

THE MISSIONER

All Souls Congregational Church
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Dr. James L. Haddix, Pastor and Teacher
Rev. Renee U. Garrett, Minister of Christian Nurture



March 2011

Lent 2011

Ash Wednesday Service at All Souls Church

March 9, 7:00 p.m.

Worship and Church School Classes

All Souls Church
Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

Palm Sunday

Sunday, April 17
New Members Received
Distribution of Palm Strips

Maundy Thursday

Thursday, April 21
Passion Vigil for High School students,
from 5:30 p.m. through Friday 5:30 p.m.
Worship Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

Good Friday

Friday, April 22

Holy Saturday

Saturday, April 23
Taize Service at All Souls, 7:30 p.m.

Easter Day

Sunday, April 24
Worship 10:00 a.m.
Memorial Easter Lillies

**Chocolate
Easter
Eggs**

**On
Sale
During
Lent**

**Assist
JC
Project**

From the Minister's Desktop

It is hard to form a people.

In a culture so saturated with invitations to sex, pleasures, possessions and savory food, it is hard to form a people.

It's always been hard. When God brought the Hebrews out of Egypt, they had to be taught to be a people. They longed for their days as slaves. They longed for the flesh-pots of Egypt and that well-watered land. They would have chosen Egypt in a heart beat. But God had chosen them. In the same way, Jesus says to his church: you did not choose me. I chose you. God comes calling.

“Spiritual” people – many of them in this culture – are into their personal spiritual quest. There are plenty of guides to sell them books and DVD's and spiritual secrets. Been to a book store lately? Have a look through the spirituality or “religion” section. Usually “spiritual” folks don't want to be part of “a people”. They are not, as many like to say, “into” organized religion. They are looking for truth “for me.” They are not looking for something that makes demands of them. They are not, by and large, looking for the Truth that is looking for them. Being part of a people requires submission to others, submission to authority, to Truth. It is risky and, while not particularly sensual in a Bay Watch way, it is very fleshly. It requires being with others, in conversation, in friendship, in love, in service.

Here's the deal: the Church is not just people. It is *a people*—a called-out people.

“Spiritual people” are seeking God. In the Church we learn that God is seeking us. It's a big difference. Our personal quests are interesting, perhaps, but not the main deal. God is seeking us. God comes to us. God, in Christ, dwells with a people—”in the midst of two or three *gathered*” (the operative word here) in his name.

I can't remember exactly who said it, but someone with very good sense said that many people like to believe that they form the church. No, said this sensible person with a handle on the Truth, “*the church forms us*”.

It has always been hard to form a people. Not everyone is born at the same time. Not every one matures at the same rate. Not everyone dies at once. *A people* is constantly in the making and always in motion. *A people* is also very diverse. The vision of the Church as a people includes all races, tongues and nations. It also includes people we don't know and a few we don't much like. We see all this great diversity and motion through our own finite eyes. It's hard to make sense of it. God (so thinks C. S. Lewis) must see this amazing variety of souls and time and places completely organically—knowing how it all fits together and how it will serve his purposes.

It is not easy to form a people. Paul saw the dangers and hope of it all. Heartbroken by the human waste of those who live for savory food and pleasures and possessions and satiation, he warned the Philippians how “many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.” [Philippians 3:18-19] It's not a flattering picture. Still, it is in almost any human era immediately observable. As my Grandmother used to say, “It's just facts”!

For your average Philippian on the street, life was about wringing out the last drop of earthly goodness from the abundance and peace of the Roman Empire. Philippi was a colony of Rome and its people—at least most of them—beneficiaries of the “bread and circuses” by which Roman politicians pacified the populace. Had you asked him to name his “savior”, (*soter* in Greek) the average street corner Phillip would very likely have said “*Caesar*”. The current Caesar, whoever he was, was worshipped as a god and was called “savior”. It was one of his royal titles. Caesar represented the government of Rome—Roman law, the Roman legions, the Roman way of life.

When one is into Empire, its perks and protections, one might think of oneself as being part of *that* people. From the belly of the Empire, when one is into one’s own spiritual quest, there is much to seek and much to find. That Roman-Empire-sort-of-people find authority, wealth, power, and abundance and even divine worship in a multiplicity of gods and the temporary earthly lord. It was confusing to Christians in that Empire, too: they enjoyed its benefits and they were commanded by their Scripture to pray for the authorities and for the good ordering of society so people could dwell in safety and in peace.

So, it’s hard to make *a people*. It’s hard to make *a people* who live *in* the Empire and depend on it in important ways, but who know—really know—they must be different from it. It’s hard to form *a people* who can live in a colony of the Empire and still imagine themselves to be a “colony of heaven,” Jesus people.

