



MINISTER'S MESSAGE

I heard that John B. Coburn died last August. A number of years ago, I heard Bishop Coburn, the one time Episcopal bishop of Massachusetts, give some lectures at Yale. I saved my notes from those talks (in 1988!). He gave these lectures to people like me, busy preachers, professional Christians. While we all came prepared to hear advice on how to be better at preaching, the Bishop surprised us. There were no speeches about technique, no prescriptions for improving our communication skills. Instead he spoke of prayer and prayer's signal importance to preachers.

He told us that the purpose of prayer is to enable us to see more clearly the evidences of grace in our world. Coburn told us prayer does not help us get 'more grace.' Grace is never a result of our efforts. Grace does not belong to us—we cannot possess grace. Rather, we belong to it. And prayer is our means of opening ourselves to grace. This may be another way of saying prayer keeps the little hopes from crowding out the big hope of our faith.

He advised us to pray as we can—not as we think we should. Be quiet, he said. Just sit. Wait. Enter a quiet place in your heart, taking time to be patient and willing to do nothing. This is the first lesson of praying: not to do anything or try to control things. The Bishop said, "Just let what happens, happen." And here was his second lesson on prayer: We learn through prayer to accept ourselves in our present situation as having reality in God's will. He told us that the acceptance of ourselves and God as intertwined is a prerequisite of prayer. It means we accept who we are, we accept our pasts, we accept our parents, we accept disappointments, *everything* in our lives in light of God's will. That is a big order, worthy of a big hope. It takes time and openness to God through prayer.

Then, he told us—only then—to turn to our Sunday scripture text. First read it in silence; then read it in prayer. Our sermons should be a response to God's initiative in the text of Scripture. Trust in this fact is, he said, the key to good preaching. "Don't think your congregations cannot tell when a preacher's words come out of the Bible read in prayer!" Scripture is addressed to a person, not to a political issue, not to a movement or an institution. The words in the testaments are addressed first to the preacher and through him or her, to the congregation. The text has to speak to the preacher before it can speak to the congregation. God is *always* the speaker—in both cases.

We cannot press ourselves and our style too hard. We have to be willing to let God have a say. (Isn't that true!) To hear the words first ourselves means we have been touched by them, changed by them. This is central in sermons which impart life to hearers. As Thomas Carlyle once said about his church that was looking for a new pastor, "*We are looking for a preacher who knows God otherwise than by hearsay.*"

Christ's purpose is to change our natures into his nature. This is the big hope, so often crowded out by all the little hopes of modern life. I hope your steady and repeated attention to the preaching at Glen Ridge Congregational helps Christ change us and make us into his disciples.

~J.D. Stinson

May 16, 2010

Sixth Sunday of Easter

8:15am Chapel/Communion

CHURCH MUSIC SUNDAY

10:15am Worship/Fellowship

The Rev. Cynthia Reynolds, Preaching

Jim O'Brien, Lay Leader



Child Care for the very young provided.

Greeting this Sunday will be the Rowan-Shove family. The ushers will be Craig Wood, Ken Underwood, Paul Brewster, Liz Brewster, Samantha Finneran and Jim O'Brien. The Acolyte will be Grant Naylor. Videographer will be Ed Harris. Counters in the Treasurer's Office will be Debbie Cusick and Mendy Overmyer. Stefan Magnusson and Ellen Morris will deliver the flowers.

✦ IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ✦

- ◇ *At home:* Jean Ost, Al Brown, Linda Woodbury, Betty Sheppard, Bob Kansky, James Hollander, Lauren Smith, Lorraine Rieder, Susan Booth, Karen Augis, Phyllis Domenic, Madeline Edgar, Scott Spoerl, Sandra Lefkovits, Mary Keller, Bob Runge, Jim O'Brien, Bill Wood, and Barbara Underwood
- ◇ *In the hospital:* Betty Bishop, Overlook
- ◇ *In extended care facilities:* Bill Luddecke (Van Dyk), Ed Warren (Stuart FL), Art and Marilea Schlobohm (Beaufort, SC), Betty Bishop (Juniper Village, Chatham), Don Olson (Job Haines), Robert Martin Schaeberle (Ridge at River Woods, Exeter, NH), Peg Carr Waters (North Carolina), Lucy Force (Sunrise, Woodcliff Lake)

Friends & family of our church: Barbara Martindale, Grace Uliano, Bern Sleem, Ruth Mustachio, Eloy & Ofelia Hernandez, Andrei Padlowski, JC Egbert, Alison Krien, Stephen Strickland, Len Calvin, Andrea Row, Bob Sherman, Helen Brabham, George Boltnew, Agnes Joy Busk, Anna Withington, Jill Reintjes, Dan Glitzer, Sue Potter, Merrill Roberts, Joan and Frank Lytle, Barbara Acosta, Thomas Bright, Jim O'Brien, Sr., Amanda Oliver, Jean and Barry Frere, Jim Marturano, Elizabeth Knox, Pat and Betty Vigliotti, Paula Newman, Frank Pescatore, Mary Embree, Jeff Glock, Bill Phillips, and UCC Missionaries Jon and Dawn Barnes in South Africa and Back Bay Mission in Biloxi. The men and women of the Armed Forces serving overseas in harm's way. The People of Haiti.

