

Church News

Local pastors offer sermons

Promises of Christ Part 3

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:

Matthew 16:13-18 (NIV)
13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

Let us unpack the promise of Christ posited in verse 18b:

1) On This Rock

What “rock” is Jesus referring to? It would be easy to assume that Peter was said rock, for his name means “rock or stone.” Yet a closer examination of the text leads to a more fitting interpretation (one that best aligns with the whole of the Word). There is some interesting wordplay happening in the underlying Greek language herein. The name Peter does mean “rock or stone,” but specifically a small stone or pebble. That is, the type you might take in your hand to cast. However, the word employed by Jesus means a large foundational boulder or rock formation. This points well beyond the likes of Simon Peter.

So what is the foundation for the Church? The best answer seems to be that the foundation for the Church of Christ is the inspired confession that came through Simon Peter. Namely, the Church is built upon the profession of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God. What binds believers together throughout space and time? Not Simon Peter, certainly. Rather, it is the reality of who and what Jesus is for both time and eternity. This perspective comports best with biblical literature:

Acts 4:11-12 [Peter Speaking]

11 “Jesus is ‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone’ [lit. the foundational stone laid at the corner of a building to provide structural support, stability, and direction for all other stones cf. Ps. 118:22]. 12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

2) I Will

This point is brief but meaningful. A promise is only as good as the one making it. If Jesus is faithful and true, and He is, then His promise shall come to pass. He shall fulfill what He has purposed or obliged Himself to do. There is no force in heaven, earth or hell that can ultimately thwart His divine intention. He will build His church.

3) Build

The underlying Greek term herein has to do with erecting a home or a structure. In the same way that

a carpenter might build a home, the Lord Jesus is fashioning for Himself His Church. That is, He is making for Himself a unique dwelling-place in the earth. To what degree is the Lord Jesus truly “at home” in our congregations? How about in our lives and our hearts?

4) My
What does this indicate but that the Church of Christ, individually and collectively, belongs to Him. Consider this selection:

1 Peter 2:9-10

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

5) Church

This is the first time in Scripture the term “church” is used. This does not point to a series of buildings or a denomination. Rather, it speaks, literally, to a “called out assembly.” Quite simply, the Church is the assembly of all believers, throughout space and time, who have been called out of the sinfulness of our world to life by faith in the gospel of Christ. Note again:

1 Peter 2:9-10

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

6) Gates of Hades

To what degree is Christ able to keep His word? Does He have the power to accomplish His purpose? In response, consider that He proclaimed that the gates of Hades would not overcome His work. Biblically, Hades is the Greek term for the place of departed spirits and the abode of the dead.

What is the gate or point of entry into the realm of the dead? Death. Thus, He is saying that the power(s) of death would prove powerless against His labor in building His Church. Death could not keep Him. It shall not keep those who trust in Him. In the end, death will be defeated and He will prove utterly victorious.

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.

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Transfiguration Sunday
“May the Glory of God come upon us.”
Scripture Reading:
Exodus 24 v 12 – 18 and Matthew 17 v 1-9

I. Introduction
While preparing the sermon on Christ’s transfiguration atop the mountain, I began reflecting on people in our midst who might be experiencing loneliness, sadness, illness or financial hardship.

I was thinking of close

friends and acquaintances, who are all dealing with significant loss simultaneously this week. There was the passing of a mother and her granddaughter, who suffered severe heart issues and is on life support; the ending of a loving relationship between two people, and the pain of another, who expressed the difficulty of dealing with all the challenges in our world today.

She believed that, aside from her church, there are few sources offering her a strong foundation or a sense of stability. I faced the fragility and tenderness of human life this past week and saw the need for connection, support, peace and love. I was reminded of the power and glory of God that transcend human suffering, and that God is always ready to help us during difficult times.

II. May the Glory of God come upon us

When Moses responded to God’s call to leave the people behind whom he was leading and go up the mountain to meet with God, I sensed in him the weight he carried of being a leader leading his flock and how much they needed his teaching and guidance and prayers. But God needed him to walk up Mount Sinai and see the Glory of God. He would not see God immediately. Instead, he had to wait six days in front of a cloud in which God resided and on the seventh day he was invited into the temple of God’s glory, where he would receive the word of God to give to the people of God.

These would not just be laws they had to obey, but the deep meaning of God’s words that would shape them as human beings. Moses transitioned from the realm of human limitation, imperfection and vulnerability to a domain characterized by divine authority and radiance.

This is the same Moses who, together with Elijah, joined Jesus on the mountain and witnessed the extraordinary manifestation of God’s presence and power. They encountered the amazing transformation of Jesus, the Teacher, into Jesus the Son of God, filled with the Kingdom of God. A voice from the heavens, the voice from God, declared to those present, including the disciples, that this was God’s Son, in whom God is well pleased and instructed them to listen to Him. The three disciples would be witnesses of this life changing event with God, with Christ

III. Conclusion

Everyone experiences moments of loneliness, and many have personal struggles with pain and loss that they continue to carry. This is part of the human experience; at times it is positive, while at other times it may be less so. As I am thinking about those in their pain and loss, I am so grateful that God did not just send God’s Son into this world as a human being with no power and no glory. God gave Him the glory and the power from God to spread the Good News to those He encountered, to heal the sick, forgive the sinners and embrace the foreigners. The power and glory of God come over all of us, because this is who God is! God gives to everyone the love and care and hope that we need. So, when we come to God in and through all circumstances, we must remember that God had already met up with Moses and all those who came before us,

See **SERMONS** page 12

Obituaries

Paul J. Sullivan, 84

BRATTLEBORO, VT – Paul J. Sullivan, 84, of Black Mountain Road, a longtime resident of town, died Sunday afternoon, Feb. 15, 2026 at Cheshire Medical Center following a lengthy illness and extended period of declining health.