Paul reminds us. “But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself. [Philippians 3:20-21]

To form *a people* requires a new way of seeing, a new way of thinking, a new way of acting, among other deep changes. And all these new ways have to be shared! They are not personal, private insights or personal, individual possessions. To form such a people requires us to know that our salvation from the tangle of ruinous sin is God’s free gift to us. We must know our end, our purpose, and our true citizenship. We must know who we belong to—really and eternally. It requires us to sit together, eat together, work together, study together and worship together. To live toward new heavens and earth.

We do not form the church. The church (the body of Christ) forms us. A Christian teacher strikingly puts it: *We have been led to believe that the church is tangential to the world when, in fact, the world is tangential to the church.* It’s not the truth we are taught by the world around us. Is it true? If it is, it makes all the difference. It’s a people-making truth.

It’s hard to form *a people*, but with God all things are possible. The church here, around the globe, and across the ages is living proof.

James L. Haddix

Pastor and Teacher

Happy 200th

First Church of Bangor: A Bicentennial Moment

The First Church of Christ in Bangor was gathered on November 27, 1811, twenty years after the incorporation of Bangor by the Great and General Court of Massachusetts. All Souls stands on the site of First Church's meetinghouse. Our congregation is a direct and continuing descendant of that First Church of Bangor.

While Bangor had worked with two other clergymen, the (much maligned) Rev. Seth Noble, and the Rev. James Boyd, no meetinghouse was built and no congregation was gathered. Mr. Noble served as "minister to the people" of several settlements hereabouts. He tried to obtain land for a meetinghouse and finally land was donated and plans were drawn; it was never built. The people of the settlement agreed to pay his salary, but the people reneged. [For more about the Rev. Mr. Noble and the founding of Bangor, please read Carol B. Smith Fisher's *Rev. Seth Noble: A Revolutionary War Soldier's Promise of America and The Founding of Bangor, Maine and Columbus, Ohio*, Heritage Books, 2010.]

The Rev. Harvey Loomis was the first settled minister who actually gathered and organized a church in the incorporated town of Bangor. Our Loomis Room is named for him and for his wife Anna Battell Loomis. The Loomis's came from Connecticut. Harvey was a graduate of Williams College in Massachusetts. He was one of the "Haystack Men", a group of Williams students who launched the foreign mission movement in America. This group of young men was known as the Haystack Men because, as they were walking in a field dreaming about and planning Christian foreign missions, a thunder storm drove them to seek shelter under a hay stack. There, they hatched their plan for sending Christian missionaries to the world to evangelize and to proclaim the Gospel.

Though he was under the hay stack with his friends, Mr. Loomis was the only one of them to disagree with their dreams about foreign missions. He argued, for instance, that if one were going to send Christian missionaries into Muslim lands, one had better send a Christian army first to clear the way!

Despite his dim view of foreign missions, he was not opposed to mission work in wild places. So, we accepted the call of the mission society of Massachusetts who themselves responded to the request from the town of Bangor to establish a church in that remote provincial settlement.

Mr. Loomis came here, as both law and custom decreed, as an employee of the town of Bangor. Citizens of Bangor paid his salary and they also provided a place of meeting, communion ware, a Bible and other necessary items for church life. The first meeting place was in a hall over a store on Exchange Street. Then the church moved to the Court House (later this became City Hall). It was typical for the meetinghouse of a Congregational church to be in a building also used for governmental, municipal and secular purposes, so the Court House made perfect sense.

According to the reasoning of the time, it was the right of every man and woman to worship God. If that was, in fact, an inalienable right, the municipality had a responsibility to provide both place and personnel through whom and with whom this right could be safely and regularly exercised. Religious tolerance, earlier enforced by British authorities, had been forced on Massachusetts (and, by extension, on the Massachusetts ruled District of Maine), so the town of Bangor might have chosen to be Baptist or maybe even Methodist. Certainly there were Methodists and Baptists nearby and maybe even some adherents living in the town of Bangor. But, the four families who signed the Covenant of First Church, and the town itself, decided to remain with the long established church of New England—the Congregationalists. They got a staunch Congregationalist to be their Minister and pastor, Mr. Harvey Loomis, who had graduated from William just two years earlier, in 1809. Mr.

Loomis would serve First Church in Bangor through many quick and, in some ways astounding, changes and some very rough times. He died in his First Church pulpit, aged 39, on January 2, 1825.

All was not settled in Bangor when Mr. and Mrs. Loomis arrived here. In spite of his misgivings about the need for an army in other parts of the world, Bangor could have used one right close at hand.

