

JANUARY UPDATE- 2016



There is no key to happiness. The door is ajar. Just open it and walk through. There is no lock on peace's chest. Just open the lid and take from the trove of tranquility at your finger tips. You have all the treasures you need for a satisfied life right within you. Soulseeds

Dear friends,

I write this January update with bittersweet emotions.... deep sorrow, anticipated joy and overwhelming gratitude. The last six months have been very difficult and emotional for me, wrapping up my fifteen plus years as your pastor. I have felt and thrived on your expressions of love and affirmation and I will miss our weekly interactions more than I can accurately express.

I have been inspired and uplifted by the incredible musical offerings of our wonderfully talented musicians, whose songs have found a way into my heart and soul. All is well.

Pastoring Union Church has been the fulfillment of a lifelong dream. Together, with the Spirit's guidance, we have built a little church with a very big heart that will continue to evolve and nurture its members and extend the love of Christ to the local community and beyond. I am proud of what we

have accomplished together and am deeply grateful for your faithful support and ever-expanding vision. We will walk separate paths, but will be ever united in love, friendship and Spirit. I know that Nancy Bancroft will provide a steady, guiding hand as you move through this transition period and look forward to a new settled pastor who will be privileged to lead this wonderful congregation forward to new heights of ministry and community.

I wish you a year of much love and laughter, as together we pray for our cherished church and our beloved planet Earth.....for peace and harmony for all life.

With much love and gratitude for all the ways you have enriched my life and ministry, Jan

Beannacht – A New Year Blessing by ~ John O'Donohue ~

On the day when /The weight deadens
 On your shoulders /And you stumble,
 May the clay dance /To balance you.
 And when your eyes/ Freeze behind/ The grey window
 And the ghost of loss/ Gets into you,
 May a flock of colours,/ Indigo, red, green/And azure blue,
 Come to awaken in you/ A meadow of delight.
 When the canvas frays/In the currach of thought
 And a stain of ocean/Blackens beneath you,
 May there come across the waters/A path of yellow moonlight
 To bring you safely home.
 May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
 May the clarity of light be yours,
 May the fluency of the ocean be yours,
 May the protection of the ancestors be yours.
 And so may a slow/Wind work these words/Of loves around you,
 An invisible cloak/To mind your life.

New Repository Site Ready



It was a labor of love and determination to find the perfect place where the ashes of beloved church friends could be laid to their eternal rest. We believe we have found it and thanks to the herculean efforts of Carol Sherman, chair of the deacons it is now ready to receive prayers and ashes. The initial vision came from Karen Barbee who began the quest a couple of years ago with Dotti Butler, Heather Davis, Karen Minton and Jan. Once the ashes have been committed to the earth, the names of those laid to rest will be placed on a plaque in the church. In the Spring the site will be landscaped to create a living patio with fragrant herbs and shrubs.



Wednesday, Jan. 6th @ 10:00: Deacons will meet in the Mill Office.

Thursday, Jan. 7th @ 3:00: Executive Committee meets in the Mill Office.

Sunday, January 10th @ 10:00: Worship

Thursday, January 14th @ 10:00 Mission Committee will meet in the Mill Office

Sunday, January 17th @ 10:00: Fond Farewell service for Pastor Jan followed by a celebratory lunch at the event room at UNE from 11:45 to 2:00. Folks should scurry down to UNE immediately after worship as the space is reserved for 2 hours only. Reservations are required.

Nancy Bancroft will begin her ministry as Interim Pastor on the 18th and will lead her first worship service on January 24th. May God bless her ministry with Union Church.

Sunday, January 24th @ 10:00 Worship with Nancy Bancroft and Wiley Beveridge

Note: There will be no Saco Meals program in January or in February due to Monday holidays.

Sunday, January 31st @ 10:00 Worship followed by our Semi-annual Meeting. All welcome, members and friends. 2016 budget will be presented.

Reiki Schedule

Reiki will be at home of Deborah Burke, 1 Oakwood Drive in Saco on Jan 7 and Jan 22 this month @ 9:30. All are welcome.

The wonderful Writing Workshop with Lisa Barstow and Deborah Burke has been rescheduled and will meet at the Biddeford Pool Community Club on Friday morning, January 22nd, 9:30-12:30. \$45.00. All are welcome!! RSVP to Lisa, lisabarstow@gmail.com, or Deborah @ debwhiteburke@gmail.com.

Welcome to Steve Bradford, new Website Administrator

We are also happy to welcome a new website administrator, Steve Bradford. Steve has excellent skills and comes highly recommended. Watch for changes as he attempts to make the site more interactive. Right now it is in transition, as we all are!! We thank Paul Ayoob who got us started in new directions!

New Church Directory Available this month

Many thanks to **Cynthia Archibald** who worked with Jan and all of us, to update the Directory Information. We are unable to add new pictures this year, but hope to do that the following year. You can pick up your copy at the church and be sure to glue or chain it to your phone or wall so you won't lose it!!!!

Lent is coming believe it or not! It all begins with a Shrove Tuesday Mardi Gras on Feb. 9th and Ash Wednesday is Feb. 10th. Watch for details on these events. Nancy Bancroft will be offering two Lenten Study Opportunities; a book study of Richard Rohr's book Falling Upward and a Bible Study on the Parables of Jesus. There will be a sign up sheet in the foyer to indicate your interest in either or both of these offerings and preferred day and time.



Welcome to Interim Pastor Nancy Bancroft

(A portion of Nancy's letter to the Interim Search Committee)

Though I am not as yet an ordained minister my resume attests that I have had as much or

more religious formation, and academic theological preparation than many clergy. I have performed all of the duties of a pastor, except officiating at weddings. As a retreat director and parish volunteer I have experience in preaching, providing spiritual direction, leading communion services and other religious services. For years I have visited the sick, I have journeyed with people who are dying and led memorial services and committal services. In addition I am trained and experienced in helping groups transition.

Personally I feel that I am a natural leader, people generally find me warm and caring and I believe that I can hold the Union Church community together as it grieves the loss of Jan and prepares to receive a new settled pastor.

I don't know if God is calling me to serve at Union church as interim pastor. I do know that when Jen Comeau stated in church, "I know that we already have new pastor for Union Church there for us. We just need to find him or her", something stirred within me. I don't think that Tom and me coming to the church just as Jan announced her retirement is a coincidence. Nor is it a coincidence that I felt moved to resign my position with the Sisters of Mercy this summer. I feel an excitement at the possibility of this new spiritual endeavor, and drawn to put myself forward as a candidate, and at the same time I have some anxiety about following such a gifted and loved pastor as Jan. Still, I know in my bones that I am called to offer myself for the position."

Nancy and her husband Tom live with their delightful dog Jazz in Saco and look forward to bringing creative, efficient leadership during this time of transition. Nancy begins her ministry with us on January 18th, though she has already been attending meetings and getting onboard. Her first service of worship will be on January 24th. Welcome, Nancy and Tom!!

Jan wins Courier's Great Person of the Year Award

Somewhat embarrassed, duly humbled and very grateful am I! Thanks to Paul Schlaver for nominating me and for all of you who voted for me. I share this award with everyone who was nominated ...with all who give hours of volunteer work to bless the lives of others. Thanks for the many ways you all inspire me to grow in love and service.