

# Good News and good news

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## Simple Rules...

by Judi Sweeney

Once upon a time, I wanted to learn how to waterski. If you are thinking that I made this sound like a fairy tale, it was for quite a while. Our family had a new powerboat, and we took it with us every year on our two- or three-week family vacations. We fished in the morning and after supper, but the afternoon was set aside for swimming and water-skiing. Over and over, my father explained the simple rules for success to my sister and me. "Bend your knees. Get the tips of your skis out of the water and even. Hold onto the tow-rope handle tightly. Stand up as quickly as you can when the boat pulls you. Stay standing and DON'T pull back when the rope goes slack," he said over and over again. I remember thinking that the rules sounded simple, but it seemed like I could only learn and succeed at them one at a time. "Bend your knees" sounded so simple, but the boat pulled me out of my skis over and over again when I had my legs straight. Then I would get my ski tips out of the water, but I forgot to get them even. That led to my getting slightly out of the water and then tipping over sideways.

The worst part to learn was the last rule – "don't pull back when the rope goes slack." I repeated this rule over and over again. I had eventually learned all the other simple rules, and I was getting my body out of the water and I was standing. Then I would watch the tension in the tow rope lessen and watch the line go slack. My mother would be yelling from the boat, "Don't pull on the rope. WAIT." And invariably I would pull on the rope to make it tight. My brain wouldn't let me just stand there and wait for the rope to get taut on its own. Back I fell and landed in the water once again.

## Simple Rules for the Disciples

For some reason, this memory reminded me of the simple rules that Jesus gave the 12 disciples shortly after the group formed, "And he called the twelve and began to send them out

*Continued on page 5...*

## Lenten Services

February 28  
Service • 7 pm

March 6  
Foot Washing • 7 pm

March 13  
Worship thru Music • 7pm



## good news...

These are the birthdays of people age 65 and older and couples with anniversaries from February 27<sup>th</sup> to March 15<sup>th</sup>.

### Birthdays:

Linda Jones	February 27
Marilyn Baron-Nagle	March 5
Rick Ottman	March 10
Judi Sweeney	March 12
Sue Caron	March 13

### Anniversaries:

### Altar Flowers:

March 5 - none

**February 25** - Flowers are given by Jack Sweeney to celebrate his Shepherd Judi's birthday on March 12.

### Want to Give Flowers?

Add your name to the flower calendar in the foyer, and Laurie Drake will contact you about price and flowers you want. Flowers must be paid for by the Sunday before their appearance on the altar. After the service, you may take the flowers or give them away.

## Lenten Foot Washing Ceremony... by Jane Ingersoll-Mahoney

**Wednesday, March 6 at 7:00 PM**, our beautiful foot washing ceremony will be held in the sanctuary. Foot washing has become a traditional part of our Lenten worship services.

We encourage you to attend and take part in this deeply meaningful event. You may also choose to simply observe and worship. Whichever you choose, you are sure to be blessed during this special event.



## Our February Verse

He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Luke 10:2 (NIV)

Blue lettering indicates those groups that have updated information.

### Adult Sunday School Class

This adult Bible Study meets weekly during the school year from 9:30 - 10:15 am in the Conference Room. Starting on January 21<sup>st</sup>, the class will be taught for awhile by Patti Barney using the book *Psalms 91*.

### Monday Morning Women's Bible Study

Meeting weekly at Phyllis Cobiski's home at 23 Gilbert Street from 10 - 11:30 am. The group will be starting a new study called "Breaking Free" on January 8<sup>th</sup>. Contact Pauline Dwelly for information.

### Women's Monday Afternoon Bible Study

This Bible Study will be meeting in the Conference Room on Monday afternoon from 12:30 - 2:00 pm. Contact Susan Gainley.

### Prayer Shawl Ministry

This group meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of each month from 6 to 7:30 pm. The group meets in the Parlor. Contact Karen Bessette for more information.

### It's All About Jesus

This Bible Study group meets to learn more about Jesus through the Scriptures. The group meets on Tuesday evenings at 6 pm. Contact Jade Ford for more information.

### Men's Bible Study

This group will be starting a new Bible Study entitled *The Essential 100* on January 16<sup>th</sup>. They meet on Tuesday from 6:30 to 8:00 pm in the Conference Room. Contact Brian Roth for details.



### Christian Yoga • Balanced in Him

Meeting every Wednesday night in the parlor. Contact Holly Kularski for information.

### Prayer Group

This group meets weekly on Fridays at 9:30 - 11:00 am in the Conference Room. Contact Nancy Olson for details.

