

*NORTH BRANFORD
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH*



*PARISH VISITOR
2021*

February



From YOUR - MODERATOR
JOANNE PALMIERI

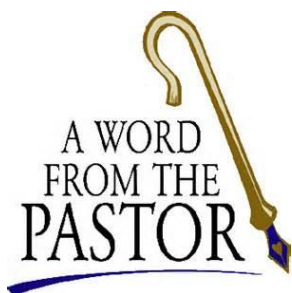
Annual Meeting – January 17, 2021

NBCC held their Annual Meeting on January 17, 2021 at 11:15am. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved for contributing to a prayerful and productive meeting. I want to congratulate the newly elected officers and encourage them to continue with the productive effort shown by all at the Annual Meeting. At the meeting, we adjourned to meet again on February 21, 2021 at 11:15 AM to consider the budget and the moderator to appoint a committee of four members to present a revised budget at that time.

Laurie Vincent also announced the formation of a Bylaws Revision committee. A revised budget and revision of bylaws are both very positive goals. We all came together at the meeting to work together towards these goals. Personally, I would also like to thank all the officers who served NBCC last year (2020) during a challenging time amid a global pandemic, especially Connie Miessau who served last year as moderator.

In closing, thank you all at NBCC and I look forward to a productive year ahead filled with cooperation and Christian caring.

May God Bless You and Keep You in His Care,
Joanne Palmieri



Dear Church Family:

It seems we've barely packed away the Christmas decorations, and along comes Lent! And if we didn't spend enough time going inward and reflecting during Advent, we have another and longer opportunity ahead. So begins our wilderness journey of forty days, a time when we are invited to turn and return to God with humble and open hearts, and allow ourselves to be both challenged and comforted by the Holy Spirit. It's a time of personal transformation, and also a time of fasting. Fasting? I recall how my aunt would always fast by giving up candy for Lent, as a sign of repentance and a desire to draw closer to God and listen for God.

The same held true on several spiritual retreats I attended, where we cleansed ourselves and put aside our material desires to focus on our spiritual health and needs. And the beauty of fasting is how it makes you feel "emptied out", freed for newness to enter in. Years ago, I participated in a workshop with a Jesuit priest who had studied Buddhism, and during a prayer time, he invited us to imagine that we were chalices, cups, needing to first be emptied out. We needed to let go, letting all that was within us leave us, such that we could then be filled up with the Spirit's power and presence. So I see fasting and emptying as related, as ways for us to experience a spiritual detox, eliminate (literally) all the toxicity, and be filled anew with the Holy Spirit.

And while fasting from food is certainly one good way to focus on becoming spiritually fit, I think there are other equally important things from which we could fast. Here are a few ideas:

Fasting from negativity – how often our words and actions are consumed with negativity, and how we must recognize and stop these expressions that are harmful to ourselves and to others.

Fasting from racism and divisiveness – many times, we tend to dwell on our differences rather than our similarities, causing us to draw apart rather than come together. But we are all children of God, and we can celebrate our diversity within our unity.

Fasting from ego – as I've previously shared, my nephew refers to EGO as an acronym for "Edging God Out". When we ignore God's voice, when we feel the need to be in control instead of surrendering to God and trusting God, we do a disservice to ourselves, to others, and to God.

Fasting from anger – sure, there are times of righteous anger, but all too often, emotions override self-control. And pent-up anger usually hurts us more than the other.

Fasting from fear – remember, the opposite of fear is faith, and faith is that grounded relationship we each have with God in Jesus Christ. Here's a good word of assurance to post on your refrigerator: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41: 10)

So please try out one or more of these fasting practices during your 40-day discipline. And when something you need to guard against appears, like negativity or anger, forcefully say to yourself or out loud, "STOP IT AND GET OUT!!" We have to be gatekeepers of sorts, not allowing those things to get inside our heads and hearts, and when they do, to quickly go to prayer and firmly ask them to leave, with the help of God. Not always easy, but I assure you, always well worth the effort!

We hear in scripture how devil departed from Jesus, after unsuccessfully trying to tempt him, and that angels then came and waited on Jesus (Matthew 4: 11). Those divine messengers are also there ready to wait on you following your own times of temptation and wilderness wanderings, to be sure you're filled after your fast. So begin your Lenten journey with that hope and confidence, and see where you and God together go!

Love,

Vance

PS – and as Vicky and Angela reminded us long ago, Lent is not only a time for "giving up", but also for "giving"! Maybe it's putting those unused clothes in our bin next to the parking lot, or preparing a basket of food items for someone in need (as the Deacons did during Advent), or sending a handwritten note to a friend or church member you haven't seen lately due to the pandemic. Remember, as the Holy Spirit fills you up, you're receiving the fruit of the Spirit into your life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Gal.5: 22-23). Be fruitful!

