



The South Church
Weathervane

From the Minister's Desk

December 2010

Rev. Jennifer Brooks

THE MEANING OF DECEMBER

Thanksgiving introduces December. With only a few days' transition, we move from expressions of gratitude to what can become an intense round of gift selection and party planning. Each year, as the holiday lights blink over America's storefronts, I wonder what has happened to Thanksgiving's message.

The truth is that we make our own meaning of the holiday season; it's up to us whether we carry into wild December a Thanksgiving appreciation for the gifts of life. Even with best efforts, it can be challenging to hold on to the meaning that resonates around the Thanksgiving table. But if we wish to live good and meaningful lives, we must at least try to live with intention.

In his "This I Believe" message on November 28, Chris Lohmann talked about a line in a song (and from Isaiah): "Let justice roll like a mighty stream." He wondered about the word "let," saying that justice doesn't flow from the opening of ethereal floodgates; it rises from the ground up, from the words and deeds of each of us. "The line ought to be," he said, "*make* justice roll."

"We, Angels and Mortals, Believers and Non-Believers, look heavenward and speak the word aloud. Peace. We look at our world and speak the word aloud. Peace. We look at each other, then into ourselves, and we say without shyness or apology or hesitation: Peace." —*Maya Angelou*

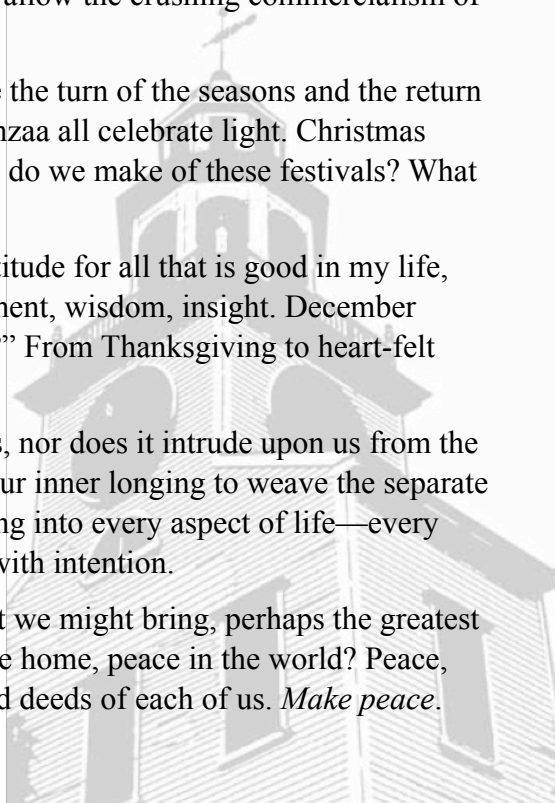
That's the way I feel about December. Whatever our religious upbringing, our religious or spiritual practice, it's a necessary human task to make meaning out of December. After all, why allow the crushing commercialism of the world around us dictate our pace, our mood, our meaning?

December brings the solstice, a geophysical and spiritual time to welcome the turn of the seasons and the return of light to the world. Hanukkah (the Festival of Lights), Diwali, and Kwanzaa all celebrate light. Christmas brings advent candles and the light-bearing Christmas tree. What meaning do we make of these festivals? What meaning, individual and precious, do we make of December?

For me the message of Thanksgiving, with its call to appreciation and gratitude for all that is good in my life, leads naturally into December's celebration of light: its call for enlightenment, wisdom, insight. December invites me to ask, "What does the world need, and what do I have to give?" From Thanksgiving to heart-felt giving, December means the sharing of my resources, my gifts, my love.

The meaning of life does not flow downward upon us from heaven's gates, nor does it intrude upon us from the outside world. It emerges from within, from the values we cherish, from our inner longing to weave the separate days of our lives into a tapestry of purpose. Whether we carry Thanksgiving into every aspect of life—every thought, word, and deed—is entirely up to us. We have the power to live with intention.