### Celia Daniel's Bible Study

This Bible Study meets in the Multi-Purpose Room on Thursdays from 1:00 to 2:00 pm. Contact Celia Daniels for more information.

### Sweeney Bible Study

We continue with our life application Bible studies. Our next meeting will be on March 14<sup>th</sup>. Contact Judi Sweeney for details.

### Men's Saturday Breakfast and Study

The monthly men's breakfast and Bible Study is on the second Saturday of each month. Contact Dale Wadsworth for information. **The next breakfast is March 9<sup>th</sup> at 8:15 am.**

### Drawing Closer

The Bible Journaling Group will meet in the Multi-Purpose Room from 9:30 - 11:00 am on Saturdays. Contact Deb Arnold.

### Parents of Little Ones Bible Study

This new group will meet at the Hulsebus' home on the first Saturdays of the month. This group is starting a new study called "Grace Based Parenting" by Dr. Tim Kimmel. Please reach out to Brian or Jessie for more information.

### Jr. KICK

This group for students in grades 6 through 8 meets from at 2:00 to 3:30 pm in Fellowship Hall.

### Ignite

This group for high school students meets from 4 - 5:30 pm in Fellowship Hall.

### Sharing Christ Through Cards

Watch the newsletter for the next session.

### Joy 'n Hope

The Cancer Care Ministry supports people with cancer as well as their caregivers. They also pray for people whose life is impacted by cancer each month. See Melanie Silva for more information.

If you want information about a small group, please contact – Judi Sweeney, (508)383-5384, or [jpsweeney58@charter.net](mailto:jpsweeney58@charter.net)



***Please sign-up for this class soon.***  
*Sign-up sheets will be on the table near the kitchen.*

*If you have questions, please contact Jane Ingersoll-Mahoney.*

## ***A Special Teaching on The Holy Spirit***

*by Jane Ingersoll-Mahoney*

Two years ago, I presented a class on prayer. In that class, I emphasized the power that we have in prayer. I will be presenting a follow up to that class on what gives us that power. It comes from the Holy Spirit!

**Monday, March 18 at 7:00 pm**  
**In Fellowship Hall**

It is intended to be a night of enjoyment, fellowship and learning. I invite you to bring family and friends to this special event. We will delve into all that the Holy Spirit is, what He does, how He works in us and how He empowers us in ways that will surprise you. I will have gifts for you to take home to encourage your own further study of the power of God in us. Please come!

There is no charge. Light refreshments will be available.



## ***Women's Weekend Spring Retreat***

*by Annie Shea*

We are again planning to send a group of women from our church to the Spring Retreat at Camp Monadnock on May 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>. The cost of the full weekend is \$215.00. You'll encounter the Spirit of God through 4 chapel sessions with applicable, Scripture-rooted teaching and intimate worship. There are also classic camp activities like nature walks, archery, and crafts.

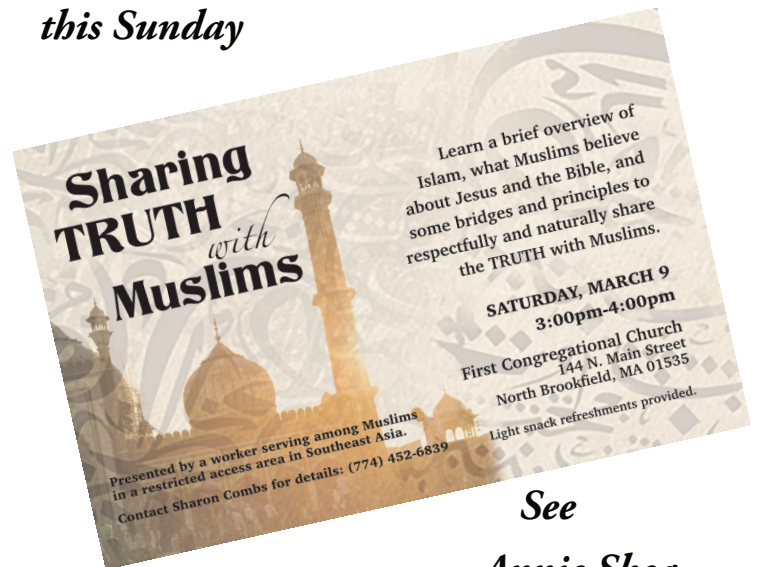
To register, go to Camp Monadnock (<https://www.monadnock.camp>) and register. When registering, you will be asked for a group name. Please let them know that you want to room with women from First Congregational Church of North Brookfield. You will also need to check off you are attending with a group.

