

# HILLTOPPER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017



Arlington Street UMC  
63 Arlington Street  
Nashua, NH 03060  
Rev. Bruce Bradshaw, Pastor  
Pastor's Cell: (603) 546-8294

## **Against Serving Our Neighbors, There is No Law**

Bruce Bradshaw

The recent legislative interests in the First Amendment Defense Act and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act have called attention to various expressions of religious freedom in our larger society. The apparent purpose of these Acts is to protect people from legal obligations that offend their moral convictions or religious beliefs.

While most Christians agree that moral convictions should not be subject to civil laws, they are fraught with moral hazards, reminding me that the road to eternal condemnation is often paved with good intentions. When legislators attempt to enact laws to protect the church, they are vulnerable to corrupting some major tenets of our faith.

The need for these laws gained national attention when service providers, such as caterers and bakers, refused to serve same-gender weddings. However, they raised questions about whether medical practitioners could exercise their rights to not treat people whose behavior is morally offensive.

Unfortunately, the RFRA and FADA are becoming the face of religious discourse in our society, giving an impression that our faith includes protecting people who believe that some of our society's moral standards violate Christian beliefs. However, our faith is not about reducing profound moral decisions to nuanced legal interpretations. Jesus appealed to the moral integrity of his followers, trusting them to discern what is pleasing to God.

When religious leaders attempted to condemn a woman for adultery, Jesus agreed they were legally correct, but he appealed to their moral integrity, leading them to conclude they were not worthy of condemning her. When Jesus addressed a law that required carrying the baggage of a soldier one mile, he instructed his followers to walk a second mile. The first mile was a legal obligation; the second mile was an exercise of moral freedom to serve an adversary.

Even if we believe some laws, customs or moral standards of our society offend our beliefs, we should muster the moral integrity to walk the second mile, serving people who offend our moral convictions, not because of legal obligation, but to exercise the moral freedom to serve those we might consider adversaries — or even to love our enemies, as Jesus taught.

Our response to the RFRA and FADA, or similar legislation, should be to muster the moral humility to exercise the freedom to practice the teachings of Jesus. The greatest of these is to love God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We have no reason to believe that anyone is an exception to this teaching, and we don't need laws to protect us from fulfilling it. The laws might protect us from following Jesus.

### **Bible Studies at ASUMC**

*Monday evening Bible study*, Fellowship Hall, 6:30-8:00 PM.

*Saturday morning Bible Study*, parsonage, 8:30-10:00AM

Please call Bruce at 603-546-8294 if you have any questions.

## Happy New Year

It is hard to believe that the Christmas season has already gone by and we are well into winter weather! Much is said and written about the commercial aspect of Christmas overshadowing the “reason for the season”. We can move past this by reflecting on the true gifts of Christmas – health, happiness, family, friends and the spiritual fulfillment of our church’s mission. As we look back at 2016, we should be thankful for the many gifts that ASUMC has received through various means. Thanks to the hard work of our members running the suppers and Holly Town Fair, managing overall expenses, and some very generous personal giving, we were able to pay 100% of our conference obligations! This is the first time that we were able to do this in several years. The conference programs that often are short-changed, but that we were able to support in full for 2016 include:

World Service Missions  
New England Missions  
Ministerial Support

We should rejoice in the giving of these gifts – it is truly a reason to look ahead to a Happy New Year! As we prepare the budget for 2017, we know we will face challenges, but we also know that God’s hand is in this. We are thankful to all of you for your faithful support in all forms.

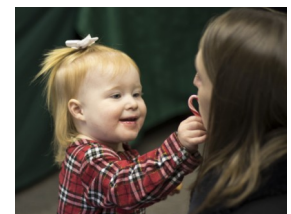
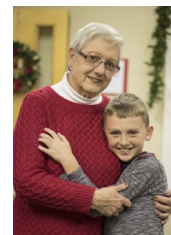
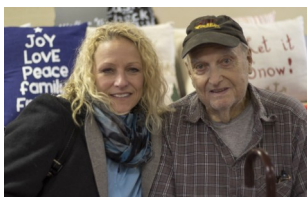
Bob Larmouth for the Finance Committee

## HOLLY TOWN FAIR 2016

The Holly Town Fair 2016 ~ another success! We had a really nice variety of vendors and a steady stream of people all day. It is so nice to see some familiar faces of customers that come back to see us every year. There are so many people to thank: all who helped with the prep nights, and the donations for those prep nights, all who helped with the delicious luncheon, everyone who donated scrumptious baked goods, all the talented people who handcrafted beautiful gifts to sell, everyone who helped set up, volunteered their time, and helped tear down and clean up. The Holly Town Fair committee appreciates all the help! The wreath sale was very successful and we hope to do that again in 2017. We would appreciate any feedback that you may have.

Happy New Year!

Sue Labrie  
Susan Stafford  
Sarah MacSeain



*Photos courtesy of Deb Sherwood*

# January 2017

**Sun      Mon      Tue      Wed      Thu      Fri      Sat**

<b>1</b> 10:00am Sunday School/ Communion	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 8:30-10am- Bible Study, Parsonage; AA 8pm
<b>8</b> 10:00am Sunday School/ Worship	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 8:30-10am- Bible Study, Parsonage; AA 8pm
<b>15</b> 10:00am Sunday School/ Worship	<b>16</b> 6:30-8:00 pm Bible Study, Fellowship Hall	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 4:15-6:30pm- Nashua Soup Kitchen	<b>21</b> 8:30-10am- Bible Study, Parsonage; AA 8pm
<b>22</b> 10:00am Sunday School/ Worship	<b>23</b> 6:30-8:00 pm Bible Study, Fellowship Hall	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 8:30-10am- Bible Study, Parsonage; AA 8pm
<b>29</b> 10:00am Sunday School/ Worship	<b>30</b> 6:30-8:00 pm Bible Study, Fellowship Hall	<b>31</b>	<div data-bbox="824 1661 1276 1944" data-label="Text"> <p><i>The mission of the United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.</i></p> </div>			

# February 2017

Sun      Mon      Tue      Wed      Thu      Fri      Sat

			1	2	3	4 8:30-10am- Bible Study, Parsonage; AA 8pm
5 10:00am Sunday School/ Communion	6	7 6:30-8:00 pm – Bible Study, F. Hall	8 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal	9	10	11 8:30-10am- Bible Study, Parsonage; AA 8pm
12 10:00am Sunday School/ Worship	13	14 6:30-8:00 pm – Bible Study, F. Hall	15	16	17 4:15-6:30pm- Nashua Soup Kitchen	18 8:30-10am- Bible Study, Parsonage; AA 8pm
19 10:00am Sunday School/ Worship	20	21 6:30-8:00 pm – Bible Study, F. Hall	22 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal	23	24	25 8:30-10am- Bible Study, Parsonage; AA 8pm
26 10:00am Sunday School/ Worship	27	28 6:30-8:00 pm – Bible Study, F. Hall		**Ash Wednesday Service at ASUMC, March 1, 7:00pm	**Corned Beef & Cabbage Supper Sat, March 18 4:30-6:00pm	