A NOTE FROM SKIP BORGERSON, OUR STEWARDSHIP CHAIRMAN:

Our Pledges are coming in, but slowly. We are about half way toward last year's total. I have a thought about why some people may be hesitant to pledge this year. Let me share it with you.

I know that some people are hesitant to make a pledge when the immediate future is a bit foggy. They do not want to commit to something they may not be able to fulfill. I do not consider a pledge to the church to be a solid commitment that I have a solemn duty to complete. I believe it is a statement of what one hopes, plans, and wants to do. I have done church stewardship pledge programs for many years. When someone calls me and says, "Skip, I've lost my job" or "Skip, my house just burned down," or some other unexpected crisis, I tell them, "Please consider your pledge to be 'Paid up'. Don't worry about it. The church is here to help you and not to make you feel guilty." And I then write them a note to make sure they know that I mean it and to wish them well.

If you have not sent in a pledge because you are not positive about what lies ahead for you, and you don't want to commit to something you may not be able to fulfill, then please make a pledge of what you hope to, plan to, and want to do for your church. And please rest assured that if you do run into unexpected misfortunes, your church would understand, thank you for whatever you have done, and ask what it can do to help you. That is what church's do.

If you are going to pledge, please do it today.

Thank you so very much.

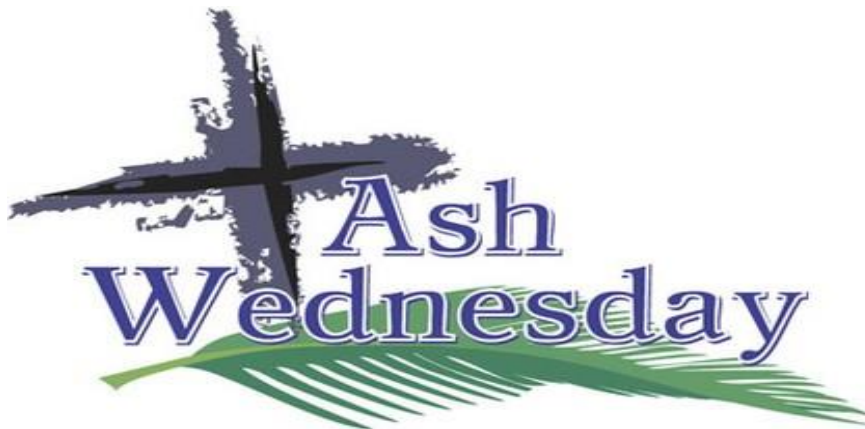
Skip Borgerson



*A MOMENT
TO PAUSE*

In the hands of our Lord, we are all entwined. For it takes many hands to build a church and have it stand tall and strong to honor our Father.

~fran v. giambalvo



February 17, 2021

Ash On Your Dash

Drive through the Church parking lot to receive your
Ashes from 7:00 – 8:30 AM

**In the meantime, think about the
trials and tribulations
Jesus went through on this journey.**



LENTEN CALENDAR

**NORTH BRANFORD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
1680 FOXON ROAD NORTH BRANFORD, CT
203-488-8456 - nobfdcong@sbcglobal.net**

FEBRUARY

February 17 – Ash Wednesday –Ashes on the Dash to be held outside our church from 7:00 am to 8:30 am.