If you will need a ride, let me know, and we will arrange one for you. As we get closer to the retreat date, I will also make a list of things you will need to bring for the weekend.

Don't miss out on this very special opportunity! You will leave there a different woman!

If you need help with registration or if you have questions, please contact Annie Shea at (508) 873-2837 (phone or text) or [annie@agenerationinneed.com](mailto:annie@agenerationinneed.com).

## ***Sign-up for this class*** ***this Sunday***



***See***  
***Annie Shea***

## ***Registration for*** ***Deeply Rooted Women's Retreat***

***Will start on Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>***

*Paper registrations will be available before and after church*

On-line registration will also be available. See Judi Sweeney after church in the Parlor to register on-line or pick up a paper with the registration link. Watch your email for a link if you attended last year.

***Thanks, Church Family!***  
***Because of your generous donations***  
***all 16 students will be going to***

***Winter Retreat!***

Age 4 - Grade 2

## He's Here!...

by Crystal Caron

He's here!! He's finally here!! We made it through the Old Testament! To celebrate Jesus' birth and this milestone, we made bookmarks for our bibles to mark the start of the New Testament.

I love the way they relate to the character they played in the Christmas pageant. When the story referred to the shepherds as "riff raff," a chorus of "hey!!" came from our little shepherds. The way they say "I" and "we" when discussing Jesus' birth is such a lovely and heart-warming thing as their teacher. ♡



Grade 3 - 5

## The Walls Came Down...

by Karen McGrail and Rhonda Brault

The Bible lesson from Feb 18<sup>th</sup> was "The walls came tumbling down." The story is from Joshua 6, and it's about Joshua and the battle of Jericho. First, we reviewed many stories from previous weeks, and it is exciting to see how much they are retaining. They were given reward tickets for bringing their Bibles and answering questions. We talked about how 7 priests with 7 trumpets and an additional army marched around Jericho quietly 6 times. On the 7th time, they blew their trumpets and all shouted, and then the walls came tumbling down. Kids colored pics for their bibles or did a picture search finding differences between 2 pictures. Rhonda showed them how to use an airbrush with stencils to decorate their trumpets and they could put additional stickers on them. Then she filled the paper trumpet with a real sound making trumpet. We ended having kids march quietly around the table a few times, and then on the last trip around they were allowed to blow their trumpets. They all cooperated and were each given a glow stick which was donated by a generous member of our congregation.



Age 4 - Grade 2

## Baptism

by Jade Ford

In the youngest group of Sunday School students on February 25<sup>th</sup>, we learned about John the Baptist (and his odd eating habits). The children were offered bugs & honey for snack! They all tried honey, but not one would eat a bug! 😂

The story we read was about Jesus being baptized by John the Baptist. We talked about what baptism means. We also talked about how the dove came down to prove how Jesus was God's son. We talked about the Holy Spirit and how He lives inside of us and not only brings us joy, but can help us in whatever we need. The kids made stained glass windows with doves flying to hang in their rooms to remind them the Holy Spirit is with them always.

*"As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him."* Matthew 3:16.



Grade 3 - 5

## Gideon's Fight & Midian's Flight...

by Sue Caron

After opening with prayer we watched the Biggest Story Video, *The Fight of Gideon and the Flight of Midian*. We learned that in the book of Judges that Gideon had been called to be a "judge," but not the kind we think of today. The Judges were "warrior-rulers" who were chosen to lead *after* Moses and Jacob and *before* the kings of Israel.

We learned about Gideon's "Fleece Experiment" and the way God told Gideon to choose who would fight the Midianites. Following God's instructions, Gideon's army of 300 men, carrying jars and torches and blowing trumpets, frightened the Midianites away!

*"But when the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who saved them."* Judges 3:9



*Simple Rules...continued from page 1...*

*two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts— but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. And he said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.”* (Mark 6:7-11). These were such simple rules. We assume from this Bible story that the disciples followed the rules to the letter. Yet I wonder to this day how difficult this was for them – how against everything their mind told them was right. The rules didn’t make sense even to me. Take a staff, one pair of sandals, one tunic, but don’t take bread, money or even a bag. Then there was the last rule that sounded so simple... Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave there. I wonder how difficult to follow that simple rule was for them. I wondered why God would have them leave with nothing, take nothing, and depend on the hospitality of others. I wondered if this was hard for them. I wondered if they failed at times on this first mission trip or if they took an extra piece of bread when they left that first morning. I wondered how long it took for them to trust the rules and to see God working out of their total weakness. However, the final two verses in this story in Mark pointed to their results, the call to the people they met to repent, “*So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.*” (verses 12-13). They learned obedience and trust, and they fulfilled God’s purpose for their lives.

