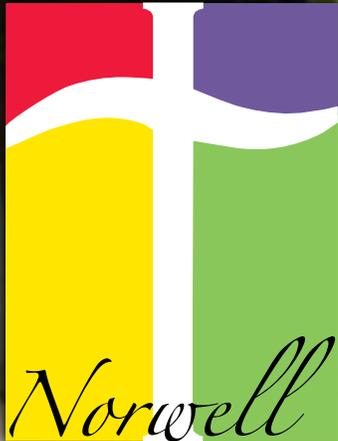


UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST



Norwell

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THE
Joy OF
A NEW DAY

page 4

Newstory
Stories of Transformation and Inspiration

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2 | HOW CAN THEY KEEP FROM SINGING? *Memory Lane Singers*
- 6 | BREAKFAST AT UCC: *Ministering to Individuals & Families with Developmental Disabilities*



Dear Friends,
We have grounded our worship this fall in an exploration of the Kingdom of God, working from our theme: Be the Church. Build the Kingdom. It is Among You.

More often than not, when Jesus speaks about the Kingdom of God, he does so through parable. He does so through telling stories. He tells all kinds of stories about the Kingdom of Heaven. He tells stories about a man who plants a single mustard seed in his field and a woman who kneads leaven into bread. He tells stories about a hidden treasure, a lost coin, a wedding banquet, and two sons sent to work a vineyard. In providing so many different illustrations of the Kingdom of God, Jesus opens us to many different ways of building the Kingdom.

Contained in these pages are stories that speak to different iterations of the Kingdom of God on earth. Reading through these pages, perhaps Jesus would say that the Kingdom of God is like a song sung by Memory Lane Singers that resurrects memories of love and joy in the heart of one suffering from Alzheimer's. Perhaps he would say that the Kingdom of God is found in each handwritten letter and financial contribution sent to Bon-Repos, Haiti, that allows one more child to slip their feet into a pair of shoes and walk to school. Perhaps Jesus would say that the Kingdom of God is revealed in clergy coming together to proclaim that the Church is not meant to be a reinforcement of societal norms, but that Church is meant to be comprised of people who fall outside of the "norm."

Perhaps Jesus would say that the Kingdom of God is in our very midst. Perhaps...

Thankful to Journey Among You,

Leanne

Reverend Leanne Walt is the settled pastor at the United Church of Christ in Norwell. She lives in Norwell with her husband, Bill, and their two children James (5 years) and Will (3 years).

HOW CAN THEY KEEP FROM

Singing?

by Betsy Brink

When Kay Spurr would visit Wilma Rae Goodhue's mother at Norwell Knoll nursing home (now The Royal) in 2000, she'd tell Kay she liked music. Kay noticed that the nursing home tended to play music people didn't recognize or respond to. She says, "Hearing that music made me feel that I wanted to play music that the folks could sing along with me." So she started by herself. "I'm not a great singer or pianist," Kay reflects, "and I told Karen Harvey I felt like crying every time I left the nursing home. Karen said, 'ask other people to join you.'" And that's how Memory Lane Singers was born.

Kay recalls that the group had three or four core people to start with, "then it just seemed to catch on." Judy Armstrong was her right-hand person at the beginning, along with Althea Dickman and Lois Arnold—all members of UCC Norwell. "We started at The Royal and a few years later added Life Care Center in Scituate. Later on, UCC member Dick Caldwell was working at Cardigan in Scituate part time and told us the residents there would enjoy us, so we picked up our third gig."

Today the all-volunteer group has approximately 30 people actively involved, with 17 to 20 showing up at 2 pm performances on three Mondays a month. Ten of the 30 are UCC members not in the UCC

Norwell choir, and 13 of the 30 are from surrounding communities and not connected with the church. Kay's husband Jack, who joined the group in 2008 and plays guitar, says, "Our mission fits with the church's efforts to reach out to the local community." He continues, "It's a great group, with tremendous energy focused on getting the residents to sing with us and have a good time."



