

Moderator

The 2008-2009 church year has been an emotionally difficult one for Acton Congregational Church. We had fully expected that Pastor Dewey Peterson would be back with us in October, but an unusually severe battle with shingles prevented his return until mid-January. At that time we felt that things were returning to normal and we could start to move ahead again. Unfortunately, new health problems arose and Dewey was forced to once again leave us, and in March we reluctantly, and with great sadness, accepted his resignation.

Dewey's health continued to decline and on June 18 he went to be with the Lord he had loved and served so well for so long. Over 250 people celebrated his life and ministry in our sanctuary on Sunday in a "Service of Memory and Hope" led by Dewey and Alice's friend Victor Scalise. Memories were shared by his family, other clergymen, friends, and by representatives of Bangor Theological Seminary, Rotary Club, and Acton Congregational Church. A luncheon was served by the Women's Fellowship following the service.

A great chapter in the life of this church has closed. Dewey was dear to our hearts and coming to grips with his loss has been hard. He left an indelible mark on this church and on all of us who knew him. We miss him, and we cherish our memories of a man we have been privileged to know and whose message of hope gives us the impetus to move on. We cannot let him down by being less than he wanted us to be.

Although Dewey has left us, God and the Holy Spirit have not! Knowing how much we, as a congregation, would need comfort in our sorrow, God led Peter Mercer to us at just the right time. He served from October to Dewey's return in January as Acting Pastor and then returned in that capacity when Dewey became ill in February. At a Special Meeting of the congregation on March 29, he was duly appointed Acting Pastor by unanimous vote. His admiration and respect for Dewey have made it easier for us to mourn his loss as Peter has quietly and unassumingly led us forward.

Because he had earlier made a commitment to another church for the summer months, it was necessary for Peter to divide his time between them and us, so we had supply ministers on a number of Sundays. Peter was here for one day each week and available for special needs. On August 30 he returned permanently working two days a week and preaching on Sunday.

Over the summer the congregation has been encouraged to respond to a series of questionnaires about what we want our church to be like in the months and years ahead. The information we have gathered will be very helpful as a Search Committee begins the process of searching for Dewey's successor. We are indebted to Peter for creating the questionnaires and to Maxine and others for tabulating them.

Despite the upheaval in our church life, the spirit is alive and well in Acton Congregational Church! Attendance remains satisfactory, the usual activities continue, and boards and committees carry out their duties faithfully. I acknowledge this with my deepest gratitude to all of you who do so much in so many ways every week. And a special "thank you" to our church secretary who catches all my mistakes, who reminds me when I forget, and who manages the church's administrative tasks so efficiently.

Faithfully,  
Joyce