The Loomis's had not been here quite three years when, on September 3, 1814, the British army, aided by His Majesty's Royal Navy, landed at Hampden. This was the so-called War of 1812. New Englanders were themselves deeply divided as to whether they should withdraw from the United States and rejoin British Canada or stay in the Union. Maine people bore little sympathy for Massachusetts and it may be that the sentiment for secession was somewhat stronger here than in Boston—where it was strong enough! Whatever the sentiments of citizens in this neck of the woods, the touch of war was keenly felt. The British soldiers drove out the local militia and came on up to Bangor. They moved into the court house (where First Church may have been meeting by then!) and took over several school houses, a tavern and even some private homes. They only stayed for three days, but those may have seemed long to certain of the residents, particularly the ones hosting British troops and officers in their homes and businesses. When the British left town, they took twelve sailing vessels from the port of Bangor and burned or scuttled another six.

The War ended. New England stayed in the Union. In a few short years, Maine was preparing to enter that Union as a new state. Change was very much in the air. Harvey Loomis would guide First Church through some troubles and some new challenges.



**All Souls Gardeners
Coffee & Information
Wednesday, April 13, 2011
9:30 am – 11 am**

All Souls Gardeners will host a coffee and information gathering in the Hearth Room of the Baillie Building on April 13th. The gardeners meet at 8:30 am each Wednesday morning from mid-May until mid-October, for an hour of work, followed by an hour of fellowship. Gardening experience is not necessary—we're happy to teach! Contact Allison Keef at 848-2274 or keefa@hermon.net for more information.

Larry Diehl
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GEMMA E. COLPRITT, C.P.A.
Partner

Nurture Notes

“I want to be an Indian when I grow up,” Peter answered his grandfather’s question quite matter-of-factly. The five year old had pored over picture books of the Plains Indians and the Woodland tribes of Northeast America for months. His play included making bows and arrows, spring traps and as many things as his ability would let him. He was preparing himself for life as an Indian and he was shaken when I gently said, “Peter, you can’t be an Indian when you grow up.” He was shocked and then crushed and then angry. I spent days trying to explain the difference between having the gene pool that makes one a *bona fide* member of the First Nations people versus a career choice. It was a hard time for him. He had believed us when we said, “Dream big...you can be anything you want to be when you grow up.” And here we were already dashing his “anything”.

We have done a strange thing as American Christians. As we raise our children we really want them to excel at whatever they want to do and we tell them so. Now that has never seemed odd, until I heard an interesting comment on the radio yesterday which caused me to question our approach to our children. The speaker simply said, “Why are we not helping our children uncover their God-given gifts as a way to point to their future?” Why indeed? As caring parents, we have wanted to give our children a leg up in this very competitive world into which they have been born. We want to give them every benefit we believe will help them. We will go to extremes to provide for their education and development so that they will have every advantage to succeed at whatever they choose. It seldom occurs to us to ask if what they’ve chosen is what God intended for these little ones given to us to care for and nurture into adulthood. God wants them to use the gifts he’s given them to improve the world for all humanity. However, God has not intended our children to do whatever *they* want. Rather God has planted within their hearts the ability to do something that *he* wants. If we persist in encouraging our children by saying, “You can be anything you want to be when you grow up,” we may, in fact, be neglecting our God-given duty to guide our children into their destiny.

Part of the reason we don’t really think about our children’s future as God’s to direct is that we have been so thoroughly schooled in the culture’s split between secular and sacred; public and private; facts and values that we do not think that our children’s career choices are part of their spiritual lives. We have divided ourselves in two between the parts of our lives that are ‘public’ (like our career choices) lived out before others and our ‘private’ lives (like our religious practices) lived out in our homes. Because we do this, we do not think it incongruent to keep God’s demands of us separate from our careers. We often think they are not even connected...so we certainly don’t make the connection for our children.

North American Christians have been so well-trained by the culture to accept the public-private split that we simply don’t recognize that we are not thinking in holistic terms about our lives as faithful followers of Jesus Christ. I certainly was one of those who just accepted the public/private split along with everyone else. When it came to speaking to Peter about his life work choices, his father and I simply said, “Whatever you want to be when you grow up, you can be.” The translation of that into real life came down to a long period of time where Peter thought he might want to go into acting. He enjoyed it and had some success with acting during high school theater productions. Still, as he entered college the focus and the passion were not there. He struggled to figure out what his true life goals were. He did a little acting. He also pursued a basic EMT certification and he continued his life-long interest in the outdoors by fishing, trapping and hunting in the Maine woods. We stood by supporting, but not providing any substantive help in that discernment process.

It was not until Peter had returned to Honduras to work in the medical clinic that clarity began to emerge. Peter was watching a soccer game between All Souls kids and several Honduran teens when a smartly kicked ball flew off the field and directly onto the head of a little 3 year old boy. The child was knocked flat by the impact and clearly dazed. Peter immediately jumped to the boy's side. Carefully picking him up, Peter carried him to the clinic for the docs to check. He then stayed with the little fellow, sharing a sandwich with him and holding him on his lap when they returned to the soccer game.