Laughing and practicing with pianist Jeanette Simmons

Jack sets the scene for any given gig. "We arrive hauling along three bags of song books, one or two guitars, a ukulele, tambourines, and a music stand. Everyone muscles all the gear in, and we get started. Jeanette Simmons plays the piano. We do thirty songs or so and fill the hour." The group starts the program with hymns, which include lively songs to get the residents going—like "This Little Light of Mine" and

"Ain't It Grand To Be A Christian." But most of the program consists of popular tunes from various eras, show tunes, and patriotic music. During baseball season, they sing "Take Me Out To The Ballgame" and "Sweet Caroline." During the month of December, the program is all Christmas and seasonal music.

Kay remembers there was a woman at Cardigan who appeared to be very ill and had been coming to performances for many years but never sang. During a recent performance, Kay says, "she came

"Music brings people together — not just from our church, but from all around the community."

"Many people say, 'you're our favorite—please come back!'"

And the group's reach is growing as it responds to requests from the Norwell Council on Aging and South Shore Peer Recovery and performed in the Friendship Home Follies at Thayer Academy, to name a few. The group is already booked for the fall, and Kay is reaching out to book gigs for January through June. After an annual party, the Singers take a break in July and August. New singers are always welcome – no particular skill required, just enthusiasm for singing.



The Memory Lane Singers perform "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" at the Friendship Home Follies

Jack says, "Music brings people together—not just from our church, but from all around the community. We visit with the folks in the nursing homes afterward; and when we leave, we really feel like we've made somebody's day. We don't rehearse, and we let people know that. We flub through new songs from time to time, but we just do it again until we get it right. Most people don't hear the mistakes, they're just thinking about singing and how good the music makes them feel."

to life. I'm not sure why." She and Jack were both delighted to notice she was clapping and singing to all the songs.

The group takes audience requests, like "Blue Suede Shoes" from a woman sitting in the front row as the group wrapped up a recent performance at Life Care. They immediately built that piece and others from the 50s and 60s into Memory Lane's repertoire.

Jack noticed at Cardigan there was a fellow always there with his wife, sitting together at the side of

the room. She was dealing with dementia but would mouth some of the words. Jack observes, "People who cannot tell you their names will sing songs they remember from years ago."

Sue Jevne's dog Teddy joins the group at every performance. "He sits on the residents' laps and runs around—everyone loves Teddy," says Kay. "We sing 'How Much Is That Doggie In The Window' in Teddy's honor."

Kay is struck by how important music is to all people. She notes,

MEMORY LANE SINGERS

Interested in joining? New members are welcome—no particular skill required, just enthusiasm for singing.

Please contact Kay Spurr at kspurr@comcast.net or call the Church Office at 781-659-2887.

THE JOY

OF A NEW DAY

interview by Judy Heitzman

Beautiful smiles on young faces beam from the wall of framed photographs that greet all visitors to the home of Cathy, John, and Annie Huycke. These “wonderful girls,” as they are lovingly referred to by Cathy, include Leetchmie, Medjine and Chrislove of Haiti; Ranjana of India; Ester, Hadija and Mickness of Tanzania; Yamileth of Peru; and, of course, Annie of Hanover, Massachusetts.

Long involved with child sponsorship through Compassion International, the Huyckes have for the past four years also been sponsoring young girls through *Jou Nouvo*, Haitian Creole for “New Day.”

This charity is centered in Bon-Repos, a community of 10,000 located twelve kilometers west of Port-au-Prince. It has a local connection, having been founded by Kerline Tofuri, a Haitian-American neighbor of the Huyckes who grew up in Bon-Repos and was moved to make a difference as an earthquake, multiple hurricanes, and political instability have challenged the area which was once an agricultural center.

Both Compassion International and *Jou Nouvo* were brought to the Huyckes’ attention through



presentations made here at UCC Norwell. After each presentation John and Cathy were inspired to get involved by actively sponsoring children, traveling to meet them and their families, writing and texting and giving gifts. One appeal of *Jou Nouvo* is, according to Cathy, that “the organization is small so everything can be quite personal.” She remarks that “Kerline knows the families very well... it is easy to build a rapport.”