CONFIRMAND'S INTERPRETATION

Kendall Smith read John 14:23-29. "In the opening of this passage I believe Jesus was trying to say that if you believe in God, you must believe in Jesus. If you believe in Jesus, you are showing your faithfulness and trust in God. Through belief in Jesus, you will receive God's love and help. Jesus also said that if you do not listen to what he said you are disobeying God. Jesus was sent by God to deliver his word—so through not following Jesus you are not following God. Jesus informed people that he will not always be there but that God will not leave you alone. He will send the Holy Spirit in the place of Jesus. He stated that you must continue to believe. Jesus said he wanted to warn all before he left in order to brace them so that when such an event occurs, they will accept and continue to believe in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I think the underlying message in this passage is that God is represented in all of us, not just one figure."

CALLING ALL WOMEN OF THE CHURCH!

*All through the long winter, I dream of my garden.
On the first day of spring, I dig my fingers deep into
the soft earth. I can feel its energy, and my spirits
soar.*

Helen Hayes

Come lift your spirits at the Women's Association Annual Meeting and Spring Brunch Saturday May 22, 2010 9:30-11:30. Enjoy fellowship, food and a special gardening presentation by our local gardening expert Betsy Ginsburg. Hope to see you there!



Very special thanks to the members of our children's choirs – Carol, Cherub and Joyful Noise – for their excellent work in preparing and presenting the spring musical, *The Tale of the Three Trees* last Sunday. Some of the comments received from members of the congregation: "...absolute joy ... just wonderful ... We couldn't have been happier ... That was a great performance ... the kids sang beautifully and looked like they were having a good time." • This coming Sunday, May 16, we will celebrate the gift of music in our midst and honor our adult choir and bell choirs as we celebrate *Church Music Sunday*. Special musical offerings by Leonard Bernstein, G.P. Telemann, and selections from *The Peaceable Kingdom* by Randall Thompson. • Sunday 5/30 – A Hymn Festival: *The Writers Tell Their Stories*. Be present as 11 different hymn writers come to life and share stories about their lives and their music. There will be examples of their great songs and hymns for all to sing.

INTRODUCING "STILL SPEAKING" MAGAZINE

The UCC is launching a subscription campaign for its new high-end-design StillSpeaking Magazine. The 88-page magazine will be published twice annually. An inaugural, three-year subscription is \$29 if purchased before July 1. After that, subscriptions will be \$39. Order online at ucc.org/magazine. "StillSpeaking Magazine promises to be a full-sensory experience for readers, with compelling writing and photography that will communicate stories of the best aspirations of the UCC, its members and its churches," said the Rev. J. Bennett Guess, the UCC's director of communications. Other websites of interest: ucc.org/news - the weekly e-zine: Keeping You ePosted. Or a first rate daily devotional: dailydevotional@ucc.org

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Ministry of Parish Life awards two scholarships every year to graduating seniors. This year's letters have gone out and we hope to hear from all of our graduating seniors by the May 24th deadline.

IN OUR CHURCH

Arthur Scholobohm had to have surgery on Friday in Beaufort, SC. Marilea, on the way to the hospital, suffered a minor stroke. Please keep both of them in your prayers.

Betty Bishop also had hip replacement surgery and we keep her in our thoughts as well.

THE REV. DR. HARRY TAYLOR

Since last summer we've had Harry Taylor to help with pastoral calling and to be on call in emergencies. Harry has just been called to be the Interim Minister at the Brookside Community Church, so we'll lose him! Thank you, Harry for your visits and help.

THE FOOD PANTRY AT BETHEL LOVE

...reports a need for canned vegetables: green beans, corn and mixed vegetables. Please leave your donations in the shopping cart in the narthex. Thank you.

YPS MISSION TRIP

On Friday afternoon, May 14th, members of our high school youth group (YPS) and adult advisors will leave for a mission trip in New York City, planned and supervised by the Youth Services Opportunity Project. The YPS will work with some of the hungry and homeless people in New York. They will prepare and serve dinner as well as meet with shelter guests. Following overnight sleeping at the Friends' Meetinghouse, they will take to the streets, serving at soup kitchens, food banks, and distributing food to our neighbors. They will return home to Glen Ridge on Saturday evening. Please hold them in your prayers. We look forward to hearing from them on their return.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

SUNDAY 5/16	JDS USN
	CHURCH MUSIC SUNDAY
8:15am	Chapel/Communion
9:00am	Chancel Choir Rehearsal
10:15am	Worship/Church School
11:30am	Fellowship/YPS Coffee
1:30pm	Montclair Music -- BR
MONDAY 5/17	JDS USN
7:00pm	Yoga
TUESDAY 5/18	JDS USN
3:00pm	Confirmation
8:00pm	AA
WEDNESDAY 5/19	JDS USN
6:30am	Morning Glories
10:00am	Bible Study
3:15pm	Children's Choirs
4:15pm	Chapel Bellringers
THURSDAY 5/20	JDS USN
10:00am	Bread for the Journey
3:00pm	SCEEP Picnic
6:45pm	Carillon Bellringers
8:00pm	Chancel Choir
FRIDAY 5/21	
6:00pm	Montclair Music – BR
SATURDAY 5/22	
9:30am	Women's Association Lunch And Annual Meeting

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