

Church News

Local pastors offer sermons

Promises of Christ Part 2

We do well to consider the promises of Christ.

They should serve as the foundation for life and living, and can be trusted. After all, is He not faithful and true? Will He not diligently work to keep His word? Thus said, let us consider yet another promise of our Lord:

John 14:16b (NIV)
16 “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever-17 the Spirit of truth.”

This pledge, uttered by Christ on the night of His betrayal, is profound. Within, He promised to petition His Father to send forth another advocate to aid and be present with His people: the Holy Spirit. Yet what is the nature of His advocacy? Let us go deeper.

1) Parakletos. Let us consider the underlying Greek term for “advocate” (16b). The term herein is derived from parakletos. We do not have an exact English equivalent, which gives rise to a number of differing translations: a) “Advocate” (NIV and NLT); b) “Comforter” (KJV); c) “Helper” (ESV and NASB); and d) “Counselor” (HCSB). The best literal translation of this word is “one called to the side of another” or “one who comes alongside to help or aid.”

In classical use, parakletos was used for legal assistants and attorneys whose job it was to come alongside those in need (i.e., offering comfort, encouragement, guidance or instruction, and intercession in kind). Do we understand the sacred working of the Spirit through such a lens?

2) Another. Let us take a moment to address a term quite easy to overlook in the text. Namely, Christ promised to send forth “another” advocate. The word for “another” is significant, as it literally means “of the same kind,” indicating that the role of the Spirit in the life of the believer mirrors that which Jesus provided His own while physically present in the world.

While on earth, Jesus served as the parakletos for His disciples. Following His Ascension, the Spirit has assumed such a work. In the same way that the Lord provided comfort, encouragement, instruction, guidance and/or intercession to figures like Peter, James and John, the Holy Spirit now plays such a role for all who believe. We have not been orphaned. Rather, Christians throughout both space and time have an enduring Advocate, Counselor, Helper and Comforter. Amazing.

Let us break things down more specifically:

1) Comfort. The Holy Spirit brings comfort to those who believe in Christ. It is His work to ease and alleviate our feelings of grief or distress. Ours is a broken, troubled world. Who is untouched by feelings of affliction due to rampant adversity?

Yet it is the Spirit of God who helps us to appropriate what Jesus promised, and that which we examined last week (Matt. 11:28-30): “28 Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Let us remember that peace yet remains a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)-a fruit He alone can produce.

2) Encouragement. The Holy Spirit also serves to encourage those who believe in Christ. What does it mean to encourage? It means to give support, confidence or hope to another; to stimulate development. Synonyms for the term are to hearten, cheer, uplift, motivate, inspire, stir, spur on, vitalize and strengthen.

Thus, the Spirit, as our parakletos, labors to provide such for God’s people. He supports, instills confidence and hope, stimulates development, heartens, cheers, uplifts, motivates, inspires, stirs, spurs on, vitalizes and strengthens those who live in a world beset with genuine opposition. Have you heard the voice of the Spirit, not only wooing you to Christ, but encouraging you to press on when all hope seems lost.

3) Instruction and Guidance. The Spirit also provides instruction and guidance unto truth. Beyond John 14 (noted above), consider this promise of the Lord and how He delineates the operation of the Spirit:

John 16:12-15
12 “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”

4) Intercession. Finally, the Spirit intercedes for those who believe in Christ. That is, He pleads our case before the Father:

Romans 8:26b-27
26 . . . the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.

When we do not know how or what to pray, we have One who will go before our Father in heaven and advocate for us. Though I am a believer in seeking prayer from others amid challenging times, I revel in the truth that both Christ in heaven and the Spirit on earth advocate for me! May such move you as well.

Thank you for taking the time to read this publication. Should you have any comments or questions, feel free to contact me at your leisure using the information below. Also, feel free to check us out online at www.NewLifeBarre.org or visit us each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. We hope to see you soon.

Pastor James Foley
New Life Assembly of God
60 Main St. South Barre
jamesfoley@newlifebarre.org
978-355-6407

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

“You are the Light of the Earth.”

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 58 v 1-12 and Matthew 5 v 13 – 16

I. Introduction
Many years ago, after I delivered my sermon at church one morning, my six-year-old niece, Elzette, who was there with her mother, asked me why I was talking so loudly.

I thought by myself, I must have scared her by shouting the word of God. As seminary students we were trained not just to project our voices, but to be passionate and as the Holy Spirit rose up within us, we must allow the Spirit to speak through us and it will be an ebb and flow.

Your voice will rise and come down. Following that advice, my voice grew stronger each time I preached so if you’ve wondered why I’m sometimes loud, that’s the reason. I guess, I also followed the commands from God to the prophets to speak passionately, and not to hold back. In many churches, pastors frequently give passionate sermons that can extend for several hours.

II. You are the Light of the Earth

In Isaiah, it is evident that God instructed the prophet to speak loudly and boldly and refrain from being silent. The context of this passage is about the return of the exiles, the need for restoration due to past events and the ways in which the people of Israel made decisions that were displeasing to God.

The text focuses on the tradition of fasting within the faith of Israel. They followed the law that gave them instructions to fast, and through their fasting, they believed they humbled themselves but did not understand why God did not see or acknowledge them. When God approached Isaiah to speak to the people, God had already seen their way of life, and that they, the people did, what they did not do. Isaiah had to raise his voice so the people could hear him clearly, like a trumpet that was blown during times when there was an important message to be spread in the community and when they had to stop all activities to listen to the message.

