**Pastor Veronica shares this message:**

**Courage and Faith**    by W. Paul Jones

Most theologians agree that the "feel" of existence is anxiety. Acknowledged or not, to be finite is in each moment to dangle over the abyss of nothingness. This is frightening. We try to escape by projecting our anxiety onto persons or groups we can subjugate or destroy. Escape is never permanent. There is always something to trigger our primal insecurity. When paranoia regarding others is unsuccessful, our blame is projected inward into neurosis as an aversion to one's self. On and on goes the vicious circle.

This is why courage, the only adequate resolution of our primal predicament, is the road less taken. Courage requires a steadfast, honest gaze at the human condition, but we are paralyzed by the thought of doing it alone. Isolated we come into the world; and isolated we will leave. We experience this specter of primal loneliness either as the fear of rejection (the isolation of not belonging) or as the fear of ridicule (the isolation of not measuring up). Either way, this forces us to try to impress or please others.

Courage can be awakened only when we experience our dilemma as rooted neither in others nor ourselves, but in the fabric of existence itself. This is why faith is the only adequate courage—it enables us to resist self-deception and live in the full face of life as tragic. Christian courage is the treasure always contained in earthen vessels: "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus..." (1 Cor. NRSV).

Faith is the courage to act as if we were not cosmically alone. But such courage is not of our own making, not some grim, lip-biting obstinacy. Rather, it is rooted in a trusting heart, a heart confident that in Christ, God so enters the struggle of life with death that the ongoing Divine/human crucifixion can be lived under the hope of resurrection.

Christian courage is the heart of faith experienced as trust. Courage and encourage are related words, a fact revealed when my daughter, frightened to take her first dive called out, "Courage me, Daddy." I made the only response she needed: "It's okay, I'm here with you." So Paul characterizes as courage: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Rom. 8:35, RSV). No one and nothing! Why not? Because "I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39, RSV). This is the faith that bequeaths a courage that can face all things. God and all of us are in it together.

From[Weavings: A Journal of the Christian Spiritual Life](https://t.e2ma.net/click/vasjo/fus0vc/34cusd), Vol. XII, No. 3 (May/June 1997) (Nashville, TN: The Upper Room,1997), 12-13.

**Upcoming Events**

* **Mason Church Annual Meeting Feb 5th 11:30** We will have soup, bread, and more, with our coffee, and follow it with our very efficient Annual Meeting! Please come if you can.
* **Community Supper February 9 5:30 to 7pm**  Good company, warm Fellowship Hall, and of course good food. Know of a neighbor who has just moved in? Invite them to dinner—the easy way! And, offer your help, extra hands are always needed. Washing dishes, picking up the chairs, or preparation. We always meet the following Thursday at 7pm for planning the next supper.
* **Nashua Soup Kitchen, February 11** We will meet at church at 3:00pm. This isa mission of love and energy, as we help prepare and serve the evening meal. To help call Kathy Chapman 878-4993.



**Veronica’s installation and celebration is on February 12th**  There will be a special service of installation at 3pm, and we will have refreshments afterwards. Please come to help celebrate this event.

* **Conversations with Women Friday, February 17 2pm to 4pm**  This is a casual group of local community women who will have coffee/tea and more as they converse. No particular agenda has been developed but enjoy the conversation. Come, share, and float your own ideas!
* **Living Room Coffee House** **February 18th**. Doors open at 6:30, Music begins at 7. There are warm drinks, food, and music lovers: just mix and enjoy. Featuring Mike Ordway Mike, a resident of Mason, has been performing since the age of 16 playing guitar and singing. While playing many different genres in many musical groups, he has developed a love of diverse musical styles.Now, in 2016, Mike performs solo with his acoustic guitar, while embracing many of today’s latest electronic effects. Using guitar looping, a now-a- day popular on-stage recording system, Mike can record himself and then play other musical parts over that recording. This results in a “full-band” sound of music, where Mike can add drums, bass guitar and even lead guitar over his live-recorded loops. From rock to blues, country to pop, Mike fills up a stage with a full sound that will surprise the unsuspecting listener.
* **Lending Library Books and Music** Notice the fine bookshelf in Fellowship Hall that has books for lending—all nicely organized, and alphabetized by a church angel. Steve Tamulonis has contributed some CDs for lending/listening. Please sign them out, and return in a reasonable time. Enjoy this mission/blessing.
* **Prayer shawls have been flying from the church!**  Spend some dark hours of winter by joining the knitters of Mason Church in prayerful knitting. Let us know if you need yarn or pattern.