And so we have the power to choose December's meaning. Of all the light we might bring, perhaps the greatest wisdom is peace. Is peace too much to ask? Peace in the heart, peace in the home, peace in the world? Peace, without shyness or apology, rising from the ground up, from the words and deeds of each of us. *Make peace.*



Sunday Services & Sermon Topics

Selected sermons are available on our website, www.unitarianchurchnantucket.org, or get in touch with Rev. Jennifer Brooks, 508-228-7597 or nantucketminister@comcast.net. Copies of readings used in a Sunday service are available on request.

December 2010

Dec. 5, “My T-Shirt Says ‘Life is Good’,” Rev. Jennifer Brooks

Dec. 12, “By the Waters of Babylon,” Rev. Jennifer Brooks

Dec. 19, “Holiday Music Sunday and Children’s Pageant,” UU Choirs, Sunday School.

Dec. 26, Rev. Ted Anderson, Minister Emeritus

Sunday Bulletin: To put an announcement in the Sunday bulletin, please call the Church Office by **12 noon Thursday**, or email nantucketminister@verizon.net no later than **5 pm**.

Newsletter: To put an item in the *Weathervane*, mailed out monthly, please email Les Ottinger lwojso@comcast.net, or drop an article off in the Church Office or Les’s box in the Activities Room by the 20th of the month. For more exact deadline information, or to volunteer to prepare the *Weathervane* for mailing, call Les Ottinger (508-228-8710).

Website: To have an announcement posted on the website, simply provide it as an announcement for the Sunday Bulletin or the *Weathervane*, or send it directly to Georgen Charnes, curiositykeeper@gmail.com.

Caring Community. Our Minister and the volunteers who make up the “Care Network” stand ready to help with pastoral care or other support during an illness or family crisis. Call the Minister (508-228-7597). May each of us reach out in love to offer support when it is welcome. To volunteer, sign up on Sunday or call the office.

Office Hours & Space Reservations. The Church Office is open Monday-Friday mornings from 9:00 am – noon. To reserve space for an event, call the office (508-228-5466) and speak to Patti Demarest.

Congregational Conversation Dec. 12 with Rev. Beth Miller: Led by Rev. Beth Miller, this conversation continues the healthy congregation development process. Members have an opportunity to share and discuss concerns in a calm, supportive setting. 12:45-3 pm. Lunch will be served during coffee hour.

Participants and planners of the November 28 Lay Led Service entitled "This I Believe..." (l. to r.) David Barham, Linda Sperry, Chris Lohmann, Jack Weinhold, Kat Robinson Greider, Sissy Girard, Grace Noyes, Christine Sanford.

Board of Trustees Report

November was a busy month for the board of trustees as we move toward the end of 2010. We welcomed Bertrand Venzor-Briere to the board at our November 23rd meeting to fill Meg Hunter’s vacancy as she relocates to Maine. Thank you to the nominating committee—Chris Lohmann, Pete Sawyer and Maggie Sullivan—for working together to fulfill their responsibilities and to Bertrand for agreeing to serve on the board.

The board is also grateful to treasurer Jack Weinhold and the heads of the 2011 pledge committee—David Oman, Trish Jarrell and Linda Spery—for their continued hard work as they wrap up the 2011 pledge campaign with outreach to regular and associate members. As of the close of November, we have 65 pledge units (families) who have committed \$75,500. We are still hopeful for 100% participation by our membership so that we can realize the \$1,000 in matching funds that have been promised if we reach this goal of everyone making a pledge, large or small.

Also in the area of church finances, the budgeting process is underway in keeping with the guidelines adopted at the July 26 congregational meeting. The first of the department meetings have taken place and will continue, leading up to the preparation of the 2011 budget to be presented to the board for discussion and approval at the December 14 board meeting. The members of the Finance Committee who have been devoting many hours to the budgeting task include chair Brian Girard, Larry Miller, Meg Valero, Jack Weinhold and ex-officio members Rev. Jennifer Brooks and myself. We recently welcomed a new member to the Finance Committee—Eidy Venzor-Briere—who will bring valuable insight to the group.

