

The Tunbridge Church Newsletter

Tunbridge, Vermont

July 2009

Pastor's Reflections

by Rev. Deadra Ashton

When my husband, Chuck, and I bought our house on Dickerman Hill over the 2005 Thanksgiving holiday, we never dreamed that less than four years later we would be permanent residents; of Tunbridge. While we knew that we eventually wanted to live in Vermont, we thought we were just buying a place to . . . a place to do what? Looking back, I honestly can't remember just what we were thinking. All I know is that we fell in love with this little piece of Orange County after the first few nights here. That year we attended Christmas Eve service in the Tunbridge Church and during the candle lighting my daughter, Aryn, turned to me and said, "We're coming here every Christmas Eve from now on!" That's when we vowed to find a way to live here . . . someday. In retirement. Probably.

But retirement was, and still is, a long way off for us. In January of this year I started a new job at Champlain College as a development officer. It's the same sort of work I did for Rider University in New Jersey and at my alma mater, Princeton Seminary, before that. In May Chuck became an official telecommuter. He is an architectural historian and works for Hunter Research in Trenton, New Jersey. Our children are grown and (mostly) out on their own. Nate lives in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, works for DeVry University and will be married next summer. Peter, an astrophysicist, is in Brookline, Massachusetts, working as a scientific programmer, and also publishes an on-line comic with some of his friends. In September Aryn will be a junior at Baldwin-Wallace College and Conservatory in Berea, Ohio, studying flute and music management. And now I'm the pastor of the Tunbridge Church. This is probably the biggest surprise of all. When I left parish ministry 12 years ago to work for Princeton Seminary, I

thought that regular church work was a thing of the past for me. I was content to fill in for vacationing pastors now and then. But during that first Christmas Eve in the Tunbridge Church I found myself thinking: Wouldn't it be great to be the pastor of this church? I immediately dismissed the thought because this church clearly had a wonderful pastor.

If I've learned anything in the past four years, it's that I have no talent predicting the future. So I'm trying to focus on today and live in gratitude. And that's an easy thing to do these days. Chuck; and I are grateful to be here. We're grateful for the warm welcome we've received and we're most grateful to be part of the Tunbridge Church!

A Final Note

by David Wolfe

If you change the names, dates and the name of the hill road in Deadra's first paragraph, you would have a fitting first paragraph for this note. The dates would be 1969 (then later 1979) and Whitney Hill. We first attended church here on Christmas Eve, 1968. I became the temporary pastor from June 1969 until January 1970, then returned to become the regular pastor in June of 1979.

That is the bare timeline of a love affair with the faith community that is the Tunbridge Church and with the wider community that is Tunbridge the Town. It has been three decades filled with friendship, loss, joy, challenges, caring and all the bittersweetness that is this life.

I have no regrets about investing the best part of my life to serving in this distinctive and precious place. It is so gratifying to have Deadra Ashton as my successor here. She is so well suited to serve this church and be part of this community.

I look forward to my new role as resident minister of counselling, visitation and teaching. Now we all step into the next era in the history of The Tunbridge Church.

Regularly Scheduled Events

Every Sunday:

Study Group, 8:45 a.m. (Resumes in October)

Adult Worship Service, 10:00 a.m.

Children's Sunday School meets during church service

Every Tuesday

Informal Bible Study at 6:00 p.m.

Second Sunday of the Month:

Fellowship and Refreshments following service.

Last Sunday of the Month

Parish Council, 7:00 p.m.

Communion:

First Sunday in January, March, May, July, September, November.

Good Friday Service.

Thanksgiving Eve Service.

Every Friday.

Food Shelf, 4-6 p.m.

SERVE food program (call Sue Barnaby, 889-3736 or Jean Wolfe 889-5577 for information.)

Parish Council

Your Parish Council members are available for you to take any of your concerns to the Council. Parish Council meetings are open to all church members.

Benjamin Wolfe, Chair	889-9467
Peg Sherlock, Vice Chair	889-3355
Rob Howe, Secretary	889-3704
Townsend Swayze, Treasurer	889-3234
Elsie Farnham, Recording Treasurer	889-3443
Lisa Amodeo	889-3245
Sue Barnaby	889-3736
Nancy Chapman	889-5542
Elaine Cilley	889-3300
Pam Dietz	889-3315
Euclid Farnham	889-3458
Lisa Kippen	889-9822

Treasurer's Note:

The Impact of the Economic Downturn on the Church Finances

Throughout the economy we are all very much feeling the impact of these current very difficult economic times. The impacts on our church finances are no exception.

Collections from January through mid-June this year totaled \$15,429 -- a weekly average of \$643. This compares to the corresponding total last year of \$19,957 -- or a weekly average of \$832.

The returns from the L.B. Bowen investments also dropped significantly, from last year's total of \$7,966 to \$6,785 -- a decline of 15%. Similarly other investment returns that fund our operating budget showed similar declines. These, of course, are significant sources of income for helping us to meet our operating expenditures.