February 24 – Taize Service at 7:00 pm via zoom

MARCH

March 10 – Taize Service at 7:00 pm via Zoom

March 24 – Taize Service at 7:00 pm via Zoom

March 28 – Palm Sunday at 10:00 am will be an outside service

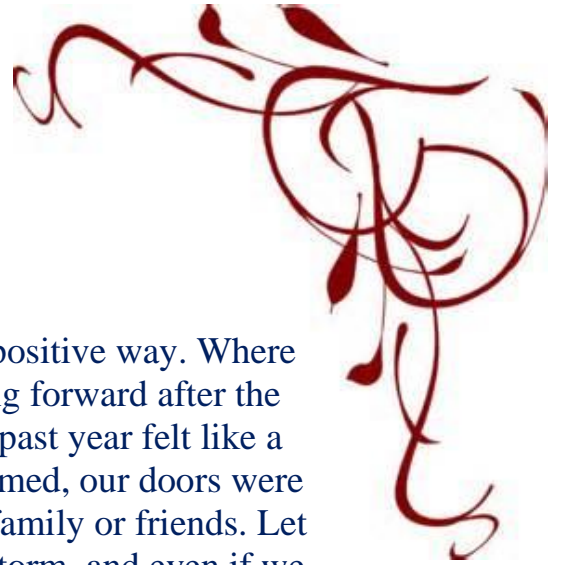
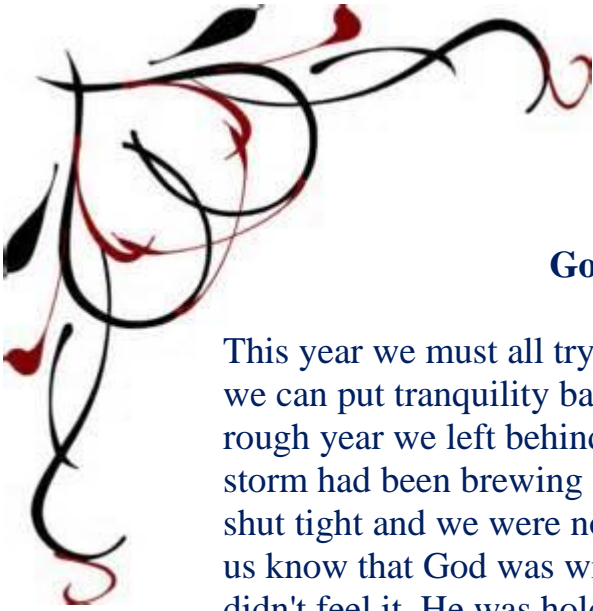
APRIL

April 1 – Maundy Thursday at 7:00 pm in church service

April 3 – Please bring cut flowers for our outdoor decorating of the Flower Cross from 9:00 am until noon.

April 4 – 10:00 am Easter Sunday Service





God, Prayer, Faith

This year we must all try to move forward in a positive way. Where we can put tranquility back into our lives moving forward after the rough year we left behind? For some of us, this past year felt like a storm had been brewing every day, where it seemed, our doors were shut tight and we were not able to mingle with family or friends. Let us know that God was with us throughout that storm, and even if we didn't feel it, He was holding our hand. We must never forget God is not only with us in good times, but He is also with us in every storm that we struggle with during the course of our life.

Let us now walk through each new day in a positive way, for looking back at yesterday does no good as it cannot be changed. We can, however, change the way we think and then look for the beauty and promises that each new tomorrow holds for us. Remember, although God can lead us filled with His love and peace, it is we who must do the work to make each new day feel calmer so we can leave storms behind us.

God, Prayer, Faith: with all three, we will be able to go through every day in this new year knowing that not only can we face any storm that comes our way, but that we will not be doing it alone!

~fran v. giambalvo



The Leadership Board of the North Branford Congregational Church would like to extend our sincere thanks and gratitude to Lou Reed, Jonathan Bodwell, Nancy Allen, and Jennifer Ramsay for getting the Sanctuary ready for worship amid the Covid pandemic. Thank you all so much for installing plexiglass, obtaining the materials, and the hours of hard work that you all put in to ensure protocols were in place for the health and safety of our church members. God Bless you all.

An Explanation of the Ways & Means Committee

The Leadership Board asked for an explanation of the Ways & Means Committee for the benefit of new Board members. They then asked that it be put in the Parish Visitor so everyone would know what the committee is doing and so members who have ideas and might want to assist can be included.

The committee was created by the Leadership Board and charged with the following purpose and duty:

- To evaluate and assess the sustainability of this church into the future;
- To search, evaluate, and recommend to the Leadership Board such actions to be taken to meet the spiritual, fiscal and physical needs of the church membership on into the future and, thus, to make the church sustainable and financially stable for future generations to come; and
- To support and assist groups within the church in their undertaking of events which will help to support and strengthen our church.

Initial members of the committee are Bob Montelius, Laurie Vincent, Skip Borgerson, Matt Orcutt, and Vance Taylor, ex-officio. In addition, the following people did not want to be a member, but expressed interest and volunteered their help when needed: Jonathan Bodwell, Connie Miessau, and Tracy Kennedy. They will receive all minutes and invitations to all meetings, but are not obligated to attend. Skip Borgerson is the convener of the committee, and officers will be elected at the first meeting. Anyone who would like to suggest ideas or to participate at any level with the work of the committee is encouraged to contact Skip at (203) 483-1116. The more people, the better the result.

