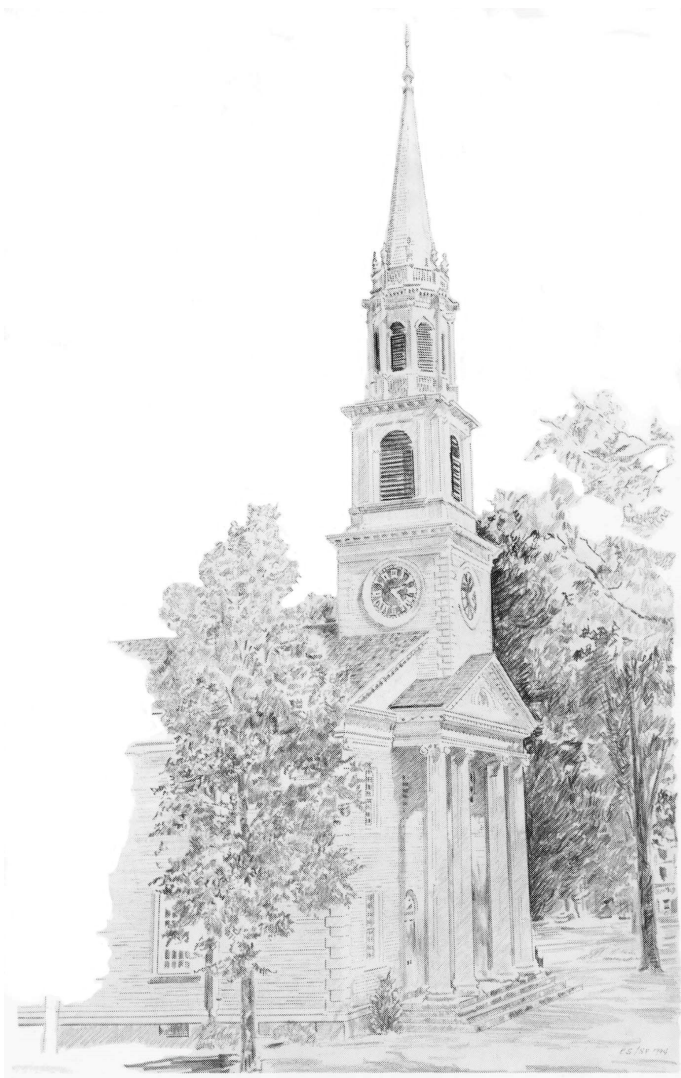


FIRST CHURCH CHATTER

September, 2020



This is another edition of our church newsletter. We thank those members and friends who have contributed stories, biographies, reflections, letters, poems and encourage any who wish to contribute to our church newsletter. As you can read in this edition, we have many talented friends and church members. We would like to get to know all of you better and encourage you to send your thoughts, poems, stories to us to publish. Thanks so much.

The newsletter will be printed at the beginning of each month and be sent via email to church members and friends, be sent by mail to those who would prefer a written copy and be available in the foyer for all to pick up when the church is reopened. In the meantime, we will deliver the Chatter to those who would prefer paper copy or don't receive email.

We are always looking for stories, poems, thoughts to contribute. If you have notices about upcoming events which you would

like published, please let Anne or Jody know and we will try to include. We try to publish by the beginning but realistically often it is sent out by the 10th or so.

We continue to be thankful for the guidance of our new interim pastor, Mark Seifried and for his enlightening sermons. We hope that you are feeling his warmth and care as we move into this Fall season where we have traditionally been planning for our youth and family activities, small group gatherings, beginning of our pledge drive, all of our outreach activities around the holidays, Budget Task Force meetings and especially our Christmas Eve service which our Deacons, Mark and Ed are hard at work thoughtfully planning something special. Many thanks to all who are busy with the goings on at church and help us to feel connected, spiritually and virtually, if not physically.

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Youth Works Program

According to the article in Wednesday's Berkshire Eagle, "the Northern Berkshire 2020 Summer Youth Works program had a twist this year as efforts were converted to virtual programming. Typically students participate in paid internships throughout local companies, but this year, with generous funding from First Congregational Church of Williamstown and MountainOne, the Berkshire Workforce Board converted programming to a seven week virtual gardening program. A three-minute video about this year's Summer Youth Works program can be viewed at tinyurl.com/y3u78grl. To learn more about the Berkshire Workforce program, visit Berkshire Workforce Board Facebook page or MassHireBerkshire.com.

As you can read from Phil Smith's email to Anne Short, our church has been actively involved in this program and we are so proud of our Outreach Team's participation and funding.