If you know someone who needs the warmth and prayers of a shawl please contact: Susan Suokko at Usercat2@comcast.net or 941-920-0270 or Michelle Scott 878-1680



* **Reverend Veronica Don** Pastor Veronica’s husband, Reverend Richard Don died on Dec 26 in a car accident in Mt Dora, FL. We extend our sympathies to Rev. Veronica and her family. Our prayers and thoughts continue to be with her during this time of grieving. Her address is: 135 Elm St. #64, Milford, NH 03055 H# 213-6368 or c 554-0170 or email: Revpalvwd50@aol.com
* **Curt Dunn** and Karin Eisenhaure. Keep them in your thoughts and prayers. Some of these days with ice and snow are such a challenge, yet they appear each Sunday for worship and song!
* **Gisela Millbrandt** Please keep the family of Dotsie Millbrandt in prayer. Wolfgang died on Nov. 26. And his mother who lives here in Mason for the past few years, died January 31. Dotsie says “..she died peacefully while knitting a sweater.” Email Dotsie with condolences and kind thoughts. She will let us know how else we can assist her. Dotsie24@gmail.com or 1322 Starch Mill Rd, Mason, NH 03048.
* **Joe and Jennie Walsh** and Joshua, Jonathan and Joseph are always in our hearts and thoughts. Call, write, or email them with your news! Their address is: 50 Clinton Ave, Chelmsford, MA 01824 978-256-6700 Jwalsh13197@gmail.com (NOTE: new email for Jennie)
* **Cindy Tibbetts**  Cindy and Jim are in Milford, but also in our thoughts! She may need rides to church when Jim or her parents can’t do this. Give Cindy a call at 809-2036. New Address: Cahill Place, 486 Nashua St. Milford 03055
* **Laila Washburn**  We had such fun going caroling at Laila’s house on Dec 18th. She was very happy to see everyone. Laila Washburn, c/o Brett Kivela, 25 Will Road, New Ipswich 03071. Although visitors are welcome from 10am to 7pm, it is good to call first. 878-3065
* **Gretchen Brown** has limited mobility these days, and loves visitors. You can call ahead 878-1481 or stop by. Gretchen is on a special diet in an effort to alleviate her chronic pain. It is gluten free, and sugar free. Please call Michelle if you need help with cooking ideas or details 878-1680 or miscott39@gmail.com
* **Do you know someone who needs spiritual support or other support, of the pastor and deacons?** Please call, your church family may be able to help. Leave a confidential message for Pastor Veronica Don at 603-878-1684 or on her personal phone at 603-213-6368.

**Our Sustainability Mission:**    Mason Conservation Committee provides special blue plastic bags for roadside trash collection which you can leave on the side of the road for town pickup. Pick up the blue bags at Charlie’s Auto Shop on Jackson Rd, or we will have a supply at church. Please put recyclable items into a separate bag you can take to the Wilton Recycling Center, or put them into our recycling bins in our church kitchen. . **Please bring only paper products (no Styrofoam) for church events, avoid plastic water bottles, and use the dishware/dishwasher whenever you can. Recycle paper, cardboard, #1 plastics, and milk bottle plastic, as well as all glass and cans. Large ‘trash’ cans for these are in the kitchen.**

Any news items, comments, or things you would like to share: contact Michelle at 878-1680 or miscott39@gmail.com

*Children can easily open the drawer that lets the spirit rise up and wear its favorite costume of mirth and laughter. When the mind is consumed with remembrance of Him, something divine happens to the heart that shapes the hand and tongue and eye into the word, love. Hafiz, Persia (Iran) poet*