And we know that
for those who love God
all things work together
for good,
for those who are called
according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

North Branford Congregational Church Slate for 2021

LEADERSHIP BOARD

Moderator - Joanne Palmieri

Business Manager - Jonathan Bodwell

Treasurer - Jennifer Ramsay

Recording Secretary - Laurie Vincent

Worship – Gerry Borgerson & Arnie Palmieri co-chairs

OFFICERS:

Financial Secretary - Nancy Bodwell

Assistant Financial Secretary - Ginny Montelius

Clerk - Marcia Duenkel

MEMBERS AT LARGE:

Skip Borgerson,

Alice Lehr,

Andrea Barlow

Justin Maldonado,

Connie Miesseau,

Tracy Kennedy

Minister (ex-officio) - Rev. Vance Taylor

WORSHIP TEAM

Gerry Borgerson & Arnie Palmieri co-chairs

Andrea Barlow

Margaret Holcomb

Fred Jungeblut

Joanne Palmieri

Wendy Tarry

He has made everything beautiful in its time.
He has also set eternity in the human heart;
yet no one can fathom what God has done
from beginning to end.
Ecclesiastes 3:11





CLOTHING SHED IS NOW OPEN

The clothing donation shed located in our parking lot, which was temporarily closed due to global effects of the pandemic, has now been reopened to the public. If you're not familiar with the clothing donation shed, it's designed to give our members and neighbors a uniquely clean, convenient, and well-cared-for option to donate their used clothing. St. Pauly Textile Inc., the company that has provided the shed, partners with businesses and various organizations to distribute donated items both here in the U.S. and worldwide, where they're ultimately re-worn by people who need them. NBCC receives funding for donated clothing, allowing us ways to maintain and expand our ministries.

TOPS

TOPS exercise program meets every Wednesday at 6:30 PM in Fellowship Hall.

TO CONTACT THE PASTOR

Please know that you can contact Vance by calling him for an urgent need, pastoral conversation, or if you have information that would be helpful for him to know about our church family and the wider community. Leave a confidential message for Vance on his office phone (203-488-8456, ext.1), or you may call/text his cell phone (860-480-3307).

GET TO KNOW OUR CHURCH

Live Streaming Worship On-Line! Are you are unable to attend Sunday Worship but would still like to feel the closeness of your church family? Just click on the following link below to watch our Worship Live on Sunday Morning at 10:00 AM. With this link you can also watch a recap of any past Sunday worships you might have missed. **Remember, your church family is never far away!**

Click on this link - www.Facebook.com/CTNBCC



Birthdays of the Month



FEBRUARY

*2: Emily Duenkel, & Jeremy Downer &
Jennifer Berube*

3: Connie Miessau

4: Logan Kennedy

7: Donna Cropley & Michael Cropley Jr

9: Carol Sabia

13: Jonathan Miessau

21: Leo Black

28: Freddie Vongher



Forgotten anyone in our birthday list
please call the church office and let
Fran know! 203.488.8456

Great Outdoors

Word Search Puzzle



S Q U I R R E L D C N R X Z J C R
W I L D L I F E E L A T S G I E S
H P N D V M C K D N J N N M M C C
I Q L S F D A S O K S I O M W T E
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BACKPACK

BEARS

BIRDS

CAMPING

CANOE

DEER

FISHING

FOREST

HIKING

KAYAK

LAKE

MOUNTAINS

NATURE

RACCOON

RANGER

RIVER

SCENERY

SQUIRREL

SUMMER

TRAILS

TREES

WATERFALL

WILDERNESS

WILDLIFE

FEBRUARY 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 7:00 pm Worship Meeting	2		4	5	6
			6:00 pm TOPS			
7 10:00 am Communion Sunday	8 OFFICE CLOSED	9 OFFICE CLOSED 6:30 pm Leadership Meeting	10 6:00 pm TOPS	11	12	13
14 10:00 am Worship	15 OFFICE CLOSED	16 OFFICE CLOSED	17 Ash Wednesday 7:00-8:30 am Ash on The Dash given outside 6:00 pm TOPS	18	19	20
21 First Sunday of Lent 10:00 am Worship	22 OFFICE CLOSED	23 OFFICE CLOSED	24 7:00 pm Taize Service on Zoom 6:00 pm TOPS	25	26	27
28 Second Sunday of Lent 10:00 am Worship						

Everyday...

~ pray for someone who is alone ~

The North Branford Congregational Church, UCC

1680 Foxon Road, PO Box 410, North Branford, CT 06471

The ministers of this parish are all of its members.

Assisting them in their ministries are:

Church AdministratorFran Giambalvo

LEADERSHIP BOARD:

PastorVance Taylor

Moderator Joanne Palmieri

Business ManagerJonathan Bodwell

TreasurerJennifer Ramsay

Recording Secretary Laurie Vincent

Worship..... Gerry Borgerson & Arnie Palmieri co-chairs

OFFICERS:

Financial SecretaryNancy Bodwell

Asst. Financial Secretary.....Ginny Montelius

Clerk.....Marcia Duenkel

Church office hours are Wednesday—Friday, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
(or with the Pastor at your convenience), 203.488.8456

Parish Visitor articles must be into the office by the 15th of the month
Please leave in the secretary's box in the office, or
e-mail to nobfdcong@sbcglobal.net,

No Matter Who You Are,
No Matter Where You Are on Life's Journey,
You are Welcome Here!