Youth Works Program

To: Anne Short, re.:
Thanks and news of the summer work program

Dear Anne,

The work program is run through an office in Pittsfield and the cost is \$2,000 for each participant. The participating businesses agree to provide mentoring and training but are not expected to pay anything to the participants who are chosen from among students at Greylock, Drury, Hoosac Valley and McCann who are selected by guidance directors as being people who could use the extra help.

Prior to Trump, the federal government provided some work training funds. The state of Massachusetts provides funds, but only for the 50 largest communities in the state. Pittsfield normally has about 50 participants, funded by the state. Unfortunately North Adams, Williamstown and Adams don't qualify for state funds, so all the funding for any Northern Berkshire students must come from private sources.

Sherwood Guernsey put us on to this project

through our Outreach Committee at church when it first began locally about five or six years ago and the church outreach has supported one or two students ever since. ABC picked up sponsorships after hearing of the success students had. Judy Wright was on Outreach and together we went to visit a couple of the student placements five years ago.

One was an African-American junior from Drury, working at Windsor Lake campground for the summer. He was in danger of flunking out of high school. After a successful summer of work, where he never missed a day, he graduated on time the next year.

Another was a 15 year old girl working as a dog groomer. She was a single mother with a one year old, which her mother cared for while she worked. She was offered a job there following her high school graduation.

The first week of the program is taught at BCC where all students are given classes on how to approach work, to be sure to let their employers know whenever they can't make it, etc. -- all the basics. They are each required to set up a bank savings account and to put some of their summer earnings in the bank.

One of the high school guidance directors serves as the mentor during the summer and follows up with their school programs after the summer.

With the success of the summer program, Bruce Grinnell got interested and we started a winter work program which has been funded for 7 Northern Berkshire students with money that Herb Allen has donated to the Church and which has supported this work program. Bruce, Sherwood and I met with the officials at Drury to set that program up. I've also met with the guidance people at Greylock so that Williamstown is always included as well.

Normally they have a graduation program for the participants at the end of the summer and Judy, Anne Clark, Sherwood, and I have attended some of these, which have been held at City Hall in North Adams with the mayor handing out the "diplomas." The first one, I recall, had one person

who worked at the Spoke and when he got his diploma he beamed and said, "I've been hired for my dream job, after I graduate." I believe he is still working at the Spoke, where the manager is a particularly effective mentor.

The program is pretty basic, but that's what's needed. And it works. I hope you get a chance to observe it in person next summer.

And thanks again for the plum jam which I enjoyed this morning.

Phil

Rick Spaulding Sermon

Anne thought that our church members and friends might enjoy this sermon which our friend, Rick Spaulding, gave many years ago, but Anne felt that the words and meaning remains appropriate today.. Rick sent his best wishes and said he is "thinking of you and wishing you all well during this important chapter in the life of that remarkable church."

[Song of Songs 2:8 ff ff, 8:6ff](#)

[I Corinthians 13: 8-13](#)

1st Congregational Church
Williamstown, MA
12 August, 2001 .

For the Love of God

"Good fences make good neighbors," said Robert Frost - in five words pinning down something that so much passes for the truth, especially among us New Englanders, that we've been drawing lines and building walls and organizing lives around it for almost 400 years, or maybe 4,000.

Probably the poem is familiar to you - it's printed as an insert in your bulletin. In it Frost remembers walking in spring on his side of a New England stone wall, his neighbor on the other side, each of them hefting back into place the boulders that heaves of winter weather have dislodged. But Frost says he resists the exercise a little; something inside him knows there's more to what they're about than meets the eye, and so he keeps turning it over in his mind like a boulder, wondering whether it fits. Walking with his neighbor, the mending wall between them, he says,

*Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
'Why do they make good neighbors?
Isn't it Where there are cows?
But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall.
That wants it down.*

Well, summer I guess is the mischief in me - for lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone (literally speaking, anyway). Summer, and the invitation of this congregation's Nominating Committee to help us think a bit about what it means for this to be "Open and Affirming" - whether it fits into our season-by-season understanding of who we are in this church, and whether it fits the way we think theologically about the covenant we made some nine years ago [to be found on page 4 of the red Worship Supplement] "to receive and accept persons as members, employees and friends without fear, prejudice or discrimination due to race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, faith tradition, nationality, marital status, physical condition or financial situation."

We'd like to think, I'm sure, that no one walking into this splendid building and this affirming community would fear even for a moment the possibility of discrimination here. But because the church of Jesus Christ has been so much the source of much of this culture's most persistent discrimination - and because we have not yet made as much progress in conquering it as we'd like to hope, I want to invite you this morning more particularly to think theologically about sexual orientation, perhaps to notice the walls that still stand and to ask to know, with the poet, what we've been walling in or walling out.

