

THE PROSPECT TOWER

Prospect United Methodist Church

A Growing Christian Community of Faith in Action

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Pastor's Page

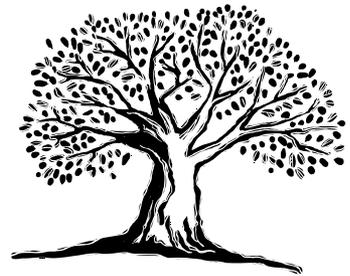
In God's Presence

Once upon a time there was a little almond tree. The little almond tree wanted to be the best almond tree in the orchard for its master. So often the master came by to check around the roots and trunk of the tree. With high hopes, the little tree continued to grow. The little tree finally reached the maturity to produce fruits.



One day the master came by, and he seemed particularly interested in the little almond tree this year. The master circled the tree, giving it a really close look. Then he reached out with both hands to grasp the tree's young trunk. With the little tree bent and holding its breath, one hand of the master firmly encircled the bent tree. With one swift movement he reached for his ax and cut off the tree at the root!

And the master cut all branches away with his ax. The almond tree just couldn't understand it. The little almond tree actually felt betrayed! How am I supposed to bear fruit without a root and branches? Then the master began to carefully peel away the bark from the almond tree trunk. The bark of a tree is its only protection. The little tree felt naked, exposed, and helpless. As it lay there stripped and uprooted, the little almond tree wrestled with an unending string of unanswered questions summed up in one thought: "I don't understand what's going on."



Finally, the bare almond tree was laid in the hot sun. Each day, when the master returned, the almond tree thought to itself, "Maybe he is going to graft me in now." But instead of grafting the tree into another root, the master turned the young tree a little every day to make sure it dried straight and true. The slow drying process took many days. When every hint of moisture had been drawn from the almond tree, the master finally returned and said, "Okay, now I think you are ready."

Then the master picked up the dried-out tree and began to walk while leaning on its sturdy length. The almond tree suddenly realized: "I'm no longer an almond tree! I am a staff. I am a rod. So that is what the master wanted — he wanted to turn me into a walking staff, a strong rod to lean upon. Okay, I can accept that. I will be the best staff and the strongest rod ever made. I will support his weight and I will not break. I

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will always be there for him." The little almond tree submitted itself to the pain of its aborted dream. It decided, "If I can't be what I thought I was going to be, then maybe I just didn't know what I was supposed to be. I am going to be the best staff that any tree could ever be."

One day the master of the almond rod was summoned to a serious meeting. Something happened during this meeting, that was different from any other meeting the almond rod had seen. The master walked directly to the opening at the front of the meeting tent and removed the almond rod from the place where he leaned it against the tent. The master then did the unthinkable! The master pulled a knife from the folds of his robe and began gouging gashes into the strong dry wood. He had branded his own name onto his staff. He solemnly returned to the center of the meeting and threw down the almond rod in the very center of the meeting tent, where all could see it.

The little almond rod grew even more frightened when the master turned on his heel and walked away. The almond rod lay on the ground with other rods stacked on top of and beside him. Then the strange old man picked up the almond rod along with all of the others and carried the rods into a dark, mysterious room. He roughly threw the twelve sticks into the thick darkness. Without a word, the man turned and walked away.

This was the story about Aaron's rod (See Numbers 17). So you already know what happened to the rod that night. It was a dead wooden stick before, then it got blossoms. After a night staying in the darkness, it blossomed and even produced fruits. Its old dream came true.

The Bible says, "The almond staff had sprouted, budded and blossomed and even produced almond." It was cut off from the roots and all branches were cut away from it. There was no bark, which means no protection. Dried out and dead.

Just stayed in a dark room overnight. Now it could produce almonds. It came back to life.

The dark room where the almond staff was thrown was the place in the tabernacle where God presents the Holy of Holy. The almond tree stayed in the presence of God even in the darkness. Then it got its life back. It became alive, productive, and fruitful.

It is very painful to experience a life being uprooted suddenly and unexpectedly and being cut off from the source of it. Your dreams are shattered. Protections and shields from dangers and harms are stripped away. You might feel betrayed, frustrated, exposed, naked, and helpless. You don't understand what is going on in your life. You kept asking that question. "What is going on in my life?" However, if you stay in His presence, your life will be back on track. Your life will have blossoms and bear fruit. Come and enter into the presence of God here and now!

In the presence of God,
Pastor Kim

■ **Women's Study Group**

Prospect is resuming a study group for women, and all women are invited. The six-week study group will meet at 1 p.m. on Mondays starting September 11th.

The study will use the book "Finding I AM" by Lysa Terkheurst, exploring the seven "I AM" statements of Jesus found in the Gospel of John. "Through this interactive, in-depth study we will be trading feelings of emptiness and depletion for the fullness of knowing who Jesus is like never before," notes facilitator Jill Wilson.

If you would like information and to join this study group please contact Jill Wilson, (860) 690-1853, jillmwilson@comcast.net.

