

President's Letter

Well, Spring is here. At least according to the calendar. The snowdrops are blooming in our woodlot so that is a positive sign. But we are still keeping our wood stove going and there seems to be a dusting of snow every morning. And, of course, we are avoiding dirt roads (or should I say mud roads) wherever possible.

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From Rev. Barbara's Couch

Half a mile or so from my house is what started as a beaver dam and is now a large marshy/pond area, spanning both sides of a road with a culvert under it. There's lots of water among lots of reeds and grasses. The water level's usually 3 feet lower than the road. But a few weeks ago, between a few suddenly-warm days with the resultant massive snow melt, an ice dam which formed in the culvert, and heavy rain, the water level quickly rose. One morning it had flooded most of the road by several inches: it was quite dramatic!

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April Half-Plate Partner



Companions in Wholeness

Now part of Rutland Neighbors, Companions in Wholeness welcomes everyone who comes through their doors, shares meals, and provides safe space, assistance, and companionship for people in need.

Visit their website:
rutlandneighbors.org



Rutland UU

rutlanduu.org

802-775-0850

office@rutlanduu.org

Minister: Rev. Barbara

President: Bruce D.

Vice President: Ann B.

Moderator: Kevin K.

Treasurer: Cathy T.

Secretary: Marcia F.

Trustee: Rosie H.

Trustee: Margaret F.

Clerk: Herb O.

RUU Admin: Jen G.

Announcements



Join the Banned Book Club!

Meetings will be on the third Sunday of each month, noon to 1pm. Please sign up by email:

- Becky Eno - bequesting@gmail.com
- Jean Marie Walker- jmwinvt19@gmail.com
- Nancy Weis - nweis@shoreham.net

April Birthdays

4/4 Kurt Kretvix

4/5 Bela Francoeur-Schug

4/10 Mike Nagle

4/15 Becky Eno

Birthday Cake @ Coffee Hour

April 26



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President's Letter

Spring, however, has brought us our annual service auction which was much fun as usual.

I understand we made over \$5000, which is wonderful. Many thanks go to the organizers, the enthusiastic auctioneers, the food donors (I do love meatballs) and everyone who offered goods and services for the auction. It goes to show what a strong community our congregation is.

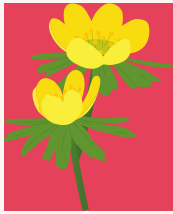
While I am thanking people, I need to point out the work that the Building and Grounds committee has been doing. We now have a keypad on the backdoor and plans are being made to rekey the whole building. That difficult front door lock has stymied many of us from time to time.

Although \$5000 is a good amount of money, I am sure you are aware that it takes much more money to keep our organization financially sound. We have to heat the building, plow the parking lot, pay the staff, and so on, which leads me to the Pledge Drive that is coming right up. The Drive will kick off on Sunday, April 12. There will be a brief announcement and some music during the service. After the service there will be a lunch (provided by the Board) and a discussion to answer questions and generate enthusiasm and excitement for the fundraising.

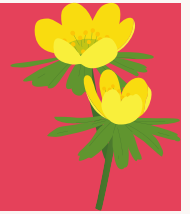
This year we are asking folks to think not just about paying the bills for next year, but to ponder on their vision for the future of the church. One thing that has come up frequently is increasing ministerial time. We had to reduce it during the time of Covid and it would be wonderful if we could at least get back to where we were. I would really like to see us get to a half-time minister. I realize that is a big and bold vision, but I believe that if we decided as a community that is what we wanted we could do it. When I start dreaming really big, I envision us being able to hire a music director so we could have a choir. I do miss singing choral music.



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Coming this Month



April 5, 10:30 am “Dirt Communion” with Nancy Weis and Natana Gill

Honor the beginnings of spring, and the dirt that sustains all the life.

NOTE: Please bring a small quantity of garden soil if you would like it blessed.

April 12, 10:30 am An Intergenerational Sunday

April 19, 10:30 am “Dealing with Death” with Rev. Barbara Threet

Special post-service event: Death Café, when those who wish will have the opportunity to share their experiences, their concerns, their hopes, and their reflections with others in the congregation in small groups.

April 26, 10:30 am Guest Speaker: Philip Ackerman-Leist

Circle Dinners

April 17, 18, 24, and 25



Circle dinners are hosted at a member’s home, and the host will assign each person attending a dish to bring.

We’re still seeking hosts for April 24 and April 25. If you would like to open your home to one of these cozy events, please email Marcia Foley at marcia12455@gmail.com.

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Speaking of music, this is a bit more mundane, but our piano was built in 1901 and is showing its age. It needs to be replaced, so that is one more expense coming down the line. So, as you await the Pledge Drive's official start, take some time to think about your own vision for where the church could be in the future.

Please bring your vision to the lunch on the April 12.

Blessed Be, Bruce D.

RUU February Board Meeting Synopsis

- Our new website is being viewed a lot and some new visitors have found us through the website. Also, the newsletter template now matches our website.
- The stained glass window restoration project continues to proceed very well.
- A new flyer to publicize our church was designed and printed, and will be available soon.
- **The Annual Meeting will be Sunday, May 3 at 12:15.** Committee reports need to be completed well before the meeting.
- The Pledge Campaign will be starting soon.
- The Board approved Constance Hockema and Theresa Haywood as new members of the Sunday Service Committee.
- Steve Waite was approved to join the Endowment Committee.

