



The Guiding Light

Sunday Service 10:00 a.m.

Office hours: Mon. & Thurs., 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (please call to verify)
508-882-5537 * OakhamCC@verizon.net www.OakhamChurch.org
Rev. Timothy Hanley, Pastor

Message from Rev. Tim

Spring! A quote from Garrison Keilor

"Help me beat rugs," she said. Son Paul slumped along behind her upstairs and out to the backyard where he dumped the carpets in a heap. They hung them over the clothesline, and she got a strip of molding out of the garage, snapped it in two across her knee, and handed him one. "Beat," she said.

He gave the carpet two light taps and little puffs of dust came out. "No, like this," she said, and she started to whack it hard. Dust flew. He watched in amazement. Diane is small but she laid into the carpet as if it was the cause of all her trouble. In the carpet was not only filth and squalor but also ignorance, sloth, corruption, lack of ambition, everything that is dull and lifeless and corrosive to the spirit. She beat it senseless and moved on to the next, beating in the name of Christ and the apostles, in memory of generations of women who devoted themselves to scrubbing and scouring and purifying the world—heroic women who took up arms against filth and stagnation and against that dull, slack-jawed, slug-footed, limp wristed, shiftless, listless, leisurely, lazy, lead-butt, slow-leak attitude of loungers and loafers and laggards and lumps and lie-about who were all ready to accept filth as a way of life—she walloped the carpets with all her might.

Spring! We wait for it with great enthusiasm since for many of us it is the seasons that, more than any other, says we're ok...we will make it...life can be glorious...there is hope...God is good. Of course we do have to contend with the cleaning and, depending upon who is the designated overseer, this can be a weekend of shouts and threats (one year my mother

hid my baseball glove and my golf clubs) unceasing until the tasks are complete and, the ogre in charge signs off and puts the whip away for another year.

The following Monday morning my friends and I showed up at school with pail-water hands, sore knees and loss of hearing in one more ears from all the yelling. We all affirmed the fact that taking a weekend of play away from a kid during the school years is the pinnacle of parental corruption of power. When my 4 kids were still at home, I tried to replay this scenario on them, naming it one of the great family traditions given by God to all human kind. I gave them all "the look" hoping this would encourage cooperation. I saw myself in the role of supervisor, coffee in one hand, donut in the other, not actually doing any work. Then my wife gave me "the look" and I realized I was not the head ogre of the clan. Ah Spring! What memories.

Coming right after Easter, however gives a special spiritual uplift to the season. Renewal of body, heart, and mind are given the blooming beauty of nature as a back drop. Those places in your life that have gathered dust, caused pain, dragged down hope can be renewed by listening again to the promises of God. Those promises come not only in scripture, but also in the stories of people you may know or hear about, or even in your family's history. There was a grandfather who overcame an abusive childhood, and a desperate time during the Depression, to awaken to the desire to make amends for a coldness in most of his relationships and begin to be different, loving, interested in one grandson. It created a better appraisal of him as a father by three of his children and in final years love was reborn.

There is the story of an aunt who heard a man speak at her church about his struggle to overcome alcoholism. How his drinking had



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driven off his wife and two children, ended his career, and landed him living on skid row; a bum always half-starved and without hope until a young priest took up a street ministry and helped this lost soul to renewal. The aunt, at the time well into her sixties, gathered a couple of brave church friends and they made a once a month trip to that skid row, passing out sandwiches, and learning names so they could better communicate with people willing to talk. Did they turn some lives around? What do you think...or hope?

There was a minister who received a terminal diagnosis from his doctor. He told his congregation and the crisis for his people and himself produced an amazing book "Love and Death", and reading it has given thousands of people a spiritual strength and a fuller life to share with family and others. I first read this book one Spring and I will read it again now.

(Cont'd. on page 2)



The Guiding Light



The Oakham Congregational Church will once again this year hold a Vacation Bible School (VBS). This year's dates are August 7-11. The program will run Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Each day children will be taught a Bible story, learn new songs, make craft projects, play games, and be provided with a snack. The program is open to any child from preschool through grade 5. Any youth grade 6 and older are welcome to participate in the program as helpers. The program is ecumenical in nature, so any child is welcome regardless of their religious affiliation. A modest registration fee is asked, but certainly can be waived if necessary. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Heather Stewart at 508-867-2710. The registration form below can be filled out and sent to the church.