Jou Nouvo’s mission is to help the extreme poor in Bon-Repos attain independence and whole life improvement through education while retaining the spirit of Haitian culture. The organization fosters economic stability through micro finance, literacy through child sponsorship, and adult reading and writing classes. They also sponsor health instruction and access to a

medical clinic in Terre Noir, Haiti, a nearby suburb.

Jou Nouvo “brings together supporters from the United States and experienced community leaders

“*Life can be hard for girls. They have a tougher time in countries of real poverty.*”

in Haiti to exchange ideas and work together to produce a venue to teach fundamental literacy skills to adults,” according to their website. They work together with *Institution Mixte Alexandre Dumas* and *Les Petits Rossignols*, private schools that have successfully delivered

kindergarten, fundamental, and secondary education, nutrition programs, and other basic assistance to the struggling families of Bon-Repos.

Sponsoring a child can have an enormous impact not only on that child, but also on the child's family, her community, and the sponsors themselves. Annie was six years old when the Huyckes first began sponsoring young girls through Compassion International, and has made multiple trips to visit the girls. In her letters to Santa, Annie would write, "Would you please share my gifts with my sisters?" The Huyckes are happy that Annie, now a high school senior, has been exposed to all of these places, and to her sisters — people important to her — in foreign places.

A *Jou Nouvo* donation of \$30 a month provides nutritional supplements to malnourished children, free medical care for the entire family, school tuition if needed, food, shoes, and school supplies. A long term goal of Kerline's is to build a community center on property in Bon-Repos that her family owns. *Jou Nouvo* hopes to promote and develop sustainable opportunities for families and advocate for a healthier environment.

The Huyckes observe that the girls they sponsor in Haiti are proud of their home and their country. One by one, sponsorships help people get out of poverty, become self-sufficient, and give back to the community. "Life," Cathy shares, "can be hard for girls. They have a tougher time in countries of real poverty."



Annie Huycke with one of her many "sisters" in Bon-Repos, Haiti.

LEARN MORE ABOUT *JOU NOUVO*

Jou Nouvo is focused on advocating for "equal access to a good education" for the families we serve through our child sponsorship and adult literacy programs in Bon-Repos, Haiti. We believe that education at any level, is an important step forward out of poverty for each child and adult, in particular all the women and girls in our programs.

To inquire about sponsorship, to volunteer, to donate, or to learn more about *Jou Nouvo*, please visit www.jounouvo.org.

 **Jou Nouvo - New Day**
"Kreye Chemen lavi Miyò - Creating Pathways for a Better Life"



Breakfast @ UCCN

MINISTERING TO INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

by Janet Johnson

On a cool, rainy morning this past April, South Shore clergy arrived at UCC Norwell to attend a forum on ministering to individuals and families with developmental disabilities. Guests gathered to enjoy an early breakfast hosted by a newly forming group of church members, convened by Wilma Goodhue, committed to promoting the importance of intentionally including people with developmental disabilities in the full life of faith communities. The breakfast was funded by a grant from the UCC Norwell Community Engagement Fund.

We all thrive in community with others — enjoying friendships and support beyond our daily work and activities. People with developmental disabilities are no different.

The purpose of the forum was to reveal a deeper understanding of the difficulties faced by families of children with disabilities. As people of faith, it is our privilege and our responsibility to develop and expand

opportunities for engagement with one another and with God.

Among the speakers invited to share their experiences was Emily Colson, noted speaker and author of *Dancing with Max*. Emily talked about both the joys and the challenges she encountered while being a single parent and raising her son, Max, who has autism. She spoke of her desire to attend church when Max was growing up, but found it impossible

due to his often-disruptive behavior. Emily also shared the heart warming news that her church, North River Community Church of Pembroke, never gave up trying to welcome Max in a way that would work for him. The ingenuity shared by a loving church community enabled Max and Emily to feel valued and loved and to know that they truly belonged! This welcoming created a feeling of inclusiveness within the hearts of a loving church family and enriched everyone's lives.