■ **Church-Wide Retreat**

A Church-Wide Retreat is scheduled for September 9th at Mercy Center in Madison. Worship Chair Mary Rogers says, "The group will meet in the church parking lot at 8 a.m. and carpool to the Center, where we will have a breakfast of bagels, fresh fruit, juice, coffee and tea. We will go through some fun exercises in getting to know each other.

"There will be an interactive worship time and discussions regarding our church focus. Lunch will be served and then there will be personal time for walking the beach, gardens and reflection. In the afternoon we will gather for more bonding exercises, wrapping up and return to Bristol."

If you have not signed up and are interested in attending, please contact the Church Office at (860) 582-3443. Participants are asked to contribute \$18 each to help defray the costs.

■ **Founder's Day is Coming**



Celebrate Our Heritage

During the month of October, the History Committee will be presenting historical briefs in anticipation of Founders Day to be held on November 5th. In addition, there will be a "Church Trivia Quiz" on October 28th. On Founder's Day we will have some special guests in the congregation, a fun Founder's Day message, and will sing some good old-time hymns. Be sure to join us!

[Check out the History Corner in this issue for a in sneak-peak historical quiz.]

■ Days For Girls International

By now you have probably heard co-team leader Carol Rivard speak about Days For Girls International (DFG), a non-profit organization that provides sustainable feminine hygiene products to women and girls around the world while also teaching them about feminine care.

There are about 950 teams and chapters worldwide. Days For Girls International services 650,000 women and girls in 101 countries, including the United States. The only Connecticut chapter is located in Orange.

Carol explains, "Without this program that provides feminine hygiene products and education, the girls stay home and sit on cardboard for the time of their period. In four years of school they miss a year because of their periods. Most drop out because they cannot keep up. Volunteers sew kits that allow the girls to go to school.

"A few members of Prospect are contributing to this program by sewing at home. We also have volunteers who help with some of the non-sewing parts of the kits such as tracing a template, cutting ribbon and ironing. We try to get together for a sewing morning once every four to six weeks. All are welcome whether you sew or not, as we will find something for you to do. We meet in the meeting room at 9:30 on a Saturday morning, dates to be announced.

"Thus far we have sent one shipment consisting of 75 shields, 170 liners, and 30 bags to Orange. One beneficiary of

this program is the Kenyan Health Care Initiatives, which works with DFG. They will take our components and put them together with the rest of the kit and bring them to Kenya.



"Our connection with this program is Prospect's Rosanne Thibodeau, who is a good friend of the sister of the woman who runs this nonprofit. Connections are great because we saved on shipping or driving to Orange.

"We are all volunteers and use our own funds to support our project. Donations of fabric, money or gift cards are always welcome."

■ Helen Camarce Asks for Prayers

In 2014 Prospect Church partnered with Helen DeLeon Camarce, a missionary in Cambodia. Our partnership is our opportunity to provide financial, spiritual and emotional support to a missionary. By doing so we love, empower, heal, and serve in Christ's name. She had planned to visit with us in September to update us on her mission work, but has had to cancel her itinerary to the USA, because her husband, Benjamin, is quite sick.

Helen is asking for prayers for Benjamin. His heart is weak, and he is in need of surgery not available in Cambodia. If strong enough, he will fly to his home in the Philippines, but if not, he may have to be air lifted to Singapore or Bangkok. Helen sends her apologies for having to cancel plans to be with us, and hopes to get to the USA next year.

Please pray for Helen, Benjamin and her family. They entrust God with everything!

■ Middle Ages 2017 Recap

"The Middle Ages Group had a great 2017 and we are looking forward to a fun-filled 2018," reports Luisa Gladu, Middle Ages Group chair.

"The Breakfast With Santa in December was well attended. The children and adults were entertained with music, story-telling, crafts and a magic show along with a one-on-one meet and greet with Santa and Mrs. Claus. The food was delicious and a good time was had by all! After expenses, we raised a total of \$727.39 for PUMC. Anna and Elsa could not make the breakfast this year as they were 'frozen' in Arrendale, but they did make a special appearance a few weeks later and even made it snow in Sessions Hall.

"The Renaissance Dinners held in May were a huge success! Both evenings were well attended and the second night sold out! After expenses we raised \$3,694. Along with the fine food and fellowship, guests were entertained as the Royal Courtiers were asked to "put on a show" by His Royal Majesty. We had some fun songs, an amazing magic show, an escape from the stocks and finally ended the evening with a rousing rendition of YMCA as the King and court donned the iconic "Village People" headwear.

"Team PUMC — Relay For Life was held on Friday, June 9th, at the Memorial Boulevard track. Our small but mighty team raised a total of \$2,891 for the American Cancer Society! Our goal was \$1,000 and we certainly exceeded it. PUMC was ranked #5 out of 29 teams. We all should all be so proud of our efforts to help fight cancer.