Some of you may be preparing to feel uncomfortable, but others of you have said that you feel it's time we talked a bit more as a church about these things. So for starters I'm choosing the company of poets - Frost, and St. Paul with his magnificent oration to love, and that other poet, the mystic who wrote the Song of Songs, the Bible's greatest flirtation with the sacred realm of fleshly

love - to reopen the conversation by saying, Arise my love, my fair one, and come away. ...For love is strong as death - its flashes are flashes of fire. Many waters cannot quench it, neither can floods drown it - and if you build a stone wall down the middle of it (which is a very New England thing to do), you run the risk, in the long run, of hefting up a boulder into the place where your heart once was.

Maps have lines to keep us worlds apart, another poet said. Every summer of our childhood, my siblings and I stuffed our energy into the back seat of the car for a two-days' drive across the country to the beach. We fashioned our summer mischief into a game that told more truth than we realized: as we crossed Indiana, Ohio, interminable Pennsylvania, we'd watch like hawks for the sign marking the state line - and when it came, we'd lift up our feet as high as possible, to avert untold catastrophe by causing the car to trip over the invisible line. Today in urban neighborhoods I notice that people play the adult version.

Among all kinds of lines you can't see but which are as powerful as anything in the city, the game is: on which side of the all-powerful invisible line is the garbage can, the snow pile, the dog's mess, the flower bed? On which side of the invisible line that somebody else drew does the property gain \$20,000 in value - or lose it? On which side of the line are the public schools considered good - or not good?

Some people find things so much more comfortable when the lines are clear. And where would all our therapists be without our need to struggle expensively to figure out where our boundaries are?

But the one who draws the line wields power over what it divides. And that power is probably what has seemed to connect our line-drawing exercises with God. Lines we suppose God drew - between clean and unclean, between orthodox and heretic, between the races and between male and female - have a tendency to conceal, not so much the holy, but the unholy power of one over another that someone is trying to protect. Our Genesis myth has God "divid[ing] the light from the darkness" - clinching the divine power by exercising the prerogative of naming: the darkness, night, and the light, day.

But if you go looking for that line between night and day, you won't find it. If you watch a dawn or a

sunset, you can see the deeper truth: there is no line of scrimmage between darkness and light at all. They are two aspects of the same reality - light and dark, night and day - so beautifully and indivisibly entwined, reaching deeply into each other's natures to embrace and inflame the sky with their passion for each other. I think what makes the sky so stunning at those times of day is that for once we can see these different facets of the truths embracing each other, aching so beautifully to be understood in their wholeness!

Some people draw lines because they need them - for power, for safety, for clarity. And given the hard weather that sometimes heaves up under these lives of ours, there are a few things down the middle of which it might sometimes be helpful to build good fences: and healthy boundaries...

But before I built a wall, I'd want to know what I was walling in and walling out. With respect to sexual orientation, there are lots of people who are trying to build walls tight down the middle of Jove - and it seems only fair to ask the question, whose power is being protected when such lines keep us worlds apart?

Here is Dr. Laura Schlesinger every day on the radio, separating what she thinks is the light of love from its darkness, calling the love on each side of her line by names she thinks she gets to choose. Here are the Methodists and Presbyterians, drawing their lines down the middle of matrimony with their ecclesiastical scalpels, thinking they are making good neighbors while they cut the arteries of the living tissue of love.

Here are the generals with their policy of don't-ask-don't-tell, trying to draw into being an imaginary boundary between a soldier's private wholeness and public profile. Here are the politicians, drawing their lines in the sand between what they think the public is ready for and what it is not ready for - not that they want to discriminate, they say, never that - but that the public doesn't really need protection from discriminatory firing, isn't ready for gay marriage, isn't comfortable with same-sex adoptive parents, isn't ready for a gay spouse to be able to visit his or her beloved in the ICU when life hangs in the balance.

All of them need their lines to keep us worlds apart. All of them are more comfortable if some

love is on this side of the line, and some love is on that side of the line. All of them, walking the walls, are petrified. Petrified. They strain to heft the boulders that once were, one assumes, their hearts.

But for the love of God - we are talking about love! Not property! And these matters come home to roost here in church because what's at stake for people on the other side of the invisible line is the truth and trustworthiness of things we all learned here in church. "Beloved, let us love one another - for love is of God, and the one who abides in love, abides in God."

We learned that here. "Greater love has no person than to lay down life for a friend." We learned that here. "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters!" We learned that here. "Set me as a seal upon your heart - for many waters cannot quench love." We learned that here.