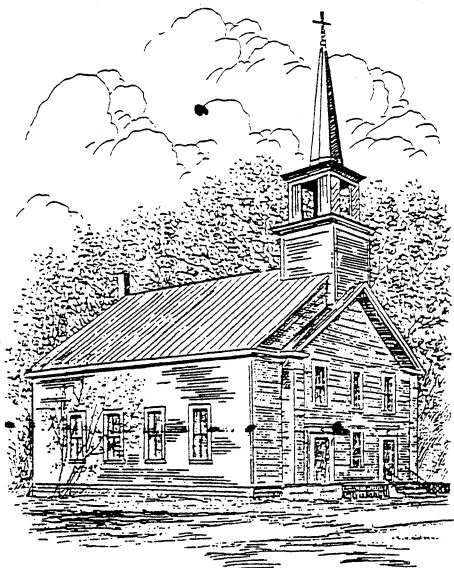
In our budget estimates for this year we had anticipated a decline in the Bowen fund to \$6,000. We didn't, however, anticipate a decline in collections. Our estimates for the total 2009 year for collections were for \$38,000. As we are nearly half way through the year, our projected totals could fall about \$8,000 short.

Accordingly, the Parish Council will have to revisit the budget in the fall, to see where we can cut back on expenses. Unfortunately, many of our expenditures are beyond our control -- heating, electricity, insurance. We may need to revisit our priorities for maintenance.

This note is not meant to alarm the church members, but we believe it is important to keep you informed of the impact these difficult times is having on the church.

Thank you,
T. Swayze, Treasurer

The Tunbridge Church



Deadra Ashton, Pastor, (685-3029)
 David Wolfe, Pastor Emeritus (889-5577)
 Judie Lewis, Music Director, 889-9490

A Little Tunbridge Church History

The original Tunbridge meetinghouse was built between 1795 and 1797. For the first number of years it was shared jointly by the town, the Baptists, the Congregationalists and the Universalists. The three denominations took turns using the building for their services. This lasted until 1808 when the Freewill Baptist East Hill Church was constructed along the Strafford Road. This was followed by building a Methodist Church in 1833. The Congregationalist Church was built in 1838 (and again in 1839 when the first one burned). A Universalist structure came in 1839 in North Tunbridge. The town then had five active churches in five separate buildings.

The population of the town had been declining for years; consequently, as church members decreased the church buildings one by one were closed. Soon after 1900 both the East Hill Baptists and the North Tunbridge Universalists ceased having services. During the 1930's the North Tunbridge Baptists and the

Congregationalists began holding joint services alternating between the two buildings. The Methodists continued with their own Sunday service in their South Tunbridge brick building. At this time all three denominations shared the same pastor. The three conferences supplied candidates.

A parish council comprised of members from the three denominations came into being during the 1950's, and the first joint canvass was held in 1957.

Finally in 1960 the parish council voted to have just one service each Sunday, spending three months in each church. The Congregational Church then installed an oil furnace so it was decided to spend the six cold months in that building. This was soon changed to ten months at the central church building, July at the Methodist Church and August in the Baptist building.

During 1978 the Tunbridge Church was organized using just one treasurer. Up until that time everything had been divided three sevenths, three sevenths and one seventh (Baptists with fewer members). In 1979 Parish Council was reformed consisting of twelve members from any denomination as well as the new Tunbridge Church category.

Euclid Farnham

IMPORTANT DATES

- Sunday August 2: Outdoor Service and Potluck Picnic, 10:00 a.m. at Pam Deitz's Yard on Falls Hill Road.
- Wednesday, August 5: Choir Rehearsals begin for Fair Service, 7:30 p.m. (continues through August into September).
- Sunday, September 20, Fair Service, 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday November 1, Harvest Potluck Dinner after Worship Service, Annual Canvass begins.
- Friday December 4, Decorating and Carol Sing with refreshments.
- Thursday December 18, Caroling of Shut-ins; meet at the church at 6:30 p.m., refreshments after.
- Thursday, December 24, Christmas Eve Candlelight Services -- Times to be announced.

Tunbridge/Royalton Phone Book

Janet Zug 889-9602 trphonebook@aol.com

The Tunbridge/Royalton Phonebook is a fundraising effort for the Tunbridge Church Children's Choir. Right now the choir is working to raise the funds to build a community playground on the parish house lawn. See below.

Work is in full swing on this project, but let me tell you it's going to take some time! The CD of our Fairpoint phonebook did finally arrive and it is of little use. Information is being compiled using the grand lists and the printed phone book.

Please contact me if:

- You would like to be listed differently than you are in the Fairpoint phone book.
- You have a cell phone or home-based business phone number you would like to have included in the book.
- You own land in Tunbridge but live elsewhere and would like to be included. If you have a local number and it's listed I should have it already.
- You have a business and would like to advertise.

Tunbridge Church Community Playground

We are just about to break ground for the new playground on the parish house lawn. George Elderd created a flat area just behind the parish house lawn.

The plan of the committee is to create the site large enough for 3 or 4 separate play structures. At least one of these to be completed by mid summer and the rest to be erected as the funds are available.

We are excited to be working on this project for the children and community of Tunbridge. Please keep an eye out for our fundraising opportunities.

If you would like to make a donation to the playground project you may send it to T Swayze, 56 Swayze Road. Please make your check out to Tunbridge Church with "Playground Fund" in the memo line. For more information contact Janet Zug at 889-9602.

CHOIR NOTES

Rehearsals for the adult Fair Service Choir will start on Wednesday, August 5th at 7:30 p.m. All are invited to join the choir, which draws members from around the community to sing at the Festival of Worship service held on the Sunday of the Fair, September 20th. For more information call Judie Lewis (889-9490).

The Children's Choir will start the season with the Fair Service. Practices will begin on August 26th at 6:00 p.m. For more information on the Children's Choir call Janet Zug (889-9602).