

THE TOWER

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*Celebrating 125 Years in Service to the LORD
1887 - 2012*

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“The Future”

(this is the third of three installments of the three speeches delivered on Sunday, September 23, 2012, at the Wachusett Country Club during the program of Park Congregational Church’s 125th Anniversary Banquet)



Good afternoon,

When I was presented with the task of discussing the future of Park Church at the Anniversary Banquet, I have to admit, it seemed a daunting task. If there is one thing I know about the future, it is that it is unpredictable. However, in doing some thinking about what the future holds for Park Congregational Church, and in pouring over photos and documents for the commemorative booklet, it turns out that the task of discussing the church’s future wasn’t such a hard one after all. Of course, the future path of Park Congregational Church has been laid by its successful and prosperous past--by those who founded the church, those who donated to the church, and those who organized church groups--and it resides within all current church members and friends.

As American politician Adlai Stevenson said: “We can chart our future clearly and wisely only when we know the path which has led to the present.” As we’ve already heard from Pastor Gary and from Miss Linda in their *Tower* articles of October and November, the 125-year history of Park Church has been a full one. From its founding in 1887, to the installations of pastors, the bagpipes and tea on Scottish Sundays, the Eagle Scout projects from Troop 60, to the musicals, the Choir Cantatas, and the Sunday School Suppers, our church community has organized and supported myriad events and activities. And despite our decrease in size, Park Congregational Church and its members remain vital and active, not only with the many events organized in this special 125th anniversary year, but with the events that we continue to organize year after year. These events help to encourage a sense of community among members and church friends, helping us to build a strong foundation upon which to build the future of our church.

Certainly, the future of our church is seen most readily within the children and youth of Park Congregational Church. Continuing the traditions of the past, the Youth Group and Sunday School children also work to build and encourage a sense of fellowship

among all members through helping with Sunday School suppers, bake sales, or special Christmas and Easter services. They serve our church as acolytes, youth deacons, singers in the Chorister Choir, and speakers during the worship services on Children's and Youth Sundays. Furthermore, the strong bonds of friendship among the youth and children inspire strong bonds of friendship among us "older" members of the congregation.

Not only do the youth and children of our church enliven worship service, the younger generations have also influenced the way through which our church communicates. Currently, more members and friends of the church are asking for their monthly *Tower* newsletter to be delivered to them via email. By the same token, news announcements are made on the church's website and several church committees communicate through e-mail when all members are not available for a meeting. Most recently, Park Congregational Church has created a facebook page (www.facebook.com/ParkCongregationalChurch). The new facebook page is a way through which the church is reaching into the future, staying current, and encouraging members and friends to communicate with each other outside of church. On the facebook page, we share news and upcoming events, well wishes, photographs and thought-provoking articles. By reaching into an online space to build community, Park Congregational Church's facebook page is helping us to achieve our goal of being a mainstream, open, and affirming community of faith.

As we work towards achieving future objectives through fostering Youth Group and Sunday School activities, we as a church also chart the future by setting other future goals. We make membership pledges, set fundraising objectives, plan church activities and events and organize schedules for Bible Study classes and monthly Game Nights. Setting goals, and working towards them together, is an integral part of insuring a successful future, and something that was exceedingly important to many of Park Congregational Church's early members and friends.

Looking through old church photos and ephemera in preparation for anniversary events, I came across a small pamphlet advertising the Park Congregational Church Membership Crusade. The crusade took place under the pastorate of Myron Fowell, probably in 1936, though the pamphlet is not dated. What struck me most about the crusade pamphlet was the list of goals on the last page. The list included monetary goals for fundraising, an attendance goal of 150 people for 5 consecutive Sundays, and (most inspiring to me) an objective for "the creation of a spirit of confidence and encouragement in the entire church as a spiritual preparation for the celebration of the church's 50th Anniversary in February 1937." The goals written out on the Crusade Pamphlet showed an awareness of the importance of commemorating the past while

fostering a feeling of enthusiasm and community in order to build a momentum that would carry them into the future with vigor.