In a loud voice, the prophet must let them know that God is not happy with them. In verses 3 and 4, the text describes how God addresses their approach to fasting, noting their acts of self-sacrifice such as wearing sackcloth, covering themselves with ashes and bowing their heads like reeds. Despite these outward displays, they continue to pursue their own interests. They exploit their workers, they engage in quarreling and strife and they become aggressive towards others.

This is not what God wants from them. The intention behind fasting, according to God, is to transform actions, promote positive deeds, break the bonds of injustice, loosen burdens and liberate those who are oppressed. It is to share their food with the hungry, and to provide for the poor. By changing their behaviors and actions, people will be blessed with God’s light, experience healing, and see their righteousness lead the way for them. It is when they do justice and show genuine humility and compassion, when God will hear their call, and God will answer. God will guide them and satisfy their needs.

In Matthew Jesus is using the metaphor of salt and light together, when He told His disciples that they are the light of the world. They are the salt of the earth, meaning they must bring flavor to others through their lives. They must live out the values of Jesus’ values, of love, peace, justice and kindness. They must be the light of the world, shining those values into the darkness.

III. Conclusion

Elzette grew up to be a wonderful woman and surprisingly a powerful worship leader in her church. Though shy, her bright presence profoundly impacted those around her. She came to see her purpose to spread God’s light to all those around her. When she passed away, many went into mourning, because of that light that left us too soon. My sister believes her daughter is worshipping God loudly and passionately in heaven with all the angels.

We know that the darkness that comes through human beings can manifest itself in various ways, lack of compassion and care, lack of kindness, lack of love, and lack of peace. When we are at the receiving end of these forms of darkness, we know how it feels like, feelings of loneliness, emotional isolation, abandonment, anxiety, depression and eventually anger. God calls us to be courageous and be loud sometimes to address situations of darkness around us.

We may not want to speak loudly, but we can shine our lights brightly into the darkness through acts of compassion, love and kindness, and through our peaceful presence. Being the light that God calls us to be will bring about change in this world little by little, step by step. May the Holy Spirit help us to share God’s light now and always.

Amen.

Pastor Margaret Keyser
Barre Congregational Church
30 Park St., Barre

New Braintree Conservation Commission Notice of Public Hearing
Date: March 10, 2026
Time: 7:15 pm
Place:

New Braintree Town Hall
20 Memorial Dr.
New Braintree, MA 01531

The New Braintree Conservation Commission will review a Notice of Intent filed by Cynthia Henshaw, East Quabbin Land Trust, to daylight the existing stream under runway and construct a rail trail.

Project location: 295 McEvoy Rd., New Braintree, MA 01531
The public is invited to attend.
02/19/2026

Barre Conservation Commission Notice of Public Hearing
Notice is hereby given in accordance with the Massachusetts General Law,

Chapter 131, Section 40, The Wetlands Protection Act, that a public hearing will be held on a **Notice of Intent** for farm pond dug in an area where there was a hayfield adjacent to a BVW located at 315 Old Petersham Road, Assessors Map C, Parcel 84B and recorded with the Worcester District Registry of Deeds Book 51899, Page 253.

From: Theresa L. Barnes
315 Old Petersham Road
Barre, MA 01005

To be held on **Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.** in the Conservation Commission Office on the 3rd floor of the Henry Woods Building, 40 West

Street, Barre, MA 01005.
Ronald Rich, Chairman
02/19/2026

PUBLIC AUCTION NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF M.L.C. 225 SEC.39A THE FOLLOWING VEHICLES WILL BE SOLD ON February 28, 2026. AT A SALE TO SATISFY OUR GARAGE LIEN THEREON FOR TOWING & STORAGE CHARGES AND EXPENSES OF SALE AND NOTICE:

2016 Mercedes-Benz C-Class VIN 55SWF4JB7GU140041
2015 Subaru Forester VIN JF2SJABC1FH437794
2006 Honda Civic VIN 1HGFA16896L042833
2011 Chrysler 300 VIN 2C3CA5CG6BH545980
2009 Volkswagen Tiguan VIN WVGBV75N09W529770
2019 Jeep Compass VIN 3C4NJDDB7KT733089
2008 Audi A6 VIN WAUDV74F68N013776
2000 BMW 7 Series VIN WBAGH8341YDP14855
The sale will be held at Early’s on Park Avenue 536 Park Avenue, Worcester, MA 01603
02/12, 02/19, 02/26/2026



Democrats to caucus

OAKHAM – The Oakham Democratic Town Committee will convene a caucus on Thursday, March 5 at 5:15 p.m. at the Fobes Library, Maple Street, to elect two delegates and one alternate to participate in this year’s Massachusetts State Democratic Convention to be held in person on Friday, May 29 and Saturday, May 30 at the DCU Center in

Worcester. Registered Democrats and pre-registered Democrats who turn 16 years old by Feb. 19, 2026, may vote and be elected as delegates or alternates.

Registration for the caucus will begin at 5:15 p.m. .Voting will start at 5:45 p.m. and the meeting will conclude at 6:30 p.m.

Are you having difficulty communicating with your partner, struggling with boundaries, and healthy relationships?

We invite you to join us Friday afternoons from 1-2:30 pm to explore these topics and more.

This group will be held in zoom, is educational, confidential, and free.

Please contact **Pat James 413-726-8661.**

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts’ public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Friday at 3 p.m.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com



1158 Main Street | 100 Worcester Road
Holden | Sterling
508.829.4434 | 978.422.0100

800-983-4434
www.milesfuneralhome.com

MILES
FUNERAL HOMES

Honoring Lives ~ Celebrating Memories

Family Owned and Operated

Nationally recognized as a Selected Independent Funeral Home with the highest ethical and professional standards.



Richard Mansfield
Director



BBB Award Recipient



Ricky Mansfield
Director



Barre Gazette OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.