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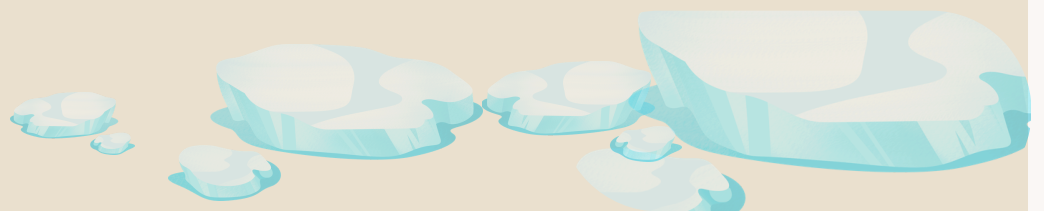
From Rev. Barbara's Couch

But overnight, something magical happened. The temperature dropped sharply, and ice easily a quarter of an inch thick formed over the swollen water. And then, the ice dam gave way, so that by morning most of the excess water had drained away, returning the water to its usual level. But the temperature stayed very cold – in the high teens – so the ice which had formed on the water the night before remained, stuck to the reeds and grasses three feet or so above the water! The area was littered with what looked like pieces of thin glass! Some pieces were several feet wide, perfectly flat and supported by reeds, three feet off the ground. Some dangled on a few stalks of grass. In places there were piles of ice-glass – pieces of ice had fallen off stalks of grass, but it was so cold they hadn't shattered as they fell but just lay against one another. The confluence of events had resulted in something quite unusual, and quite beautiful!

My grandson Julien noticed it on his way home, and he came rushing in to tell me I had to come see Something Amazing, so off we went. We tried to take pictures, but it was the sort of thing that doesn't photograph easily. We spent quite a while there, admiring the phenomenon from various angles and speculating on how unusual it was. A few cars stopped to see what we were looking at, but many more just drove on by, and Julien mentioned how easy it is to be so absorbed in wherever one is going that one forgets to notice things along the way. And he's right: sadly, had I been driving, I too might have been so intent on getting to wherever I was going that I'd have missed it.

It was beautiful. By the next afternoon, the temperature had risen and the ice was gone. It had provided a most welcome reprieve from the drumbeat of Iran, and a different kind of ICE, and so many other things that scream for attention these days. It reminded me – again – that there are wonders in the world as well as horrors, places of unexpected beauty as well as ugliness. I need those unexpected delights, that unanticipated beauty. I need to remember to look beyond the daily news. So do we all, especially these days.

Shalom and Salaam,
Rev. Barbara



From Rev. Barbara's Balcony: A poem and reflection

A poem for these days, written by Polish/American poet Czeslaw Milosz. Born in Lithuania, he was living in Warsaw, Poland when he wrote this, in 1944. That was the year when Nazi forces utterly destroyed the city. But in the long run, they did not win.

The news and the images from Ukraine these days are harrowing. The images from long civil unrest Syria and Yemen, Ethiopia and Nigerian are awful, too. More than 26 million people in our world are currently refugees, and another 50 million are internally displaced: nearly 4 million of those refugees and internally displaced are Ukrainians, within just a month. The world is not a safe place, for many people. Covid, no matter what we wish or long for or flat-out deny, has not disappeared. Our oceans are still warming. And the color of one's skin and/or one's gender and/or what nation one was born in still determines way too much in this world, for way too many people.

And as Milosz saw, as his city was being destroyed, bees—and birds—still fly. They're returning now, to the northeast of our US: you may well hear birdsong as you read this. Music still appears to soothe and lift and inspire the soul.

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A Song on the End of the World

*On the day the world ends
A bee circles a clover,
A fisherman mends a glimmering net.
Happy porpoises jump in the sea,
By the rainspout young sparrows are playing
And the snake is gold-skinned as it should
always be.*

*On the day the world ends
Women walk through the fields under their
umbrellas,
A drunkard grows sleepy at the edge of a lawn,
Vegetable peddlers shout in the street
And a yellow-sailed boat comes nearer the
island,
The voice of a violin lasts in the air
And leads into a starry night.*

*And those who expected lightning and thunder
Are disappointed.
And those who expected signs and archangels'
trumps
Do not believe it is happening now.
As long as the sun and the moon are above,
As long as the bumblebee visits a rose,
As long as rosy infants are born
No one believes it is happening now.*

*Only a white-haired old man, who would be a
prophet
Yet is not a prophet, for he's much too busy,
Repeats while he binds his tomatoes:
There will be no other end of the world,
There will be no other end of the world.*

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Babies are born, gardens are still planted, people care for and tend to and even offer refuge to one another. The sun still rises and the moon is still beautiful, and flowers are still emerging. Each of these, and love and hope and great courage, are still part of our world too. Remember to see all of it.

(And my sabbatical time is renewing, inspiring, productive, and most welcome. I look forward to seeing all of you – many of you in person! – in just a few weeks!)

Shalom, salaam, and мир вам

Rev. Barbara

Office News & Notes

Greetings and salutations—

I'm delighted to be your new church admin!

By way of introduction, I'm a native of Addison County; I grew up on Snake Mountain and my grandparents' dairy farms before my family moved to the San Francisco Bay Area when I was 15.

After college (American University and Johns Hopkins), I built a career in communications and web content strategy and management, working for DC nonprofits, small businesses, and big tech (the good kind). In 2024, Vermont called me home, and we moved our kids back to be near family.

Pleased to meet you!

Jen Gingras

Church office administrator

This column will appear as needed for any administrative announcements or requests.

- Our church has a new email address: **office@rutlanduu.org**. This enables greater security and alignment with our website URL, as well as giving us a unified workspace for church administration. Please keep an eye out for more of these changes (e.g.: president@rutlanduu.org, etc.), and update your contact lists and spam filters.
- If you've been missing UU emails, please let me know! Although we migrated our contact lists into the new workspace, some preferences, such as preferred email addresses, have been lost.