

“SEEKING THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

The words of the Lord’s Prayer ask that God give us his kingdom here on earth, as it is in heaven. Sometimes I pause with these words, asking what was Jesus asking for when he taught them to his disciples? And what images do you have, or your congregation agrees on, when you ask God to give his kingdom to us here on earth.

In teaching the Gospels and the subject of the Kingdom of God this year at Bedford Presbyterian Church I became immediately aware that Jesus was not asking for the restoration of the nation of Israel as a political power, nor was he expecting his disciples to think of Jerusalem as the city where people would come from the east, west, north and south as the prophets described. At times I feel the leaders of the church construct an image of the kingdom of God out of their own ideas and interpretations. Thus arises a image of the kingdom that sometimes has forgotten God’s call is for the moment we

are living, and not just a concept defined in human language.

The Lenten season begins with Ash Wednesday and the call to repentance. And if we take seriously our own contrition and seek renewal of our spirits, we are involved in life as people being transformed. If I take my own transformation seriously, I find I move from fear to hope, from anxiety to confidence, from a sense of being overwhelmed to a sense of clarity. This is evidence of the presence of God in saving ways. But our faith is not just personal. It is a faith in a living community that acknowledges those things that restrict the work of the Holy Spirit, and build places where we see the kingdom of God. Jesus’ ministry was confrontational. Sometimes it was a quiet word spoken, but in his death the real powers that oppose God’s kingdom became evident. And so we too quietly live the kingdom, and are challenged by powers in our world that seek to put to death the voices and spirits of many people.

To seek the kingdom of God and to have glimpses of that kingdom begins in personal prayer. The words ‘your kingdom come’ are most real when we realize we need the presence of God to live our lives. Meda Stamper in the Journal for Preachers (Lent 2011) wrote of our wilderness experience, and described Lent in these words.

“In the Lenten way, your whole life is reoriented away from collecting things or social status, from impressing human beings or satisfying your own need for achievement, and toward relationships and love, a reorientation that allows for transformation and hope in the face of tragedy and brokenness and sin.”

May we, who are members of the Presbytery of Northern New England, seek the kingdom of God, listen to our faith journeys, and build our sense of being called to invite others to the search for God’s kingdom through their trusting in his salvation known in Jesus the Christ.

Written by Rev. Tom Woodward



Nashua Presbyterian Church

on Sunday, February 13 elected the Rev. Sally Newhall as its new pastor . She began her duties on February 28.

There have been five previous pastors during the church's 25 year history.

Rev. Newhall, was ordained by the Presbytery of Boston in 1976, she has previously served a number of churches in New England, Virginia, New York and Indiana and had been a college chaplain. Most recently she was Interim Pastor of the Hartford Street Presbyterian Church, Natick, MA. She holds Masters degrees in both Divinity and Religious Studies.



The Rev. Sally Newhall and Robert Graybill chair of the Pastoral Nominating Committee

“Welcome to PNNE”

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