
please write "Treasurer" on the outside lower left corner of the envelope.**

### *A Mother's Instinct and Intuition*

Stacy Friedman  
Rabbi & Mother of 2

**Intuition is so much a part of mothering, and yet so much of what the world and our culture feed us today is counter-intuitive. We have all these books about how to raise your children, and all these advice shows and talk shows and people telling you what to do. I think we're really lacking trust in ourselves, that people really doubt their instincts. I know I do sometimes. I think it's important to get in touch with that, when you take your child to the doctor to say, "You know what, I know something." This happened to me a couple of weeks ago. My child's sick. Why? He didn't eat three eggs today, he only had one, and he looked at me funny. I said, "He's sick and he has strep throat." You just know these things. Whether that's instinct or paying attention, I don't know, but I think that it's important to be in touch with that. It also teaches us how to be instinctual about the rest of our lives and how to really pay attention. I think being a mother helps us to pay attention to the rest of our lives because we need to pay attention to our children, and they feel the difference. My son feels so light and happy when I notice things or pay attention. He says, "Mommy, you bought me my favorite (whatever it is)." And how do you know what those are? Partly it's just paying attention.**

From Life Messages for Moms: Inspirations for a Mother's Spirit, Josephine Carlton, MJF Books, New York 2004

*K. Totten Note: My daughter gave me this little book for my birthday some years ago. I recommend it to all mothers everywhere. The hand written sentiment inside says, "Happy Birthday, Mom- hope this lifts your spirits when you need it. Love, Amy" One of the tragic results of the techno culture today that I notice all around me is the lack of just paying attention to our children and they us. Amy and I have a beautiful mother-daughter relationship because we paid attention to each other from day 1 and continue to. This little book pays tribute to the important work of being a mother. Pay attention.*



*Scrapbooking on Saturdays will resume this summer. Watch for dates on the bulletin board in the narthex.*

*Save the dates!*

- Sunday, May 25** Drop-in farewell reception for Mark. Linden Tree Meeting House, 10:30 – 1:00
- Sunday, June 8** Youth Sunday 9:00 a.m.
- Friday, June 13** Concert – Great Bay Sailor 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, June 14** Sagadahoc Preservation Inc. House & Garden Tour 10 a.m. – 3:30
- Sunday, July 13** The Summer meeting of the congregation
- Saturday, August 2** Lobster on the Lawn 5:00 p.m.
- Friday, September 19** Concert – Sara Grey & Ed Trickett 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, September 27** Unity Circle Quilt Show

*Upcoming Community Concerts at Phippsburg Congregational Church*

**GREAT BAY SAILOR** Friday, June 13 7:30 p.m.

The popular Portsmouth-based group will return to welcome sailing season with a program of maritime music. \$10 adults; \$6 students & children

**SARA GREY & ED TRICKETT** Friday, Sept. 19 7:30 p.m.

These two prominent fixtures of the international folk music scene for the last 50 years will join forces in what's sure to be a memorable evening. Sara's beautiful voice has been heard at over 150 festivals around the world, and you'll see why Don Stevens of the All Music Guide said that Ed is responsible for "some of the most beautiful songs ever recorded".

\$15 adults; \$8 students & children

**BOB WEBB TRIBUTE CONCERT** Friday, Oct. 24 7:30 p.m.

A great evening of performers celebrating the life and music of Bob Webb. Sea shanties, folk songs, great stories, and much more. Stay tuned.

\$10 adults, \$6 students & children

**THE GAWLER SISTERS** Friday, Dec. 12 7:30 p.m.

If you have been to either of their previous concerts for us, you already know why the mere mention of this trio brings a smile to your face and why there's no place you'd rather be on December 12. If you haven't, you owe it to yourself to come and find out why everyone is grinning. Hailing from one of Maine's most famous musical families, the multi-talented trio will once again help us welcome winter and Christmas.

\$12 adults; \$6 students & children.

Are YOU on our mailing list for concert announcements??

Children under 8 are always admitted free.

For more information, please call 389-1770

**You are cordially invited  
to share in an open house and reception  
to honor and say farewell to Rev. Mark D. Wilson  
Sunday, May 25, 2014  
10:30 – 1:00 p.m.  
Linden Tree Meeting House  
Phippsburg Congregational Church  
10 Church Lane  
Phippsburg, Maine**



Phippsburg Cong. Church  
PO Box 301  
Phippsburg, ME 04562

**ADDRESS CORRECTION  
REQUESTED**

**NEWSLETTER STAFF**

Jean Flink  
Several Volunteers

Website: [www.phippsburgucc.org](http://www.phippsburgucc.org)  
Pastor: [pastor@phippsburgucc.org](mailto:pastor@phippsburgucc.org)  
Office: [pccoffice1@gmail.com](mailto:pccoffice1@gmail.com)  
Phone: (207) 389-1767

*Sunday worship is at 9 a.m. through the end of October*  
10 Church Lane, Phippsburg - just 1/3 mile down Parker Head Road from Route 209