

THE TOWER

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

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“The Present”

(this is the second 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,

Looking at your program booklet, it is no surprise to any of you that I am here to speak about THE PRESENT. Also, it is no surprise to anyone here that whenever I celebrate Children’s Time with our Sunday School and our Youth Group (who are no longer children but still inspire not only the children but “Miss Linda” by still sitting up on the chancel with the children on Sunday mornings) I always have “props” with me! Well, this afternoon is no different. In fact, I have TWO props with me. But wait. Are they really “props”? I would argue that they are really “PRESENTS”!

What a wonderful afternoon is today! A day for celebration! A day for cheers! A 125-year milestone in the ministry of Park Congregational Church’s service to the LORD! A PARTY! And, who goes to a party without a “present”? So, as you can see, I have not only one, but two “presents” (gift boxes) with me today. One is larger than the other, but very similar. They look very much the same except for their size. But the size really does not mean much, as something very small like a DIAMOND could be in the little box and maybe POPCORN filling the larger box! So, now, let me talk about these “presents.”

The dictionary defines a “present” as “a gift.”

Most often, much time is spent by us when shopping for a “present.” WHAT IS THE OCCASION? WHO IS THE PRESENT FOR? HOW COSTLY WILL THE PRESENT BE? WILL THE PRESENT BE APPRECIATED BY WHOEVER RECEIVES IT? Ah, yes, PRESENTING a “present” is not always easy, especially if you are like Miss Linda who makes a total project out of selecting a “present” for anyone! Well, today, I am not worried that my “presents” will not meet all the concerns that I have just itemized. The OCCASION is an anniversary celebration. One might call it a BIRTHDAY. A 125-year-old birthday! I would challenge the thought than any of us here have ever attended a birthday party for anyone 125 years old!! I once attended a birthday party for a wonderful neighbor who was celebrating his 103rd birthday and still was quite able to enjoy his cake and ice cream! But 125 years old??? I don’t think so!

Now what is the cost of these “presents”? Well, as many, many people

contributed to the cost of them, it really did not cost ME much at all. You see, the people that contributed to purchasing these “presents” had been preparing for today for a long, long time; some are here today in body, some in spirit only. Without a doubt, I am sure that it was not easy, and even maybe sometimes seemingly impossible to be able to plan and sacrifice enough to purchase these “presents.” But, all working together and remembering the REASON why they were planning and sacrificing for such a long, long time and always remembering the REASON that they were dedicating themselves and that their sacrificing was for this day was NOT for themselves, not to be the recipients of the “presents,” but to be the presenters, made it possible to wrap these “presents” for today! Then, there is the time spent securing these “presents.” As much time as I spend selecting a present for someone, the many, many people who purchased these “presents” for this special day spent more collective time than I could ever imagine, not to mention the time spent securing these presents.

Aren’t these “presents” pretty? Aren’t they colorful? Look at all the different colors of the “presents.” Though they are so different, the colors all blend together to make the whole “present” simply BEAUTIFUL!!

Well, after all this time, I’m sure you are wishing me to do something with these “PRESENTS.” Shall we open them now?

What?? What did I hear somebody say? I have been talking about the WRONG thing all this time? I am supposed to be talking about another kind of PRESENT, as “the present time”?? All this has been for naught? I think naught. I have been talking about the right thing. The PRESENT . . . THE PRESENT as the dictionary defines as “**a moment or period of time; a time between the past and the future; THE NOW.**”

You see, what are contained in these “presents” are YOU. YOU are THE NOW! It is this very moment in time. It is THE NOW. All of you represent the PRESENT! The PRESENT is truly all we have! It is the only time we can act upon NOW! It is the only time we can LIVE in the moment! NOW!

YOU, the Church Family and Friends of Park Congregational Church, are these “PRESENTS.” You are also THE PRESENT. You cover both definitions of the word “PRESENT.” You who serve and sacrifice for the work of the LORD today and now. You, the ones acknowledging the PAST, looking forward to the FUTURE, but living this moment.

Whether you are a member of Park Church, whether you sing in Her Choir, whether you teach Her young children, whether you serve as a Deacon or Trustee, whether you serve on one of Her committees, whether you help to share in Her ministry to the elderly and infirm at the Odd Fellows Home, whether you are Her Sunday School child, whether you are one of Her budding Youth, whether you are one

of Her inspiring elderly, whether you are a friend to Her who steps up to help and support Her in any way, whether you are our NEADS dog, “Benny,” who serves his Master in a way only an animal can do. TODAY! NOW! Living our 125TH Anniversary motto, which is “Our Past Has Inspired Our Future”! For the past is but a memory and the future a hope . . . but HERE AND NOW is our present!