As a church community, we have fostered that same growth and sprit in our youth and Sunday School children, we've stepped forward into the digital age, and we've begun to set goals and objectives for our next 125 years. Although we may not be able to reign in 150 people on 5 Sundays in a row, there is no reason why our small church can't do big things. Here at Park Congregational Church, members and friends all know each other, care about each other, and have a stake in each other's lives. So, as this 125th anniversary year draws to a close, let us prepare to move into this new chapter in our church lives by laying the foundation for a prosperous future--setting goals, attending events, utilizing new technologies and supporting the youngest members of our church. May our past inspire our future, for the next 125 years, and beyond.

Kimberly Toney



TO REV. DR. SHAHINIAN AND PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

How God seems to work in mysterious ways! My sincere thanks to Park Congregational Church for the Thanksgiving gift card I received at a time in my life that allowed my family and I to realize the true meaning of thankfulness.

A Grateful Recipient of a Thanksgiving Gift Card



. . . for your continuous support to the Park Church Thanksgiving Project. This year we purchased Shaw's Supermarket gift cards for 5 families consisting of 8 adults and 9 children. The amounts were determined by family size and ranged from \$100 to \$200. Once again your generosity has helped lessen the burden of these families at this time of year.

Coordinators: Ann Lavalley and Christine Wilson
(and thank you Ann and Chris for once again spearheading this important ministry of our church!)

THANK YOU PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

I talk about you a lot. In face-to-face visits and in our emerging digital ministry, I tell stories about how you and other Christians serve faithfully and steadily in your local churches. The Massachusetts Council of Churches is a network of interconnected individuals, churches, and denominations committed to a vital and unified Christian witness. The Holy Spirit is leading us to write a new chapter in our honorable story.

God is doing something new with the 110-year-old Massachusetts Council of Churches which stepped out in faith to hire a 33-year-old young woman like me. In an age of division, we continue to tell a story of unity. In an age of rapid technological change, we are adapting to tell the timeless story of reconciliation in Christ. In an age of religious, national and ethnic intolerance, we are writing a new story of interreligious cooperation.

The Massachusetts Council of Churches is building a network of Christians who are convinced that what binds us together is stronger than what divides us. We are investing time and energy into our digital ministry to connect us to new communities. We are partnering to prompt vital worship, like our recent event on ecumenical hymn sharing with Boston University School of Theology. We are creating cross-denominational learning opportunities, like our “Christian Unity in the Digital Age” workshops. We are introducing a younger generation to our ‘saints,’ as we honored ecumenical liturgist Rev. Dr. Horace Allen at this year’s annual meeting. We are rebuilding a network of Christians with political power on Beacon Hill with the recent Ecumenical Advocacy Call-in Week in support of key housing and homeless prevention budget items.

We are visible across Massachusetts with “ecumenical delegations” at each denomination’s annual gathering and liturgical celebrations. In my first year as Executive Director, I have committed to guest preaching and teaching in every county in Massachusetts. We are building a web of Christians across this state committed to the vitality and unity of the Church.

We thank you for your prayers, your connections, and your financial support.

Advent Blessings from the Massachusetts Council of Churches,
The Reverend Laura Everett, Executive Director
(the Massachusetts Council of Churches is one of the budgeted items in our Missions Budget)



. . . thank you to Malcolm Beauvais for his generous donation which allowed the Deacons to select and purchase new purple paraments for our chapel altar. The new paraments that adorn the altar presently as we celebrate the Advent season are in loving memory of Malcolm's parents, Alden and Dorothy Beauvais.

THANK YOU also to Ron Devoe who designed and created a solid brass rod to secure the new paraments in place on the pulpit.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Mary Lowell	1
Laura Harris	7
Rev. Martin Perry	7
Dee Dorsey	17
David Gifford	20
Christine Wilson	20



Our annual Christmas Cantata will take place on Sunday, December 23, during our 10:00am worship service in Davis Chapel. Our Choir Director David Rose and devoted choir members are busy preparing a beautiful morning of music for all.



Christmas Party

The Sunday School will have a visit from Santa following the morning worship service of Sunday, December 16. The whole church family is invited to the Lee Room for this festive occasion! One is never too old to enjoy a visit from Santa!!

And he will be their peace



Isaiah 53:5

**BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE WILL BE ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19,
AT 7:00 PM IN DAVIS CHAPEL**

Take an hour out of your busy schedule for a time of peace and reflection, especially for those who are facing sadness during the holiday season. You will have an opportunity to light a candle and offer a prayer, to meditate on and experience the message of Christmas, and to partake of Holy Communion.