Paul was born in Worcester, Massachusetts on Jan. 29, 1942, the son of the late Walter F. and Mary G. (Molloy) Sullivan. He was raised and educated in Barre, Massachusetts, attended local schools and graduated from Barre High School with the Class of 1961.



Following graduation, he enlisted in the U.S. Army serving during the Cuban Missile Crisis and stationed in Washington State. Following his honorable discharge from active service, he returned home and attended the New England School of Accounting where he graduated with high honors.

He worked his entire career as a CPA beginning in Worcester, MA.

After relocating to Brattleboro in the early 1970s he secured a position with Blake Edwards & Co. which later became Livingston & Hayes and then Joseph Pieciak & Company, all of Brattleboro.

Paul later owned and operated his own accounting business based downtown and then out of his home in Brattleboro for over thirty years.

Fraternally, he was a longtime member of the B.P.O. Elks, Brattleboro Lodge #1499 and also held membership in the VFW.

Of his leisure time activities, he enjoyed golf and was a member of the Brattleboro Country Club. Additionally, he enjoyed fishing, camping

and skiing in his younger years and time shared with his family and close friends.

On Dec. 30, 1961, Paul married his high school sweetheart, Carol Jean Gulino of Barre. They raised four children while living in Barre and Chesterfield, New Hampshire. Paul later married Patricia Jane Cobb of Brattleboro, Vermont. The couple exchanged wedding vows on Nov. 15, 1974. They shared a very happy life together until Pat passed away on Feb. 17, 2019.

Survivors include his three children, Craig Sullivan of Worcester, Mark Sullivan and his wife Diana of Barre, and Laurie Ann Ward and her husband Paul of Georgia; three step-children, Kelley Aither and Mark Jameson of Brattleboro, Todd Aither and his wife Maureen of Brattleboro and Martin Aither of Winter Park, Colorado and one brother, Robert J. Sullivan of Worcester. Additionally, he leaves five grandchildren, one great-grandson, and several nieces, nephews and cousins, especially Maureen Ann Listro of Florida and Keagan Jameson of Brattleboro.

Paul was predeceased by a son, Michael P. Sullivan and two sisters, Geraldine A. O’Connor and Sheila E. Sullivan.

In keeping with his final wishes, there are no formal funeral services scheduled.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in his name may be made to the Silver Towers Camp, in care of the Brattleboro Lodge of Elks, P.O. Box 8051, Brattleboro, VT 05304-5101.

To share a memory or offer condolences to Paul’s family, please visit www.atamaniuk.com.

Matthew D. Thorng, 67

BARRE - Matthew D. Thorng, 67, of Barre and Spencer, passed away on Monday, Feb. 9, 2026 in Spencer.

He was born in Holden, on Sept. 12, 1958 to the late George and Dolores (Franciose) Thorng. Matt is survived by his significant other, Maria Thompson and his siblings, William “Chuck” Thorng, George Thorng, Nancy Spinney, Eric Thorng and many nieces and nephews.

Matt was retired and last worked at C & C Pools in Barre. He loved the out-

doors including hiking, skiing, rafting, fishing, boating, the beach, walnut gathering, mushroom hunting and camping. He and his cousin once climbed Mt. Rainer.

“Wrinkles will only go where the smiles have been.” – Jimmy Buffet

The funeral for Matthew will be held on Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026 at 11:30 a.m. in St. Francis of Assisi Church, Vernon Avenue, South Barre.



A calling hour will be held from 9-11 a.m. in Pillsbury Funeral Home, 96 South Barre Road, Barre prior to the Mass.

Burial will be in the spring in Evergreen Cemetery in New Braintree. In lieu of flowers donations may be made in his name to: ALSAC/ Saint Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital 501 St Jude Place, Memphis TN 38105.

Public Notices

BARRE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Barre Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.** in the Henry Woods Municipal Selectmen Meeting Room, 1st Floor, 40 West Street, Barre, MA requested by Insight Meditation Society, Inc. for a variance from the maximum height requirement for properties in the R-80 zoning district and the minimum parking requirements of the Zoning Bylaw in connection with the construction and development of a retreat center building (the “New Retreat Center”) and three duplex cottages (the “New Teacher Housing”) (collectively, the “New Buildings”) located on Pleasant Street, two parcels. Assessors Map B-107A and a 3.23 acre portion of B-107A. Recorded with the Worcester District Registry of Deeds, Books 54612, 18293, Pages 48 (B-107A), 157 (B-90) consecutively. Plan can be reviewed by contacting the Boards’ Office.

Anyone wishing to comment on this matter should attend the hearing or submit comments in writing prior to the hearing to the Zoning Board of Appeals, Henry Woods Building, 40 West Street – Suite 5, Barre, MA, barreboards@townofbare.com or contact the Boards’ Office at 978-355-2504 ext. 8. 02/26, 03/05/2026

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

Commonwealth of Massachusetts NOTICE TO COMMERCIAL TIMBER OPERATORS
The Dept. of Conservation & Recreation, Division of Water Supply Protection, is offering for sale standing timber and cordwood located on the Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs and Ware River Watershed. For details, contact the Water Supply Protection Division Office on or before March 9, 2026, at 857-274-7090. 02/26/2026

DEATH NOTICES

Sullivan, Paul J.
Died Feb. 15, 2026
No formal funeral service

Thorng, Matthew D.
Died Feb. 9, 2026
Calling hour Feb. 28 from 9-11 a.m. at Pillsbury Funeral Home, South Barre Road, Barre Funeral Mass Feb. 28 at 11:30 a.m. St. Francis of Assisi Church, Vernon Avenue, South Barre

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.