Also during the past month a newsletter policy was adopted by the board. The text of the policy is included with the minutes of the November 23 meeting on display on the bulletin board in the activities room. Also on display on the bulletin board is a copy of the ministerial transition plan that was finalized and signed during November.

Please be sure and mark your calendars for Dec. 12, when the next congregational conversation session will be held with Rev. Beth Miller as our leader. The upcoming session will be a different format from the previous meeting held on October 24th. According to Rev. Miller, we will be using a consensus building process using small groups similar to the familiar dialogue circles. I urge everyone to attend this important meeting to let your voice be heard. Also on December 12, as a part of this gathering, we will vote on the purchase of a new copier for the church office. A notice about this expenditure is included elsewhere in the newsletter.

At our last board meeting in November, the group approved the formation of an interim minister search committee starting in January 2011. The committee will be comprised of five members to be appointed by the board. The new committee, reporting to the board of trustees, will focus upon selection of an interim minister to start August 1, 2011. If you are interested in being considered for this committee, please contact me at craigspery@aol.com or any of the other board members and let them know of your interest.

Finally, we were sad to say goodbye to board member Dan Ross, who is stepping down from the board as he continues his education off-island. We thank him for his great contributions and his participation in the congregation, including serving as a certified OWL program teacher. He has promised not to be a stranger. Thank you, Dan!

Craig Spery – President, Board of Trustees
President
Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees hereby gives notice that there will be a congregational meeting after the service on December 12, 2010 for the single purpose of authorizing the Board of Trustees to purchase a new copy machine. The meeting to vote will be held at 12:30 PM, after coffee and refreshments. It will precede the planned congregational meeting facilitated by Rev. Beth Miller.

Lifespan Religious Education (LRE)

We have begun our spaghetti dinners and enjoyed 48 guests at our November offering. We are going to do our next spaghetti dinner in January (3rd Wednesday of the month), and give December a miss as people are so busy then. Lizie, Joan and Sally did the cooking and prep, and stayed to serve and clean up. Thanks to Joan for helping cook, prep, set up, and thanks to Jean Murtagh, Maggie Sullivan and Debbie for helping with serving and clean up. Also, thanks to Georgen and Cassia for setting the table.

November also saw us eating stone soup together and collecting for the Food Pantry with our wagon train food drive. Thanks to everyone who took part; too numerous to mention! Truly a couple of all-church events.

The youth group is decorating the tree this year. Look for it down town. They continue to meet at 6:30 PM on Thursdays in the AR.

In December, the Sunday School class will look at the Nativity story and the excitement that all new babies bring to the world. They will bring stories of their own birth to tell each other.

The children and youth are invited to take part in our no rehearsal Christmas Pageant on December 19th. We will have sheep hats and angel halos for the little ones and the older children and teens can don some of the bigger angel and shepherd costumes. We always try to have some wise men and have smaller crowns and capes for them.

Sally and Lizie, Co-directors, LRE

Inter-church Harvest Fair

Many thanks to all who helped in some large or small way to make this a success. I won't be able to list you all, but am grateful to all who were a part of this year's effort. Together we were able to make a \$1134.50 donation to the church programs (and there may be additional IOUs). And a special thank you to Mary Beth Splaine, who offered to

co-chair organization and follow up on plans. Others who did lots of work: Jeff and Judy Norkin, Patrick Beaugard, Joanne Polster, Sharon Carlee, Grace Noyes, Linda Spery, Nancy and Jerry Mack, Jack Weinhold, Craig Spery, John Merson, Georgen Charnes, Les and Joan Ottinger, Karin Gockel and all you who donated items and shopped and cleaned up. **Well done.**
Debby Merritt

Personal Credo on Music

Presented to the Congregation at the Service on Choir Sunday

"Music is a unique expression of joy and intelligence which gives people a unique way to feel deeply. It is a vehicle for expression of things that are difficult to say in words. Singing together, as choirs and as a congregation, is one of the most satisfying things that a human being can do; it is a reason for living, a purpose in life, something that makes it all worthwhile despite the times of trouble. And that's a lot, that's very powerful. Our church does not have ritual prayers, and so we need our music even more. Music is an expression of happiness, and an expression of who we are inside, in the deepest parts of ourselves. Music is a powerful path to the soul, and making music is even more powerful than listening to it. Music teaches concentration, purpose, self-expression, and a sense of the beautiful. It unites body and mind, and teaches a very pure kind of spirituality that comes straight from the heart. And what words can't say, music can."