"Our team was asked to lead the first lap which is the Survivor and Caregiver Lap. We held the banner and all of us walked very proudly as we represented the Survivors of PUMC with our caregivers beside us. It truly was a very emotional moment. Thank you to everyone who donated towards the cause.

"We are in the process of working on our 2018 calendar of events and we will have those dates for you in the next Tower as well as the Breakfast With Santa for December 2017.

"Thank you to everyone who helped make our events a success. When we work together so many good things happen!"

■ Join the Choir

If you can walk, you can dance. If you can talk, you can sing! ~African Proverb

We are a happy church! I have been enjoying Pastor Kim's messages about being happy, especially about



Choir Practice Resumes

singing to express our happiness and gratitude for God's many blessings! I am inviting all interested singers and handbell players to join with our Senior Choir and Prospect Tower Bells as we begin our new season of song.

Rehearsal schedule:

Senior Choir – Wednesday evenings 7 p.m. Room 208 (beginning Sept 6th)
Sunday mornings 9 a.m. Sanctuary (beginning Sept 10th)

Handbells – Wednesday evenings 6 p.m. Sanctuary (beginning Sept 16th) We play once a month during worship service.

■ Art After Church

Some 12 adults and children remained after worship service on July 16th for "Art After Church." The Education Committee offered art supplies while participants selected their own subject and media. Worship Committee Chair Mary Rogers reports, "We had a fun time creating the paintings and pictures you see here in the Tower. This activity will be offered again in the Fall and we hope more people will join us for the fun." Check out the artwork on www.anewprospect.org.

■ Save The Date

2nd Annual Family Promise of Central Connecticut "Walk Away Homelessness" Walk-a-thon Event October 7

■ History Corner

By now you should be aware there is a tiny addition to the family of our pastor, Rev. Yountae Kim, and his wife Sophia: baby daughter Alisha, born earlier this summer, joining brothers David, 6, and Daniel, 4.



Alisha was born on June 30th. Little Alisha has even made an appearance at our summer services the past few weeks.

Here is a question for you, actually suggested by my brother, Rev. William Barnes, our pastor emeritus: Who was the last pastor to have a baby while serving Prospect Church?

Take a look at the faces of former pastors in our Historical Gallery off Sessions Hall. Do any of them look like candidates for fatherhood, or in one instance, motherhood, while serving as Prospect's pastor?

If you have a guess, please email me at kathybdube@comcast.net.

Look for the answer in the October Tower!

■ Back to School Drive

Thank you for supporting The Covenant to Care Adopt a Social Worker program through the Backpack and School Supply Drive. With your help, we were able to provide backpacks and supplies to over kids in Bristol and our neighboring communities. We appreciate your support – thank you for making a difference in our community

■ VBS

God's heroes have heart!

God's heroes have courage!

God's heroes have wisdom!

God's heroes have power!

God's heroes have hope!

Do Good! Seek peace and go after it!



PUMC was filled with heroes this summer at Hero Central (Vacation Bible School) Thirty children, from pre-school to grade 5 met Captain Shield and Flame each evening and learned how they can live as heroes.

Discover Your Strength in God was the theme of this fun-filled and exciting adventure. We learned about Samuel anointing David, Abigail saving the day, Jesus Going to the Temple, the Beatitudes and Pentecost in our Bible story time. Game time centered on these same themes. Curiosity was piqued as they experimented with science and they were engaged in thoughtful discussion during Mission time.

Local heroes from the Bristol community shared their thoughts on wisdom, hope, power, courage and heart. Many thanks to the Bristol Hospital EMS Team, Bristol Firefighters, Postal Service, Bristol Library and Brian's Angels volunteers that impressed the children with descriptions and demonstrations of their important jobs.

Thanks also to the Prospect United Methodist Church heroes:

- Elizabeth Baker, Mary Rogers, and Carol Rivard for sewing the capes for the children.
- Pastor Kim for being a hero and wearing the Spiderman costume!
- Gary and Luisa Gladu for their donations for decorations and sunglasses.
- Plainville United Methodist Church members, Lisa, Paige, Carol for their participation and great decorations.
- All of the adult and youth helpers that guided our young heroes on their adventure!

■ Rally Day Is September 17th

The beginning of the new Sunday School year is nearly here! Prospect's "Deep Blue Adventure," formerly known as Rally Day, is scheduled for Sunday, September 17th, Education Superintendent Christa Zaldivar has announced. On this date, parents will fill out registration forms and meet the teachers. During our 10 a.m. worship service, children ages 3 and up are invited to participate in some fun activities and games.

Sunday School classes officially begin on Sunday, September 24th and will take place during the 10 a.m. worship service. In addition to nursery care for children ages 6 weeks to 3 years old, there will be one-room Sunday School classes this year for PreK through Grade 5.

If you have any questions about our programs or would like to serve as a volunteer, please contact Christa Zaldivar at cjw02@hotmail.com or (917) 386-8599.

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