So, now again the question arises. Should we open these presents? Why bother? The boxes have been open all along as they contain YOU. True “presents.” Gifts that testify to THE PRESENT time in the life of Park Congregational Church.

The noted writer, antiquarian, and historian ALICE MORSE EARLE, who interestingly was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1851, and who traveled the world, died, and was buried in Worcester in the year 1911, wrote,

“Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. And today? Today is a gift. That’s why we call it THE PRESENT.”

Ladies, gentlemen, youth, and elderly, I present to you, these symbolic “presents.” YOU are THE GIFTS OF PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH!

May God bless the United States of America where we are able to worship in freedom of choice and may God continue to bestow blessings upon Park Congregational Church as She carries on her ministry, testifying to the Glory of God for many more years to come, and may God continue to bless each and every one of you as YOU continue to answer God’s call to SERVE.

Miss Linda



To all who worked to make the Sunday School Baked Stuffed Chicken Supper such a success! Dinner was delicious, raffle baskets beautiful, the profit was \$300.00, and the evening . . . “priceless”!!

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4, AT 2:00AM

Thank you to the Youth Group who led the Worship Service on Sunday, October 28, during Pastor Gary's absence and "Thank You" to Joan Pierce who delivered the sermon that morning.

The following note was received with a monetary donation of appreciation to the Anniversary Booklet Committee.

"The 125th Anniversary Booklet was superb! You really outdid yourselves!"
Maryrose Lynch, Clearwater, FL



SUNDAY SCHOOL BREAD SALE!

Back by popular demand, the Sunday School will be holding a

BREAD SALE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18, in Gordon Hall during Fellowship Hour

BAKE . . . BUY . . . or BOTH!

Just in time for Thanksgiving!!

CHRISTMAS WREATH SALE!

The Christmas Wreath Sale is now on and the Youth Group/Sunday School are currently taking orders! Those who ordered either wreaths or centerpieces last year enjoyed the beauty of their purchases for many weeks and those who received them as gifts were delighted! **ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY NOVEMBER 18** and wreaths/centerpieces will be shipped UPS and will arrive between December 3rd and December 10th. See any YG/SS salesperson for pictorial brochures with choices!

**GAME NIGHT WILL TAKE PLACE ON FRIDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 9,
AT 7:00PM AT THE CHURCH IN THE LEE ROOM**

Notice the change in day! 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!



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 4 Daphne Spear
- 5 Josep Rose
- 13 Charlotte Thalín
- 16 Kathi Rose
- 18 Gordon Wilson
- 22 Ruth Menzigian
- 27 Lynn Hakala
- 30 Jannelle Lindquist

**MOVIE MATINEE ON NOVEMBER 11
PRESENTS *WHALE RIDER***



Is it possible to be faithful to tradition in the contemporary world? This is a moving story of a girl growing into adulthood on a Polynesian island who questions her role, takes risks, and discovers her destiny. The themes of family relationships, torn loyalties, generational conflict, love and rejection, and hope and acceptance are all explored. 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 suited for youth and children.



“The Pilgrims and Response Ability”

For many of us, *responsibility* is a rather harsh word. It conjures up thoughts of blame, diligence, and duty. But perhaps we should look at the word in a different way, in a way that the Pilgrims might have looked at it.

Instead of viewing the single word, *responsibility*, let us look at it as two separate words, *response* and *ability*. In 1621 the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony celebrated what was later recognized to be the first observance of the American festival of Thanksgiving. The celebration lasted three days and featured goose, turkey, and beer, among other foods and beverages. The Pilgrims, being a devout Christian group, decided to host this festival partially in response to the biblical text of Leviticus 23:39, which states, “when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall keep the festival of the LORD, lasting seven days” and partly in response to the fact that the Pilgrims, poor as they were at the time, felt that they were richly blessed by God.

Though they underwent many hardships during that first year in the New World, especially the death of almost half of the original voyagers on the *Mayflower*, the Pilgrims knew that they had been given a response ability to give thanks to God. Their unwavering faith in God’s goodness, despite that terrible first winter, led them to share their tables with each other and with the indigenous people of the land.

Like the ancient Israelites, the Pilgrims responded to God, who provided for them by leading them to a new land, a land full of promise and opportunity, with whatever ability they had left by offering thanksgiving for God’s goodness, grace, and daily care over their lives. Let us remember to do the same not only on Thanksgiving Day, but every day.

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Gary

HAPPY & BLESSED THANKSGIVING



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