Not long after that, Peter was again bemoaning his lack of clarity for a career direction. At that point, I had a heart to heart with him. I began by listing all the events from his childhood that demonstrated his compassion, his decisiveness in action, his on-going interest in things medical, his ability to be a calming presence in trying situations, his love of variety and his desire to do something good for others. I pointed out that the incident in Honduras with the boy demonstrated all those qualities. I then suggested that acting had almost nothing to do with this and that the medical field did. Emergency Medicine as a paramedic or the like seemed a far better fit for the gifts that God had given him. I'd love to tell you that he immediately said, "Thanks, Mom," but he didn't. He listened and then went on about his summer work without another word until shortly before the fall semester began. Only then did I discover that he had been pondering all these things in his heart and he had made up his mind. From that moment on, he "took off". He was focused and energized. He had indeed discovered his God-given task and it all fit.

I've begun to wonder, are we working at cross-purposes with God when we fail to help our children discover and develop the very gifts that God has given to them for the healing of the broken world? Instead of being God-directed, we encourage each other to be self-directed. We teach it to our children...we expect it ourselves...and our world just continues to suffer the neglect of those whom God equips to ease its suffering. As long as we believe that God-direction is for the privacy of our own homes and Sundays and Self-direction is for the public arena and the other six days of the week, we will miss the unity of purpose that our lives are meant to embrace. We are doomed to feeling split with divided, contradictory loyalties...a far cry from the abundant life Jesus promised those who follow him.

All our children's talents and skills, aptitudes and interests are pointing toward the underlying purpose of their lives given to them by their Maker at their very conception. Our task as parents and as a community of faith is to help the children entrusted to us to sort through their aspirations determining which ones are God-given and which ones have been inspired by cultural expectations. It is a worthy task and one that I pray we will embrace more conscientiously at All Souls. In truth, our world desperately needs the wide-awake love of Christians who know God has called them to be salt and light in all kinds of careers. Such an awareness begins right in our homes. May God give us the eyes to see his gifts to our children and may we be given the ability to speak persuasively of this to our young.

Yours in faith,

Renee U. Garrett

Minister of Christian Nurture



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HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS DINNER

Each year, Dr. Haddix and Mrs. Garrett have dinner with the graduating seniors while enjoying the conversation and fellowship before the end of the school year and graduation activities crank into gear. Graduating seniors will be getting a letter of invitation before long, but just for the calendar please save Wednesday, April 27, 5:30 PM. Seniors will be recognized at the worship service on Sunday, June 5.

MISSIONER DEADLINE SCHEDULE

April Missioner

Wednesday	March 9	To Church
Friday	March 11	To Editor
Wednesday	March 16	To Printer
Friday	March 18	Mailed out

THE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

The next meeting of the 2010-2011 season will be on Tuesday, April 5, at 12 Noon. a program on "Ideas for Your Summer Reading" will be presented by Nancy Smith. We welcome all church women to our meetings. Please bring a sandwich. Dessert is provided. We look forward to another year of fellowship.

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BREAKFAST GROUPS
Men's Breakfast Group
Governor's Restaurant on Broadway

The men will meet for breakfast and conversation on the first Friday of each month at **Governor's** on Broadway in Bangor at 7:00 AM. The Friday dates for the next few months are:
 March 4, April 1 and May 6.

Women's Fellowship Breakfast Group
 The group will gather again at 8:00 AM on Friday mornings March 18 and April 15 at Kev Lan on Broadway.



BUY A CUP OF COFFEE FOR YOUR FRIENDS!
 Coffee hour sponsors contribute \$10.00 per week to help defray coffee hour expenses...coffee, tea, sugar,

paper products, etc. A sign-up sheet is located on the bulletin board in the Hearth Room (near the church office). Thanks to recent sponsors:
March 27 - Rae and Jeff Wren

All Souls Website
www.allsoulsbangor.org

PLEASE CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW WOULD LIKE TO BE VISITED AT HOME OR IN THE HOSPITAL.



COMMUNION SCHEDULE
 Communion is celebrated during Sunday's 10:00 a.m. worship service on the first Sunday of October, December, February, April, June and August for all who attend worship. On the first Sunday of November, January, March, May and September, the Lord's Supper will be celebrated at 9:30 AM, in the Chapel.



WEEKLY INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Christians are urged-even commanded-to be at prayer. Each Thursday for half an hour at lunch time, you can respond to that urging and command in our Chapel, meeting others for intercessory prayer. This quiet time in the middle of the day, sharing concerns of the church, matters beyond the church, and taking time for personal prayer and meditation, has been a source of inspiration and hope for many. Please come from 12:30 PM to 1:00 PM each Thursday.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

The Sacrament of Baptism may be received on the following Sundays:
 March 13, 20 and 27
 April 10
 Please check with Mrs. Bryant or Mrs. Libhart in the Church Office 942-7354 for more detailed information.

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Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise. (Psalm 100:4)

(over the door as you enter)