J.R. Foley speaks to the breakfast crowd about his experiences in his church community, and how that has had a positive impact on his life.

State Senator Patrick O'Connor (R-Weymouth), was invited to share his thoughts about how the special needs community is being served in Massachusetts. He reinforced his ongoing commitment to serve and advocate for people with disabilities and confirmed that his door is always open to his constituents.

Two participants at Friendship Home in Norwell, Martha Willson and J.R. Foley, who attend its social and work-related programs, spoke of how the acceptance and welcoming in their church communities has had a positive impact on their lives.

Their desire, like those of so many people with special needs, is to be fully contributing members of the communities in which they belong. Focusing on abilities rather than challenges allows people to learn from the gifts that they share.

Jack Spurr, UCC Norwell member, South Shore business leader, and long-time Chairman of the Friendship Home Board of Directors, shared how he became involved with people with disabilities many years ago. Jack is now a proud grandparent of five children, one of whom has Asperger's syndrome and is legally blind. Jack shared how his relationship with people of differing abilities has been powerfully

“We all thrive in community with others — enjoying friendships and support beyond our daily work and activities. People with developmental disabilities are no different.”

meaningful and has added a special dimension to his life.

The final speaker was Mary Kate Gallagher, a 2017 graduate of Notre Dame Academy. At age 11, she attended a Friendship Home Ice Cream Social and became friends with Sophie, a girl her age who has autism. Mary Kate was very moved and said to her mom, “We have to



do something for Sophie.” Within a year, Mary Kate and her mom, along with two dear friends, started the Friendship Home Middle School program — now in its sixth year. Mary Kate was a shining example of how one young person can make an incredible difference!

Toward the end of the morning's program, there was a time of open sharing among the guests. Questions, personal experiences, and future insights about moving forward were explored. As the close of the breakfast forum drew near, it was clear to all that faith communities have a unique opportunity to be places of welcome and that we are called by our faith to embody God's radical hospitality. The group

who organized this event plans to hold a follow-up meeting, where clergy and lay leaders will be able to share challenges, experiences, and best practices around ministering to individuals with developmental disabilities.

As the guests departed, the rain had abated and the morning chill was gone — the sun was shining — a very good sign for the future!

For anyone wishing additional information about the program or to participate in the ministry of inclusion for people with developmental disabilities at UCC Norwell, please contact Wilma Goodhue at 781-659-7233 or Reverend Leanne Walt.

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT FRIENDSHIP HOME...

Friendship Home (located behind UCC Norwell) was founded by 2 mothers of adults with developmental disabilities. This beautiful “Home with a Heart” provides respite and support services for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Programs include overnight respite, vocational and social recreational programs, and individual support services provided by a dedicated and caring staff. To volunteer, donate to Friendship Home, or learn more about their programs, visit www.friendshiphome.net.



Friendship Home, Inc.

LOOKING AT THIS NEWSLETTER IN PRINT (NOT ONLINE?)

The web links below will (clearly!) not work, but you can view the newsletter (and past issues) online at www.uccnorwell.org to access all of the live links.

INTERNET LINKS FOR THIS ISSUE:

- 2 | Like to email **Leanne Walt**?: [CLICK HERE](#) to email Leanne at lswalt@uccnorwell.org.
- 2 | Like to learn more about **Memory Lane Singers**?: [CLICK HERE](#) to email the Church Office.
- 4 | Like to learn more about the **Jou Nouvo**?: [CLICK HERE](#) to visit their website.
- 7 | Like to learn more about **Friendship Home**?: [CLICK HERE](#) to visit their website.



Speakers at the April Clergy Breakfast at UCC Norwell included Friendship Home Chair Jack Spurr, Emily Colson, Martha Wilson, Mary Kate Gallagher, J.R. Foley, Rev. Leanne Walt, and State Senator Patrick O'Connor.