

Love of Taxes...

"After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up, left everything, and followed him." - Luke 5:27-32

The W-2 forms are filling up the mailboxes. The IRS is on its way to its annual collection – and we are on our way to our annual grumpy submission. I happen to love paying taxes, as I think they are the best way to redistribute wealth. I know I am weird.

Before I explain why I love taxes, let me explain my problem with people who hate them. When we hate taxes, we move deep into the land of individualism. That land is dry and dull – but much of our cultural economy likes the neighborhood. The next stop on the train to the land of individualism is loneliness. Again, many like to live there. Some move back to the human race when their loneliness turns to that bitter complaint, "It is all up to me." That cry of anguish comes straight from the decision to hate taxes.

We are watching an unprecedented unraveling of the social safety net. Security is no longer social; it is individual. It is all up to you, when the social safety net unravels. For those of you who can make it on your own, hoorah. For those of us who can't – the lame, the blind, the unlucky, the weak, the 200's on the SAT – hoorah as well. At least we aren't lonely. At least we are weird enough to like taxes and help each other.

Prayer

O God, when we are like Levi and invited by you to let go of our individual security on behalf of something more beautiful and fun, help us to say yes. Amen.

Author: Donna Schaper She is a Senior Minister at Judson Memorial Church in New York City. Her most recent books is [I Heart Francis: Letters to the Pope from an Unlikely Admirer.](#)

Rabindranath Tagore, 20th century Nobel Prize-winning poet

"I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy."

Mason Congregational Church February 2018

Please visit: www.masoncongregationalchurch.org or call us 878-1684

Upcoming Events

- **Community Supper February 8 5:30 to 7pm** Our best cooks bringing the community warmth to body and spirit. Lasagna is on the menu. Bring a friend, or reach out to a new neighbor. Gluten free, dairy free vegetarian alternative available. Just ask us when you come.
- **Mission: Nashua Soup Kitchen, February 10th at 3:15 meet at Church.** This month we need help, as some of our "usuals" cannot attend. Join in this effort to share our caring for neighbors who need a smile, and the Soup Kitchen staff that needs extra hands. Meet in the parking lot of the church at 3:15 pm for carpooling. This is a mission open to all. Invite a friend or neighbor, and you may open an opportunity for another caring person. Call 878-4993 or email Kathy at chapman.kathy@gmail.com.
- **Ash Wednesday Service 7 pm February 14 at Mason Church** Rev. Veronica Don will lead us in a joint service with Brookline Church and the Rev Catherine Merrill. Lent is a time to open our hearts deeper to explore the human condition, your own spiritual connections, and more.
- **Conversations with Women Friday February 16 2-4pm** Join this wisdom circle of women for lively conversations on a variety of topics. This month we are exploring ageism, and continuing our investigation into meditation. Bring your knitting if you like. Open to all women, everywhere.
- **Prepared to Serve February 24 Workshops for You! Spiritual Direction, Active Participation in your church, Immigration issues, anyone looking for inspiration and joy, etc.** Sign up now, only \$40 for the day which includes lunch, and 6 workshops of your choice. Church can provide scholarships. We will carpool to Pembroke, so let Rev Veronica, or Michelle Scott know if you are coming. Sign up before February 14 on the website <http://www.nhcucc.org/caring-for-congregations/prepared-to-serve>
- **Bystander CPR** Last month we had 13 people sign up for Bystander CPR, and they received the critical instructions needed to maintain a heart rhythm and use an AED (automated external defibrillator) Simple instructions, and practice in a 2 hour class. If you are interested we will be glad to host another class. Please let Kathy Chapman, Nancy Richards, or Michelle Scott know if you are interested.
- **Living Room Coffee House February 17 6:30 to 9 or so. Live Music in Mason!** Doors open at 6:30, signups for open mic, and snacks are available, with coffee. The feature singer this month is Jon Pond. Jon is one of the members of the Milford area band, Spare Souls. I'm sure he will tell us more about his project. With his firm and strong vocals and a range that emphasizes the breadth of his emotion packed compositions the listener is drawn into the sharing of the story... www.Livingroomcoffeehouse.wordpress.com

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- **Puerto Rico and hurricane damage** In January, Jahdiel Torres-Caba, a community organizer for Civix, working for families in NH, and the environment, spoke at our Sunday worship gathering about the continuing disaster in Puerto Rico. He was born and raised there, and came 5 years ago to Antioch to do his graduate work. He gave us a list of organizations that could use assistance. <https://isercaribe.org> is one of those that's building water treatment on a small scale so communities have clean water. We will be collecting for this organization. If you wish to contribute, send a check to Mason Church with Puerto Rico in the memo column.
For more: <https://www.sierraclub.org/compass/2017/11/puerto-rico-after-hurricane-maria>
- **Ride Share in Mason** It has come to the attention of the Mason Church Council and community that there is often a need for rides (think 'public transportation') here in Mason. Communities around us have this service, and we are finding ways to be included. The Church Council has set aside money in the budget for making this happen, and getting the word out. If you know someone who needs a ride, to doctor appointments, events, please leave a message on the church phone 878-1684, or speak to Rev Veronica, a Deacon, or a Trustee. **On Sunday, February 11 there will be a discussion at Coffee Hour of this topic.**
- **Lending Library Books and Music, A Blessing for Wintry Days!** 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 always needed, free yarn available.** Spend some time by joining the knitters of Mason Church in prayerful knitting. Let us know if you need yarn or pattern. If you know of 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
Attention knitters: Go to <http://twillnh.com/calendar-4/> and check out Sandy's website, and the schedule for activities there. It may be one of our Conversations with Women outings!



Are you listening, caring, sharing?

- ♥ **Liz Fletcher** Liz is recovering from a fall, and many stitches in her knee that will need healing. Liz is one of the Soup Kitchen helpers who has been very faithful. In addition, she has always been a wonderful resource to the community in Conservation Commission, and hundreds of other ways. Send her a card, or give her a call. 288 Marcel Rd, Mason 878-2537
- ♥ **Dierdre Rohter** Amy, Dierdre's daughter, just died of colon cancer. Dierdre has been in Hawaii for the past 2 months at her side, along with Amy's husband, Ed. It has been a long year of anguish, treatment, and joy too. Dierdre's address is 18 Patricia Ln, Amherst, NH 03031
- ♥ **Wally and Gretchen Brown** Think about a visit, or a meal (gluten free/no dairy), or a card to cheer up Gretchen, and Wally, too. 878-1481

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- ♥ **Laila Washburn** Laila lives at Summer Hill Assisted Living in Peterborough. She loves company, and cards. At 99, everyday is treasured. Laila Washburn, Summer Hill, 183 Old Dublin Rd, Peterborough, NH 03458. Call ahead if you have questions. 924-6238
- ♥ **Curt Dunn** and his attentive Karin, enjoy company, and occasional assistance, but check with them first. 878-2675 or eisenhau@aol.com Karin's sister is very ill and in cancer treatment in Michigan. Keep her in prayer.
- ♥ **Neighbors** Keep in touch with your neighbors and friends in this bitter weather when people are staying inside, and may need help with various hardships that arise. Frozen pipes, sluggish cars, and trips to the grocery store may require our physical help, and calls or visits provide help to people's spirits. Some surprising gifts of friendship develop just this way.