

**Pastor Veronica shares this message:**

**I Am the Way Matthew Laney**

*"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to God except through me." - John 14:6*

For inclusive, interfaith-minded, UCC folk, this verse can be like fingernails on our theological chalkboard. I mean, who hasn't heard these beautiful words of Jesus twisted into a pitchfork by hell-bent Christians to skewer people of other faiths or no faith?

Hear me: this verse does NOT mean only Christians go to heaven because the gospel of John makes little or no difference between this life and the afterlife. When John talks about eternal life he's not envisioning an ultimate post-mortem retirement in the clouds. For John, eternal life *begins now* by living the Jesus way of nonviolence, doing justice, telling the truth, defending children, forgiving one and all; in other words revealing peace, love and heaven with every step.

You have heard it said, "Life is not about the destination, it's about the journey," but that's not what the Gospel of John would say. For John, the destination, eternal life, is the journey. In other words, what you aim for must be present in every step along the way.

Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh once put it this way: "There is no way to peace, peace is the way. Heaven or hell is available right now depending on how we walk."

According to the book of Acts, the first followers of Jesus were called "people of the way." Later the term "Christian" or "little Christ" became the main descriptor for Jesus way-farers. We are Christ's body on earth today. That means it's up to us to reveal his way, truth and the life. And I'm pretty sure that doesn't include condemning others to hell.

**Prayer** Lord, help me to forgive those who use scripture as a wall instead of as a door and may I reveal your way with every step.

About the Author: Matthew Laney is the Senior Minister of Asylum Hill Congregational Church UCC in Hartford, CT.

## Upcoming Events

- **Community Supper June 8, 2017 5:30 to 7pm** As a true-to-the-name, Community Supper, the Mason Fire Department is putting on this dinner. They will be firing up the grills for burgers and dogs, and the rest of us will put in a request for no drizzle that evening! Bring your appetite, and your friends to share in getting to know the volunteers of your community fire department. Show your support.
- **Mission: Nashua Soup Kitchen, June 10.** Call Kathy Chapman to let her know if you plan on coming since we can't bring too many, but need enough! Meet in the parking lot of the church at 3pm for

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Please visit: [www.masoncongregationalchurch.org](http://www.masoncongregationalchurch.org) or call us 878-1684 carpooling to the Nashua Soup Kitchen. Usually we are back by 6:30pm. Call 878-4993 or email Kathy at [chapman.kathy@gmail.com](mailto:chapman.kathy@gmail.com) if you would like to volunteer. We need a minimum of 8 people.

- **June 11 Children's Day Worship Service 10 am** Don't miss the fun as the children help lead worship, share their choices for donating animals to Heifer Project, and take you on a tour of the newly refreshed labyrinth
- **June 23 Women's Conversation group Trip to Weston Priory** Meet in the church parking lot at 8 am, and we will travel about 1 hr 45 minutes to Baba A Louis' Bakery in Chester, VT. There we will have a brunch before heading up the road (20 minutes) to the Weston Priory for a chance to walk around, and then go to Midday Prayers with the Benedictine monks who specialize in acoustic music to accompany their worship. Travel in New England this time of year is beautiful, no matter what the weather. Probably returning about 4:30 pm. We will carpool, so call Michelle if you are interested in going. 878-1680, or email [miscott39@gmail.com](mailto:miscott39@gmail.com)
- **June 17 at 7 pm Hand in Hand Concert Tickets \$10 or \$5 for under 11 years old. Contact Steve for tickets at 878-4947, or email [tamufam5@gmail.com](mailto:tamufam5@gmail.com)** A concert to benefit the Greenville NH Food Pantry. This promises to be a cornucopia of relaxing music. Hiroya is a musician and composer since he was 13, with training at Berkley School of Music. A smooth set of classical flute and guitar concert will open with Jane's original award winning folk songs, then top that off with Hiroya's lyrical guitar that will warm the soul like the changing colors of a early summer's sunset. Hiroya website: [www.hiroyasukamoto.com](http://www.hiroyasukamoto.com) and UTube will provide you a sampling of his music, but live in the Mason sanctuary you will feel the beauty of the music.
- **Reaching out** The Deacons and Reverend Veronica have reached out to a Muslim community in Fitchburg to invite them to visit us in Mason. The purpose is to find common ground with those who are different from us. Several of the families, men and women and children came to worship service in April, and a grand group of 5 women, 2 teenagers, and 3 children came to our Conversations with Women. It was an excellent time of sharing, learning about each other's religion, and telling our 'women stories.' We will be looking for other ways to connect and share. We have been invited to their celebration of the end of Ramadan which falls in late June. (see end note) Let Rev Veronica know if you want to go.
- **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 still 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 someone who needs the warmth and prayers of a shawl please contact: Susan Suokko at [Usercat2@comcast.net](mailto:Usercat2@comcast.net) or 941-920-0270 or Michelle Scott 878-1680



- **The Damery Family** Marlene had a cochlear implant on April 25. She will have the implant activated on May 30<sup>th</sup>. Send encouragement via cards or email: 768 Ashby Rd, New Ipswich, NH 03071 or [mrsdamery@gmail.com](mailto:mrsdamery@gmail.com)

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- **Tom Fallon and Edie need your prayers.** Tom is not able to do any more treatments. Please keep them in your prayers. You can email or mail them a card. PO Box 394, Peterborough, NH 03458 or email: [ehfallon@aol.com](mailto:ehfallon@aol.com)
- **Curt Dunn** and Karin Eisenhaure. Thanks to Karin for faithful fulfillment of church secretary duties of bulletin coping/collating and other chores. Thanks to Curt for his insightful comments, and conversation.
- **Joe and Jennie Walsh** and Joshua, Jonathan and Joseph are always in our hearts and thoughts. We were delighted to see Jennie, Joshua, and Jonathan at the Installation. Call, write, or email them with your news! Their address is: 50 Clinton Ave, Chelmsford, MA 01824 [978-256-6700](tel:978-256-6700) [jwalsh13197@gmail.com](mailto: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 249-9399.** Address: Cahill Place, 486 Nashua St. Milford 03055 Note: correct phone number from last month
- **Laila Washburn** Our oldest member, and one of our most special! 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 Wally and Gretchen at 878-1481 or Michelle if you need help with cooking ideas or details 878-1680 or [miscott39@gmail.com](mailto:miscott39@gmail.com)
- **Cynthia and Jeff** are going up to their camp early this year. They send their greetings to all, and promise to be back in late fall! Nothing quite like our beautiful New Hampshire summers.
- **Jim and Susan Suokko** came back from Florida early due to the death of Susan's son-in-law. The family has known of this possibility, but it does not make his passing any less painful. Our prayers of peace and solace are with Susan and Jim, her daughter, and especially their grandchildren.

## **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 Walsh Don at 603-878-1684 or on her personal phone at 603-213-6368.

### *What is Ramadan?*

Ramadan is the Muslim holy month marked by daily fasting (no food and no water) from dawn to sunset, increased religious observance, and self-reflection. It is not just physical hunger and thirst that constitutes the Muslim fast. For 30 days, the followers of Islam pray and refrain from smoking, bad behavior, and impure thoughts. Alms-giving and care for the destitute are so highly emphasized, that is no period during the year do Muslims engage in such care for the poor and needy as they do during the month of Ramadan.