### **Simple Rules for Lot’s Family**

The story of Lot’s family and God’s destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah is found in Genesis 19. God had made the decision to destroy these evil cities, but out of his mercy, He sent angels to Lot and his family to give them a simple rule – “*Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city.*” (Genesis 19:15). But the Bible tells us that Lot “lingered.” I can imagine he was trying to decide if he had to go and if he went, what they should take. Like me, Lot would have pulled back on the rope and would have landed in the water if it hadn’t been for the angels who

literally took him by the hand and pulled him out of the house. Once they were in the hills, the angels left them with one more simple rule, “*Escape for your life. Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Escape to the hills, lest you be swept away.*” (verse 17). What could be easier than the simple instruction – don’t look back? How close was that rule to my simple rule – don’t pull back on the rope. Lot and his daughters did what they were told, but Lot’s wife couldn’t help herself, couldn’t get past the voices in her head that told her nothing would happen. She looked back and turned into a pillar of salt. I at least had an opportunity to try and try again to “not pull back on the rope” once I was standing. The result of her not following a simple rule was 100% disastrous.

### **Good and Bad Simple Rules**

Not every simple rule that we are given are good for us. Satan, the father of all lies, makes it a practice to whisper rules that will lead to disaster. Eve learned this the hard way when Satan talked her into eating from the tree God had told them not to eat from. Lot’s wife listened to Satan whispering in her ear, “Turn around and take a look.” But the original rule given to them by angels was “Do not look back.” This rule from God, delivered by angels, was given to them for their own good. Jesus gave His disciples a set of rules about what not take with them and how to depend on the people they stayed with. His rules served a two-fold purpose. First, He was teaching them about obedience, just as so many people in the Bible had to learn it. Secondly, He taught them about God’s providence, how God will always provide what we need when we need it. In my case, I had to learn to trust my earthly father’s simple rules. I eventually was able to not pull back on the rope. I learned to waterski, and together with my sister, I found joy not only in learning to waterski but also in trusting that my father had my best interests at heart. He was right. I still have more simple rules to hear and follow from God on a daily basis. When He whispers, “Forgive” or “stop right now,” I have learned to listen and obey, usually the first time. I hold this proverb in my heart now, “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. (Proverbs 16:25). May our right way always be His way instead.

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## **What’s New on Sunday Mornings...** *by Pastor Joe Shea*

### **We now have two projectors and projector screens!**

Before Covid, our attendance had grown on Sunday mornings to the point where some people were sitting in an area with an obstructed view of the screen. At that time, a generous gift was given and designated to purchase and install the equipment needed to have two screens. And then Covid happened! Suddenly I was preaching to a few people on the worship team during the shutdown, and the need for the second screen was put on the back burner. The good news is we are back in that place of needing the second screen! The ability for everyone to follow along with the service and see the screen from wherever you sit is greatly improved.

### **Overflow Parking**

This is also a good time to make mention of another issue that was upon us before Covid but also became a non-issue during the shutdown, and that is parking. We are again beginning to fill the parking lot. So, I wanted to make everyone aware that we have permission on Sundays to park in Vibram’s parking lot located on School Street directly behind Fellowship Hall. The gate is always open and spaces are available, just park and walk back down School Street to the church.



# Luke 10:25-37

E O Y J T W W A D D W S  
R G A I E M A C A H E Y  
E L N S N S U S E J L K  
H L T V T H I N R A I R  
T E E F Y R E W N G F E  
O F A N S W E R E D E Y  
C H C R R R E N I K D W  
G B H D T T E A G T I A  
N N E V E T S B H T S L  
I E R H T S E T B K H O  
Y B O I O V S T O O D R  
A I R U O L C A R E R D  
S W L L K N D U P M N F

ANSWERED  
CARE  
HEART  
LAWYER  
LORD  
OTHER  
ROBBERS  
SIDE  
STRENGTH  
TOOK

BEHOLD  
ETERNAL  
INHERIT  
LIFE  
LOVE  
PASSED  
SAID  
SOUL  
TEACHER  
WHEN

CAME  
FELL  
JESUS  
LIKEWISE  
NEIGHBOR  
READ  
SAYING  
STOOD  
TEST  
WRITTEN