We have walked with these things we learned down the boundaries others before us built upon the face of the world we inherited - and even before we could quite name what was going on, something inside us knew another truth: something there is that cannot love this wall.

And we know something else. We know it even before we are quite able to name it - but naming this truth, learning it and owning it and offering it to everybody who ever honors this place by crossing its threshold, is what will truly make us "open and affirming."

We have begun to see that over time, all the loves we have learned - the love of friends, the love of spouse and partner, the love of nature, the love of children, the love of humanity, the love of Christ, the love of God - over time, as we live more and more deeply into the meaning of our lives and learn to make more and more responsible and careful choices, over time all those loves simply and quietly and slowly become harder and harder to tell apart.

All those loves slowly become part of one great love, which as time deepens is revealed like the dawn and sunset to be singular, whole, clean - and indivisible.

I don't think I have to tell you that some Religious People want to fence off the love of God as though it were a property over which someone could hold title.

And maybe, to be fair, their desire begins in a respectful or reverent instinct.

But fences like that are something which God never seems to have wanted - from the time God pleaded with David not to build a temple to separate God from the rest of the landscape to the time Jesus pleaded with people not to keep the sabbath separate from the work of love and justice. There's nothing irreverent about putting our loves in time together with God's love above all time - for reverence is the spine of all true love, the breath within all true love. And time is love's medium.

Any parent knows this is true - knows what happens over time: how you think you are so exhausted that you have not one thing left to give, and then there is a cut on your child's finger, or a monster under the bed, and in the most elementary act of bandaging or exorcism you not only give a love you couldn't imagine you'd have any more of to give, but you receive a love you wouldn't have known how to ask for. And there, sitting on the edge of the bathtub with a band-aid sticking to your finger and tears dampening the shoulder of your shirt, you realize that you are in the presence of the Love at the center of the universe.

Any lover knows what happens over time - how you look up from your book on an ordinary rainy night to see your beloved there, dozing over his own book, or balancing her checking account, and just for an instant a miracle is there in the room with you, the seal on the mystery of life itself in a love you don't deserve and can't fathom but which is yours just in the act of breathing and sharing life - and you realize that you are in the presence of the Love at the center of the universe.

Anyone who has loved a long love, or loved a deep love, or a wide love, knows that in the careful choosing of what is good and responsible and in the wearing away of things that don't matter like the fluff of some Velveteen Rabbit, all these loves are finally becoming translucent to the love of God. As though, in the fullness of time, God were loving us through the love of the other. As though it were God loving the other through us.

Anyone who has shared God's hope for this church - that it might become, over time, in its worship and its learning, its seeking of justice and

its embrace of each and every life that crosses its threshold, transparent to the love of God - anyone who has loved what this church might become knows how open and affirming is the light that, here and there and now and then, begins to shine through us when we let all those loves become part of one great love. So every so often, as the seasons change, probably we should walk the walls and see what's happened to them - walk the walls to see what invisible lines might have gotten drawn when we weren't aware of it, and ask ourselves again what we've been walling in and walling out. Every so often we should probably let spring be the mischief in us, and walk the walls to see what invisible lines may have been etched across our lives since last we looked - to see how the weather of God's love has been heaving boulders around, remaking the world.

So - Arise, my loves, my fair ones! Let us be walking. We are called to set holy love as a seal, not only upon one another's hearts, but upon the heart of the world. And this love is stronger than death, brighter than fire, longer than time. The winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the time of singing has come, and the voice of love is heard in our land. Lo, the best loves we love in this life are revealing their oneness. They are all becoming part of the love of God!

The Rev. Richard Evans Spalding
Williams College
Williamstown, Massachusetts

The Williams Inn: Then and Now
by Gail Burns
Autumn, 2019

There have been very few years when the Williams Inn was not owned by Williams College, but thanks to four hard-working innkeepers -L. G. Treadway and his son John, and Carl and Marilyn Faulkner—the town has had a strong attachment to the business.

In 1902 Arthur H. L. "Bemie" Bemis had a sign made reading "The Williams Inn" and installed it on his business at the northeastern end of Spring Street. Bemis was a popular shopkeeper, selling newspapers, candy, tobacco products, and Williams mementos, and, while he did rent rooms upstairs, his "inn" was hardly in competition with the nearby Greylock Hotel or the Idlewild.

Bemis had been inspired by talk among some New York City-based Williams alumni of the need for a "Williams Inn" to accommodate them on their visits to their Alma mater. A committee was formed that included College President Henry Hopkins, money was raised, and plans were even drawn up for the site on Park Street now occupied by the Paresky Center. The business in which they sold shares in 1909 was named the Williams Alumni House Inc., not the Williams Inn, and it was housed in the former home of mathematics professor Cyrus Morris Dodd (Williams 1855).

