

Disagreeable
Emily C. Heath

September 26, 2017

"I urge you to watch out for people who create divisions and problems against the teaching that you learned. Keep away from them. People like that aren't serving the Lord. They are serving their own feelings. They deceive the hearts of innocent people with smooth talk and flattery." - Romans 16:17-18

Malcolm Gladwell, the journalist and author, has a theory. He believes that the people who truly create social change in this world are always a little "disagreeable." Far from people who seek peace and unity at every cost, disagreeable people are willing not to be liked by everyone. They are also willing to break a rule from time to time in order to do **what is right**.

We don't like conflict in churches. I certainly understand why. As a pastor I used to hold my breath during church meetings when there were differences in opinions. I didn't want there to be a fight. In recent years, though, I've begun to understand that differences of opinion are not just okay, but even vital. If a group starts thinking with one mind, and no one is ever willing to object, that's a sign that there is a huge problem.

Are there people who like to "create divisions and problems"? Absolutely. We've all known bullies who love to start drama. But should everyone who has a different opinion be put in that category? No. In fact, if we start to do that, the church will never progress any further in the advancement of God's vision than it has so far.

Paul warns the church in Rome to be on the lookout for anyone who contradicts the truths that they know. He tells them to be aware of the ones who serve themselves, and not God. It is the deception of God's people that he is worried about; not the threat of a disagreeable person who is still trying to stay in community and find God's will.

The next time a contradictory opinion comes up in your church, test the spirits. Is it really a "division and problem"? Or, is it possible that it's another way of understanding what God is doing now in your church? God speaks from the margins more than we know, and maybe that disagreeable voice is a sign that the still speaking God has got something new to say.

Prayer God, help me to hear what you are telling the church today, no matter whose voice you are using, and help me to test the spirits of all I hear. Amen.

Upcoming Events

- **Blessing of the Animals October 8th 10 am** This day we share our worship service with the special animals in our lives. If the animal would not enjoy worship service, you can bring a picture of her/him, to share in the occasion.
- **Church Council Meeting at 11:15 am October 8th** Church Council Meeting after Worship Service The following people should attend: Pastor Veronica, Dotsie, Darrell, Mike Goen, Michelle, Judy Wilkins, Marlene Damery, and Karin Eisenhaure.
- **Community Supper October 12, 2017 5:30 to 7pm** It's the Harvest Dinner, our very special turkey with the trimmings! Don't miss it. Come enjoy.

Mason Congregational Church October 2017

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

- **Mission: Nashua Soup Kitchen, October 14th.** Call Kathy Chapman to let her know if you plan on coming since we can't bring too many people, but need enough! Meet in the parking lot of the church at 3pm 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.
- **Conversations with Women Friday October 20th 2-4pm** Join this wisdom circle of women for lively conversations on a variety of topics. Last month we discussed an article on how to diffuse a bigot and looked at some "action items" to shore up hope in our community and world. This month I have an article on Wisdom Circles for our discussion. Bring your knitting if you like.
- **Coffee House October 21 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! Feature performer is Steve Z. Here is what Steve suggested to promote his performance as the feature artist—"The Living Room Coffee House is pleased...no, required to announce our Featured Performer will be Steve Z. For 30 years Mr. Z has been irritating Southern New Hampshire audiences with his interminable litany of sad songs. Blessed with a powerful voice that spans four octaves, of which he sings adequately in approximately one, Steve will blubber incoherently about one emotional calamity or another until clearer heads prevail and we chase him from the stage. So abandon all hope and join us for what is sure to be a memorable evening. (If you're the kind of person who remembers root canals and tax audits.)"
- **Halloween Tailgate Party at Mason Church October 31 6:00 to 7:30 pm**
Join in the fun by decorating your car/yourself or neither, but simply opening your tailgate with a few treats for the children. Come early to get a spot in the lineup in the parking lot, and enjoy hot beverages and all the fun. In the past, it was difficult to tell who had more fun, children or adults...
- **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.
- **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 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 our next Conversations with Women outing!

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- **Church Yard Sale and our Mason “Old Home Days”** Thank you to all who brought items, bought items, and helped carry away the leftovers. Special thanks to Bettie for making this happen.



- ♥ **Wally and Gretchen Brown** Think about a visit, or a meal (gluten free/no dairy), or a card to cheer up Gretchen.
- ♥ **Laila Washburn** Since her fall this year, Laila has moved to Summer Hill Assisted Living in Peterborough. The transition was hard at first, but Laila has had many changes over her lifetime which she takes in stride, and she is making the most of this one. Her daughter says she has more company than ever! Her kind manner will win over all who meet her there. She loves company, and cards. At 98, everyday is treasured. Laila Washburn, Summer Hill, 183 Old Dublin Rd, Peterborough, NH 03458. Call ahead if you have questions. 924-6238
- ♥ We all remember that when there is the loss of a loved one, the loss continues to be felt for a very long time. Catherine Schwenk, Judy Wilkins, our Rev Veronica, Dotsie Milbrandt, Edie Fallon have all lost loved ones. And now Eileen and Fred Cuda have also suffered a loss this past week as Eileen’s brother died unexpectedly. Your prayers have power, as do your thoughts and courtesies!
- ♥ **Ed McCaffrey** brother of Eileen McCaffrey Cuda, and son of Marie McCaffrey, grew up in Mason along with his sisters. He died at 59 of cardiac arrest. His large extended family is greatly saddened, and will hold a memorial service, October 28. Details to follow.

Think Like a Tree

by Karen I. Shragg

Soak up the sun
Affirm life’s magic
Be graceful in the wind
Stand tall after a storm
Feel refreshed after it rains
Grow strong without notice
Be prepared for each season
Provide shelter to strangers
Hang tough through a cold spell
Emerge renewed at the first signs of spring
Stay deeply rooted while reaching for the sky
Be still long enough to
hear your own leaves rustling.