

# The Village Steeple

## From the Pastor's Desk: In Unfamiliar Waters



### ***This Week's Lectionary Texts***

13th Sunday after  
Pentecost

Jeremiah 1:4-10

Psalm 71

Hebrews 12:18-29

Luke 13:10-17

When I moved to New England from the South one of the greatest shocks to me was the beaches. I could take the fact that no one said “y’all” or that I was states away from great barbecue, but I couldn’t get used to going for a swim in the ocean off Massachusetts.

Down South the beaches are sandy and level, and the water is warm and placid. The first time I went swimming off Cape Cod I hiked over a sand dune, tore my feet on the rocks and walked into water that was colder than any January in Atlanta I could remember.

And then I got in the water. I’ve always considered myself a good swimmer, but here the waves crashed over

me so hard that I thought they would knock me down. Oh, and there were shark warnings. Finally, cold, grumpy and exhausted, I looked over at my New England-bred friend and asked something to the effect of, “Why do you all even go to the beach up here? This is miserable.”

She laughed and essentially told me, “Just go in farther. It gets better.”

That was my first summer in New England. And since that time I have made many other swims in the waters off of Cape Cod. And, much to my surprise, I’ve grown to love it. In fact, one of the things I (continued)

#### THIS MONTH'S BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Aug. 2 – Jill Gentilin

Aug. 2 - Nancy Logan

Aug. 8 – Kathy Lorenz

Aug. 11 – Jeff Novy

Aug. 12 - Merrill Mundell

Aug. 20 – Martha Schoonmaker

Aug. 20 - Nelson Bond

Aug. 30 – Carson Fillion

Aug 1 - Barbara Willenbrock & Janet Kierys

August 2, 1988 - Mindy & Andy Childs

August 6, 2000 - Andy & Chris McLean

Aug 6, 1994 – Randy & Robin Johnson

August 29 - George & Laurie Newton

**Pastor's Note (continued)**

look forward to the most each summer is my first swim in the ocean.

Here is what I have learned about swimming in New England waters. The ocean has not gotten warmer, and the waves have not died down. And, as my mother calls to tell me every time I go to the Cape, there are still sharks all around. The water hasn't changed, but the way I see it has.

First, despite my mother's conviction otherwise, I've learned that the sharks are not out there waiting for me. So long as I don't go swimming with the seals, or at night, or on a day when they've been sighted, I'm safe. And that means that so long as I use some common sense, they don't get to ruin my day.

The same is true for us in life. There are those people who drag us down with negativity or even dangerous choices. We learn not to get into the water with them. But we also have to learn how not to let them ruin our day at the beach. We don't let them dictate our lives and we don't let them take away our happiness.

I've also learned about cold water. My friend was right. The quicker I immersed myself in the water, the warmer I would feel. If I

stood there with half my body in and half out, I ended up feeling like I was freezing. But the quicker I committed myself to the water, the quicker I became used to it, and the easier it became.

The same is true for me when I'm trying something new. The first few days I might spend all my time thinking about how much I dislike it and how awful it feels. But when I take the steps I need to take, I find myself actually getting used to it and, finally, enjoying it.

Finally, the waves. I've learned that if I stay close to the shore, the waves hit me knee high and knock me over. But, if I just go out a little further, I end up floating high enough that the wave just lifts me up and puts me down gently again.

The same is true with faith. If we stand near the shore, the power of what we believe is enough to knock us over if we stay still. But if we take a few steps out in faith, we find that same power lifting us up, and keeping us safe. We find that we stay afloat even in rough waters.

We each have our own coast lines that we navigate. But so long as we wade in with faith, and without fear, we will find ourselves brought safely back to shore time and again. "Just go in farther. It gets better."

- Emily

**This Week's Link:**

**Did you know we have a Facebook page?**



<http://www.facebook.com/pages/West-Dover-VT/West-Dover-Congregational-Church-UCC-in-West-Dover-VT/>

**Calendar**

**Sunday, August 22**

Worship, 9am  
Coffee Hour, 10am  
Bible Study, following

**Saturday, August 28**

AA, 8pm

**A Reminder:**

The Deerfield Valley Food Pantry needs donations in order to supply the growing need in our area. We have designated the first Sunday of the month, Communion Sunday, as a canned food drive day. Please bring soup or tuna if you are able.

**STAYING CONNECTED**

If you or a loved one are sick, hospitalized or in crisis please call the Rev. Emily Heath at (802) 258-1143 at any time.

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