In 1880 Professor Dodd had designed a large home just behind Consumption Hill for his family. It sat quite alone on its property at the time and afforded fine views in all directions from its Swiss balconies and verandas. After Dodd's death in 1897, his daughters Grace and Agnes, both unmarried and in need of an income, began operating a boarding house on the premises. It was called The Netherleigh, and the sisters added a wing on the north side in 1902.

In 1909 the alumni acquired what had become known as "Dodd's Monstrosity" and they put in charge another woman in need of an income, the recent widow of political science professor Henry Loomis Nelson. In less than three years the business lost \$57,000, so in 1912 Mr. Lauris Goldsmith Treadway, who was then at the Idlewild Hotel in South Williamstown, was engaged to have charge of the College Commons in Currier Hall and to manage the Alumni House.

Alumni House/Williams Inn

Believing that visitors were unlikely to book a room at the Alumni House, L. G. Treadway purchased, for \$5, the sign and the name "Williams Inn" from Mr. Bemis. However, the legal name of the establishment he managed continued to be the Williams Alumni House Inc. until that corporation dissolved in 1956. He also started using what became the nationally known Treadway lamplighter logo on signs directing customers to the Inn in its off-the-beaten-track location.

The Inn flourished under L.G.'s leadership. Within a year he was turning away business and approached the college trustees for money to enlarge the premises. When they refused he threatened to resign. The result was that in

December of 1915 excavations for the foundation of a \$25,000 new addition, containing “20 sleeping rooms and 14 baths,” were under rush order. That addition to the south and west of the Inn, completed in 1916, balanced the wing on the east side and gave the building the gentle U-shape it sports.



The Treadway Inns eventually comprised more than two dozen establishments nationwide, primarily east of the Mississippi. All five of the Treadway children—three sons, Richard, John, and David, and two daughters, Antoinette and Jane—were born in Williamstown, some in the Inn itself. The Inn was a major employer in town. The Treadways treated their employees well and they in turn were a very loyal group. In 1962 the Treadways celebrated 50 years in business with much fanfare.

John Treadway was an amateur ornithologist and he planted gardens designed to attract as many species of birds as possible, simultaneously attracting many bird-lovers to the Inn. In 1969 the gardens were the site of a college production of Shakespeare’s “Henry IV, Part I.” The Twelve Days of Christmas were celebrated in the Inn, commencing with the Boar’s Head banquet, a tradition continued by the Faulkners into the new millennium. Pip the cat was a beloved member of the staff, and there was briefly a hound named Eph.

In 1936 it was announced that L. G. had leased the Inn from the owner, Williams Alumni House, Inc., for “a term of years” and intended to “operate the Inn on his own behalf.” In 1956, after the Alumni House corporation was dissolved, ownership of the land and buildings became the property of the President and Trustees of Williams College, with the Treadways continuing to lease. It appeared by then that fraternities would be disbanded and the college would have to feed and house the majority of their student body for the first time since 1833. In 1960 the college announced

plans for \$250,000 in renovations to the Inn, chief among them the installation of a wet pipe sprinkler system for fire suppression, without which the Inn could not later have been converted to student housing.

In 1960 the Treadways expressed their first interest in the property on the north side of Field Park. The former Proctor mansion, home to Kappa Alpha. The Treadways along with the Alumni Society petitioned the town to rezone the residential parcel to a Tourist Business District so that they could use the planned new fraternity building as a “summer guest house.” The town refused. The Proctor House burned in 1968, the fraternities were disbanded, the college acquired the property, and nothing was built on the site for several years.



When the Treadways’ lease with the college expired in 1970, the college did not choose to renew it. In-stead they offered the Treadways an exchange of what is now known as Dodd House for the Kappa Alpha property in order to preserve a thriving, tax-paying business and a major employer of long-standing. As college property the land was off the tax rolls.

By 1970 the Treadway family had sold their business to Restaurant Associates, who in 1971 sold to NBO Industries (formerly known as the BOWL-O-MAT Company), which promptly took the name Treadway Companies, Inc. While L. G. and John Treadway were part of the public face of the company during negotiations with the town in the early 1970s, they were not part of the legal entity that owned the Inn.

(to be continued)

Cont'd in October Chatter with: "The Inn at Field Park" and continuing on through the Faulkner's management and ownership to the new Williams Inn.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY WISHES

When you see these folks,
wish them a Happy Birthday

September Birthdays

- 1. Abbie Hatton
 - 22. Adrianna Duhan
 - 25. Marilyn Faulkner
 - 27. Elizabeth Smith
 - 28. Brad Wells
-