VBS is open to everyone.

Vacation Bible School

Aug. 7-11 9:00 a.m.—12 noon, daily

Name: _____

Age: _____ Grade in September _____

Address: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

In case of emergency contact:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Does your child have:

Any physical restrictions: _____ Food allergies: _____

Any other allergies we should be aware of: _____

Please mail this registration form with \$20.00, first child, (additional family members \$15.00) to cover the cost of the program to: **VBS, 4 Coldbrook Road, Unit 12, Oakham, MA 01068**. For any questions, concerns or for scholarship assistance, please call Heather Stewart at 508-867-2710 or the church office at 508-882-5537.

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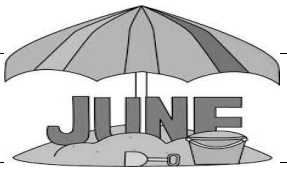
As I write this article, it is a warm, semi-sunny day. I am sitting in my car at Home Depot, waiting for my 2 1/2 year old granddaughter, asleep in the back seat to wake up so we can shop. There is green grass and bushes, a vivid assortment of plantings displayed in the garden center. I feel joyfully awake to the life God has given me.

May this Spring bring renewal and joy to you. In the cold or winter-like depths you may face in life, may the idea that Spring is here hold you together and inspire you to believe you can renew those parts of your life where now you have fear, or pain, or regret. The way to renewal is well known. Many, many have traveled on that path and God promises to guide you. You just need to take the first step and that may step may be as simple as a prayer. God will love you all the way.

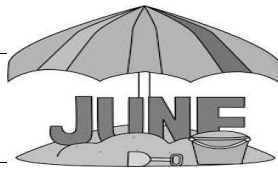
Rev. Tim


2017



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 Bible Study 7:00-8:00 p.m.	10 Knit, OCC 10:00 a.m. Dismas Dinner 6:00 p.m.	11	12	13
14 	15	16 Bible Study 7:00-8:00 p.m.	17 UFO Group 9:00 a.m.	18	19	20
21	22	23 Bible Study 7:00-8:00 p.m.	24	25 Knit, Library 6:30 p.m.	26	27
28	29 	30 Bible Study 7:00-8:00 p.m.	31			

2017



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Oakham Congregational Church
4 Coldbrook Road—Unit 12
Oakham, MA 01068

Local Postal Customer

OAKHAM, MA 01068

Food Pantry

We donate to the Barre Food Pantry and the Rutland Food Pantry. All contributions of food are graciously welcomed and can be dropped off here at the church. Monetary contributions can be made directly to the Barre Food Pantry by mailing them to: Barre Congregational Church, P.O.Box 936, Barre, MA 01005 or the Rutland Congregational Church, P.O. Box 484, Rutland, MA 01543

We are also continually in need of replenishing the stock of our local food pantry here at the church. These items are available to local folks who are in need. Please consider canned meats and non-perishable boxed milk along with your other donations. Checks to support this ministry can be made payable to the Oakham Congregational Church with a note in the memo stating: Pastor's Discretionary Fund.



Dismas Family Farm Dinners

On the second Wednesday of every month at 6:00 p.m., the church prepares a dinner for the Dismas Family Farm on Lincoln Road. If you would like to help with a meal, please contact the church at 508-882-5537.

Church Membership

The Oakham Congregational Church is a community of faith comprised of many members and friends. One need not be an official member of the church to participate in many of its activities or to worship. However, one does need to be a member to vote on matters concerning the church. If you are not an official member of the Oakham Congregational Church and would like to be one, please contact Rev. Tim or one of the Deacons.

Opportunity Fund Applications

The Opportunity Fund is accepting applications. The purpose of the Opportunity Fund is to provide financial assistance to individuals in the town of Oakham or within the Oakham Congregational Church Community to support an endeavor that provides spiritual, personal and/or vocational advancement for the applicant. The Outreach Committee acts as the Opportunity Fund Committee. Proceeds from the Annual Bob Tyck Memorial Golf Tournament support the Opportunity Fund. For applications call Linda at 508-882-5222.

UFO Group

The UFO group meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 9:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. They have started construction of the quilt to be raffled at the 2017 Holly and Harvest Fair. It is called Crosswalk (it is beautiful). Also, any UFO (Un-Finished prOjects) can be continued. New ideas and classes will be scheduled. Come join the group and bring your ideas.