Christmas Eve
SERVICE

Our Christmas Eve Service this year will be at 11:00pm in Davis Chapel. It will be our traditional Candlelight Service with the singing of "Silent Night" at midnight.



Our Sunday School will present their Christmas gift to the congregation on Sunday, December 16, during our worship service at 10:00am in Davis Chapel.

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**GAME NIGHT WILL TAKE PLACE ON SATURDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 8,
AT 7:00PM AT THE CHURCH IN THE LEE ROOM**

Bring your favorite board games! Bring your friends! Bring snacks! It's lots of fun! Youth and children are welcome! It's a great way to socialize!

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**MOVIE MATINEE ON DECEMBER 9
PRESENTS
*HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS!***



This is the original animated version from 1966 of the famous story by Dr. Seuss. Bitter and hateful, the Grinch is tormented by the thought of the Whos of Whoville having a happy time celebrating Christmas. And so he hatches a plan whereby, disguised as Santa Claus, with his dog made to look like a reindeer, he raids their village on Christmas Eve to steal all traces of Christmas. Don't forget to bring your brown bag lunch. We meet in the Roy Room following the worship service. The movie begins at 11:30am. The film is geared for youth and children, but even grownups can learn some lessons from this wonderfully entertaining 26-minute cartoon narrated by legendary horror actor Boris Karloff.



“The Wise Men and the Shepherds”

When we compare the Wise Men with the shepherds, it seems that the Wise Men had a much more difficult task. They had to do painstaking research before they even left their homeland of Persia, take a survey of the kings of the ancient Near East, analyze old prophecies, and rely on their ability to read the stars in order to find the infant Jesus in the insignificant little town of Bethlehem.

None of that hard work was necessary for the shepherds. They were visited by the angel on the night of Jesus’s birth and told exactly where he was born, what he would be wearing, and where he would be lying. In addition this lone angel was backed up by a full angelic choir to make sure that the unsuspecting shepherds got the message.

With such a clear announcement by an angelic host, dazzling heavenly lights, and just about an exact street address, is it any wonder that the shepherds found the baby Jesus so easily?

The Wise Men, however, could only travel by night, took many months to reach Jerusalem, perhaps even a couple of years, and once there, had to stop and ask for directions. By the time they finally found the holy family, Jesus was living in a house (Matthew 2:11), no longer lying in a manger.

In this festive season, do we identify more with the shepherds or with the Wise Men? Is the time, directions, and destination of our journey clear, so that each morning, we know exactly what to do, where to go, and what to expect? Or are we more like the Wise Men who have no specific directions or exact instructions, and are simply stumbling each day toward what seems to be an elusive dream?

Even if we identify more with the Wise Men, we should notice in our famous Christmas story that both groups reached their destination, though it took the Wise Men much, much longer. We must stay on the journey that God has set before us, for we have the promise that if we keep our attention on Jesus, he will lead us to our goal.

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Gary



As the calendar year 2012 comes to an end, looking back from 1887 to this date in time has been a marvelous period of reflection on the ministry of our Park Congregational Church.

Time passes quickly, and through the 125 years of the history of our church, many souls dedicated themselves to our ministry and served and sacrificed without hesitation for the good of all.

We have celebrated our commitment to the LORD for the past 12 months with food, music, and word. We have celebrated God's WORD . . . the same WORD that has been and will remain in our church's ministry from the Past to the Future. Our Past has inspired our Future . . . "and we also thank God continually" . . . 1 Thessalonians 2:13



It is now almost 4½ years since we have taken the “leap of faith” and began worshipping in Davis Chapel here at First Baptist Church. Praise the LORD!

The “leap of faith” that we took left some things behind, but made room for new beginnings as well. As always, God guided our insight into what God would want us to do in order to continue our vital Park Congregational Church ministry, and as always, Gods has blessed our “leap of faith.”

New beginnings are especially in sight as we look at the newness of our Davis Chapel. How beautiful are the new white walls, new floor, new rug, and finally, the new graceful window decorations. All the renovations to the chapel serve to remind us how thankful we are as a congregation to the First Baptist Church family for their welcoming us into their building and helping our Park Congregational Church family to worship side by side as brothers and sisters in Christ.

PRAISE THE LORD for the “old,” the “new,” the “past,” and the “future” of both our church families.



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