Marcia Hempel

Music Notes

Christmas Caroling: Please come and carol with us, and visit the Hospital, Our Island Home, The Homestead, and other places on the island. Right after the drawing downtown, and then it usually takes a couple hours. It's lots of fun, and the people at the different places really do appreciate it very much.

Christmas Music: Our special Music Sunday and Christmas Pageant is the 19th this year. the adult choir will sing six or seven songs, and the children will sing three songs. It will include some favorites like "In The Bleak Midwinter", "The Holly and the Ivy", and "Lully, Lullay".

Finance Committee

Your Finance Committee is in the process of consolidating and preparing budgets and forecasts for the 2011 calendar/fiscal year. The process includes submission of requests and estimates from each committee, consideration in light of anticipated revenue (from pledges, facility rentals, fund raising and investments) and presentation to the Board of Trustees for approval. The timely compliance by committee members is recognized and appreciated by all as a vital contribution to the health of our Society and Programs.

Please feel free to address any questions or comments to any Finance Committee member - Brian Girard, Larry Miller, Meg Valero, Eidy Venzor, Jack Weinhold.

South Church Preservation Fund

Full-scale paint removal is now underway in the auditorium, beginning with the ceiling and entry vestibule. New evidence of the patterns and colors of the original paintings has been recovered by using two and even three applications of stripper to reveal the lower level of paint. Review of the stripping and documentation by the EverGreene conservators is scheduled for December 15, before the final stripping down to bare plaster and the initiation of repairs to the plaster itself. An outside propane furnace is being used to bring sufficient heat into the space for the work to continue as the weather has turned colder. To protect the Goodrich organ from the resultant dryness, an insulated room was built around it and humidity within the room is being monitored and controlled.

An intense effort is underway to complete fundraising for the inside work by December 31. We feel this goal is achievable, but in order to succeed we do need to find some additional contributions. Then, it is the plan of the SCPF Board to begin, after the first of the year, a campaign to establish a permanent fund for the maintenance of the Meeting House,

Leslie W. Ottinger
President, Board of Directors

From your Membership Committee

During our last meeting we discussed the importance of how we identify ourselves; how in some ways “membership committee” can have a negative connotation, as if we were out to search for and recruit new members into our sect, or cult. After much thought and discussion we all agreed to approach the board with a request to re-identify ourselves as the “Welcoming Committee”. Our new name seems to encompass a few new responsibilities: hospitality and greeting are the main two. On the surface, not too much will change. We will still have the hospitality sign-up sheet on the door in the activities

room to provide refreshments and make coffee for our social time after the service. David Hall will most likely still remain our faithful greeter, but we encourage other members to graciously volunteer to stand at the door and pass out hymnals and welcome visitors and current members into our warm sanctuary, be it in Hendrix Hall in the winter or the main sanctuary in the summer months.

As for our monthly update, Bertrand and David will be working together to bring you your monthly dose of membership/welcoming news and maybe some good (truthful) gossip, if there is such a thing. Name badges are in the works. The committee has discussed the design with Jack Weinhold and has decided on a tasteful but inexpensive option for now - no bedazzling yet. Sorry guys, can't afford the gold plated ones. I was rooting for them, but hopefully next year's finances will allow us to at least get some silver ink....maybe.

Your comments and suggestions are always welcome. Please seek out one of your welcoming committee members and feel free to chat us up; we are welcoming people. My email is always open, but if you would rather be anonymous please feel free to leave a note in the committee's mailbox in the Activities Room.

Bertrand Venzor-Briere, Bbriere01@gmail.com, Acting Chair

Welcoming Committee - Bertrand Venzor-Briere, David Hall, John Merson, Kat Robinson Grieder, and Craig Spery.