

Hilltopper Spring 2020



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Humility: The Virtue of Moral Confidence

Bruce Bradshaw

Lent is the season of humility. The Bible is full of references to this virtue, encouraging us to be humble, but it does not define the term, leaving me with the task of developing a good definition or an effective illustration of it.

However, while I am sitting here, pondering the meaning of humility, the fear of the coronavirus is causing our global society to shake; stock markets around the world to hemorrhage; just this week, about four trillion dollars of value evaporated from the U.S. economy because of stock losses.

Some news commentators are using the word “humble” to describe the losses from a viral pandemic, causing me to consider that the loss of \$4 trillion is equivalent to every employee in our nation losing about \$25,000, or every resident losing about \$13,000. The financial losses are staggering, and viral pandemics can have devastating consequences, but are they humbling?

Let's hope so. Humility is about having levels of moral confidence that empower us to navigate our life situations with sober estimates of our moral capabilities and vulnerabilities, which is about knowing what we can and cannot do as well as knowing what we should and should not do.

The lack of humility, which often produces arrogance and fear, can cause considerable moral damage; it can influence us to deny the seriousness of an issue or to believe that we do not have the moral capacity to cope with it. Adam and Eve lost their humility when they ate the forbidden fruit, thinking they could become like God. Likewise, the Babylonians, who enslaved the Hebrew people, thought they could build a tower to heaven. Neither Adam and Eve nor the Babylonians had the humility to consider the meanings of what they were doing.

Moral confidence, a key ingredient of humility, is engaging the risks of meeting the challenges of life abstemiously, knowing the seriousness of what we are doing, whether we are resisting temptation or building towers to heaven. By contrasting humility with arrogance and fear, we might consider that arrogant people will build the towers of life, believing the risks of failure do not apply to them. In contrast, fearful people do not think they are capable of managing the risks. However, humble people develop the moral confidence to assess and manage the risks.

The tasks of developing humility are formidable, and we need to be intentional about rising to them, which is why we journey on the path of dust and ashes during Lent. The ashes give us a sense of who we are, where we are going, and the hope that lies beyond us, the hope of the resurrected Christ. The question is whether we have the humility to embrace that hope.

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ASUMC Needs You!!

Bruce Bradshaw

Since I announced that I will retire from the United Methodist Church in June, a few people have asked about the future of ASUMC.

Of course, outgoing pastors do not have influence on the future of a congregation, but I will say that congregations, like other social institutions, exist according to the will of the people, expressed by how much value enough people place on them.

The central word in that sentence is “enough;” congregations depend on enough people investing enough time and money in them. Moe’s article, on page 3, indicates that ASUMC has enough resources to navigate a future, but the resources are not abundant.

I am assuming that ASUMC, like most congregations, conforms to “Pareto’s Law,” which says about 80 percent of the support, in terms of time and money, comes from 20 percent of the people; it is also known as the 80/20 principle, and it serves most congregations well, but ASUMC might have to defy Pareto. The future of ASUMC might require that 80 percent of the congregation to give close to 100 percent of the time and money that are necessary to sustain it.

Pareto was concerned about financial support, but, for congregations, financial support, while essential, is secondary to spiritual commitment, and it has two parts. The first part is a commitment is to Jesus Christ; the second a commitment to the Church of Jesus Christ. Many people seem to think we can have one without the other, but I am convinced that we need to hold both of them together: We cannot be committed to a congregation unless we are committed to Christ and a commitment to Christ needs to be substantiated by participation in a congregation. Our commitments to Christ and to the church define whether we believe any congregation is worth our time and money.

Commitments are easier to make than they are to maintain, especially because we have so many other demands that influence us to say: “I am committed to the congregation, but I just don’t have time for it.”

The congregation needs you.

Announcements

Bible Study – Saturday mornings in the parsonage, 8:30-10:00 A.M. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter – Next opportunity to volunteer will be on March 20, 4:15-6:30 PM. Contact Heather Davis at harrihc6@yahoo.com for more information.

U.M.ARMY Mission Trip, July 12-18, 2020 - The United Methodist Action Reach-out Mission by Youth (U.M. ARMY) has been providing mission opportunities for youth and adults for 40 years. During the week of July 12-18, the participants will stay at St. John’s UMC, Dover, NH and will be partnering with several other UM churches to work in the Dover community doing projects, such as handicap access ramps, step and stair repair, handrail installation, painting, yard work and a variety of other projects. The cost per person, \$300.00, will be paid by the church. If you are interested in participating, please contact James Davis for more information. (603-440-9731 or clmbhunter@hotmail.com)

Upcoming Public Suppers

4:30-6:00 PM

~~March 21: Corned beef and cabbage, boiled potato, turnips and carrots~~—Cancelled

April 27: Roast pork with potato, carrots, green beans and applesauce

May 18: Roast beef with mashed potato, carrots and string beans

Financial Update

The following information is designed to give the recipients of the Hilltopper an insight into the status of the financials of the church. The information will be broken down into several areas to include the 2019 Budget and Actual cash expenditures, and the 2020 Budget for expenditures, the 2019 church receipts from estimates of giving, donations, church suppers, Holly Town Fair etc. (excluding bequests, grants, and Trustee funds).

2019 and 2020 Church Budget:

Local Church Expenses -	2019 Budget \$4,600	2019 Actual \$4,153
	2020 Budget \$4,050	
Conference Expenses (not generally paid) -	2019 Budget \$24,159	2019 Actual \$6,141
	2020 Budget \$24,541	
Pastor's Comp. -	2019 Budget \$34,064	2019 Actual \$32,201
	2020 Budget \$34,064 (subject to change)	
Other Salaries -	2019 Budget \$18,275	2019 Actual \$12,530
	2020 Budget \$18,275	
Parsonage Exp. -	2019 Budget \$4,372	2019 Actual \$4,462
	2020 Budget \$4,492	
Church Exp. -	2019 Budget \$11,250	2019 Actual \$10,338
	2020 Budget \$10,700	
Trustees -	2019 Budget \$700	2019 Actual \$0
	2020 Budget \$700	

Church Receipts:

2019 Actual \$64,391 (excludes bequests, grants and Trustee funds)

Estimates of Giving:

2019 - \$41,160 (13)

2020 - \$36,084 (14)

This is a lot of information to digest, but I believe having this information allows you to understand the situation that the church finds itself in. Year after year the church continues to get by due to the generosity of our friends/members, but unfortunately we need more members to become engaged in the support of the church. The church is not in a mode of sustainability as you may have determined from the information provided. We need more involvement in supporting the church with our presents and presence.

The church budget for 2020 will more than likely be revised, particularly in the area of the Pastor compensation, as we will more than likely be receiving a ½ time pastor. This may also result in some savings regarding the parsonage as we are not required to house a ½ time pastor in the parsonage.

My hope is that we can increase participation in the church's support and in the Sunday services throughout this year. My prayer is that this message is well received, and that we reap the benefits of member involvement in the life of the church.

God Bless,
Maurice Cloutier, Finance Chair



Holy Week and Easter Celebrations

Palm Sunday, April 5, 10:00 AM, ASUMC

Maundy Thursday, April 9, 7:00 PM, ASUMC

Sunrise Easter Service, April 12, 6:30 AM

Evergreen Cemetery, 391 Main Street, Nashua

Easter Sunday Service

April 12, 10:00 AM, ASUMC

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