

**GREETINGS!!** We greet you as the Season of Epiphany concludes on Valentine's Day which is also Ash Wednesday this year. We hope some light has shone in the darkness that many people are experiencing these days and that the Valentine's sprinkled throughout this issue reminds you of God's love that shows up repeatedly and sometimes unexpectedly. It continues to be an honor and pleasure to serve as Chaplains to Retired Clergy in Vermont.

In our last newsletter, we asked people to send us favorite quotations that have inspired/nourished them through their years of ministry. If you have a favorite that you would like to share with this wider audience, please send it to one of us for inclusion in the next newsletter. We can include your name or print the quote anonymously. Here, without further ado are this month's ...

**PERSPECTIVES TO PONDER:**

1. Man is equally incapable of seeing the nothingness from which he emerges and the infinity in which he is engulfed" ~ **Blaise Pascal** ~  

2. "Somewhere we know that without a lonely place our lives are in danger. Somewhere we know that without silence words lose their meaning, that without listening, speaking no longer heals, that without distance closeness cannot cure. Somewhere we know that without a lonely place our actions quickly become empty gestures. The careful balance between silence and words, withdrawal and involvement, distance and closeness, solitude and community forms the basis of the Christian life and should therefore be the subject of our most personal attention." ~ From **Henri Nouwen's** Out of Solitude ~  

3. "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."  
~ **Theodore Roosevelt** ~ 
4. "Vocation does not mean a goal that I pursue. It means a calling that I hear. Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am. I must listen for the truths and values at the heart of my own identity, not the standards by which I must live--but the standards by which I cannot help but live if I am living my own life." ~ **Parker Palmer** ~ (from Dick Bower)  

5. "... God apparently does not expect me to live up to all the BIG promises I made if Bob could have an ending that was not too difficult. I'm happy and relieved to accept the Higher Wisdom." ~ Ivy Freeman, widow of retired priest, Bob Freeman ~  


6. “God, seeing the world falling into ruin through fear, never stops working to bring it back into being through love, inviting it back by grace, holding it firm by charity, and embracing it with affection.” ~ Peter Chrysologus, Bishop of Ravenna, 5th Century ~ (from Thad Bennett)



**QUICK NOTES FROM THE CHAPLAINS....**

FROM JOHN MORRIS: In November of 2017, Terry Gross interviewed The Rev. Greg Boyle, a Jesuit priest who has worked with gang members in Los Angeles for many years. This interview is as profound as any I have heard. Boyle reflects on a wide variety of topics---faith, hope, death, healing, etc.--- in deep and amazingly helpful ways. It does not relate directly to the ministry of retired clergy, but it has great insights for anyone who listens, no matter where they are in their journey. It lasts about 40 minutes: <https://www.npr.org/programs/fresh-air/2017/11/13/563738497/fresh-air-for-nov-13-2017-priest-helps-former-gang-members-start-new-lives>

FROM CAROLE WAGEMAN: I am doing some research, writing, and workshop/retreat development on the subject of “Spiritual Dignity with Elders: Hidden in Plain Sight”. Would love to have your thoughts—particularly around your own experiences both before and since retirement. How does the church support the spiritual development of elders? Is there a “black hole” that people drop into because of age and/or frailty? Is “the Church” missing something here? You all have such a wealth of experience with many unique perspectives, I would appreciate learning from you. You can contact me at my email: [revmomvt@gmail.com](mailto:revmomvt@gmail.com) Thanks in advance for any help and wisdom you can offer!



**...AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR SPONSORS- CHURCH PENSION GROUP:**  
**[HTTPS://WWW.CPG.ORG/RETIRED-CLERGY](https://www.cpg.org/retired-clergy)**

TAX QUESTIONS: CPG has received several inquiries regarding taxes and continues to provide a Tax Hotline to all of our members. The two qualified CPAs below might be able to help you if you have questions:

- Ms. Nancy N. Fritschner, CPA ..... (877) 305-1414
- The Rev. Canon Bill Geisler, CPA (ret.)..... (877) 305-1415

REMINDERS: For questions or concerns about your retirement benefits, you can contact **Client Services 1-866-802-6222** (for pensions, life insurance, annuities, retirement savings, and disability) or **1-800-480-9967** (for medical, dental or vision).

A NEW CPG PROGRAM FOR RETIREES: In 2017, a new program (the Provincial Retiree Gathering) was designed and piloted to address the specific needs for retired clergy and their spouses in Province II and IV. Individually and together, couples will explore issues of identity, roles, and relationships, having time to renew and reimagine

their vision for life. Based on the CREDO model of clergy wellness, the program focuses on the areas of spiritual, vocational, financial well-being, physical, and psychological health. These programs will be offered Provincially; retirees will receive individual invitations to attend 6 months prior to the events. If you would like to attend please contact the CPG Pastoral Care team or <https://www.cpg.org/retired-clergy/learning/credo/> or the Education and Wellness Office at 888-274-2828.

E-LEARNING: Another new program available on the CPG website is a drop down menu entitled “Learning” <https://www.cpg.org/retired-clergy/learning/> Especially be sure to check out the e-learning library—many subjects, short videos, helpful info. Become the expert in your neighborhood now!!!



Be sure to contact Church Pension if you have a change of address, phone or email. They keep a master data list for all of us retirees that is quite secure but, of course, is only as up-to-date as individuals make it!



### **ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF CHAPLAINS:**

Each Fall, Church Pension Fund sponsors a conference for all the Chaplains to Retired Clergy in Provinces I and II. This past September, we attended the four day conference held in Providence, Rhode Island.

In addition to meeting other chaplains whose ministry is similar to ours and discussing with them the joys and challenges of this ministry, we also had the opportunity to get to know representatives from the Church Pension Fund who work with Chaplains from all Provinces of the Episcopal Church. They shared information and resources with us to help us better understand how the Pension Fund’s programs can assist retired clergy/spouses. One quip that some of you some of you may have heard before but is worth repeating: Regarding notifying the Pension Fund of the death of a cleric or spouse of a cleric, it is necessary for the Bishop to make official notification. The saying is, “You’re not dead until the Bishop says so!” Worth remembering!!

In addition to spending time with the other Chaplains and Church Pension staff, we had a very valuable session with The Rev. Colette Wood, who has spent a significant amount of time in recent years researching and working with Alzheimer’s and other dementia-related disease patients. She is the Rector of All Saints Episcopal Church in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is also the chaplain in two senior living facilities, including their memory care units, and is the author of Do This Remembering Me: The Spiritual Care of Those with Alzheimer’s and Dementia. In her presentation, she offered many very practical suggestions on how to minister to people living with these diseases. (“Dementia can’t steal their faith.”) In addition to her book, published by Morehouse Barlow, she gave us some handouts with useful guidelines and suggestions about communication tips and useful worship customs.

Please let us know if you would like to see some of information we received from Rev. Wood.

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