

Chapter 1 : Christian Preaching and Discrimination | Employment Law Solicitors in Northamptonshire

Be an active member of Northampton Bible Church, fully supporting and implementing the vision, values and leadership. Participate in general pastoral duties as needed (preaching on Sundays, weddings, funerals, counseling, etc.).

Todd Weir September 24, [http:](http://) I dreaded group projects in school, where my grade depended on someone who partied and waited till the last minute to do their part. If you have a sense of responsibility, you can be taken advantage of and resentment can build up. Fortunately, this never happens in church, right! Jesus says the Kingdom of Heaven is like a land owner who pays everyone the same amount, no matter how long they worked. He is destroying the incentive system for hard work. You can make a strong case that Jesus would support a living wage, but would union members vote for this plan to pay people the same no matter how many hours they worked? Wages in America make no sense either. Immigrants, many who are without legal citizenship. Some think hiring immigrants is unfair, and takes jobs from citizens. The story was in the Washington Post recently: Here is what happened in chapter 19 of Matthew. A rich young ruler engages Jesus. He seems like a really good guy. Is there another board or team I could join? Do you need me to do coffee hour? Do you have a capital campaign coming up? Just tell me what else I should do Jesus. What then will we have? At least the disciples had free health care, since Jesus could heal them. Which I think is the new plan in the Senate. Fairness, in Jesus mind, means everyone deserves a place, an extravagant welcome. We need everyone to bring in the harvest, no matter when they show up. Being status seeking, and worried about getting a fair share diminishes community. That is why the rich young ruler must give up everything to join, because Peter and friends left their boats and jobs too. How might this lesson apply to our journey of discipleship together? We are focused on recruiting volunteers this month. Resentment and unfairness can be big issues when it comes to getting the work of the church done. If we say we have an extravagant welcome, you are welcome here no matter who you are, it also means no matter how much volunteer work you can do. But we still need to get the work done, and too often a few dedicated souls carry the load. How do we stay an inviting, joyful community but still have enough volunteers for coffee hour and the church fair? Here is my solution from the parable. From now on everyone gets paid, just like the laborers in the vineyard. All volunteers at First Churches, from this moment on get paid. How does that work in the budget? Here is what a professional volunteer coordinator says: No one works for free. The difference between volunteers and staff is in how they are paid. Businesses know that money alone is never the sole factor in retaining good workers. People like to work and volunteer where they feel valued. Volunteering to do something makes people more happy. People who volunteer twice a month are 12 percent more happy, and people who volunteer every week are 16 percent more likely to report they are very happy. Who says volunteers are not well paid for their labor? The Kingdom of God runs on generosity. People are more productive and happy when they feel they are freely giving of themselves, and they have already chosen how they get paid. You decide what you want to do, and how you want to be paid. I gave them days a year. That was after my full-time work, on evenings and Saturdays, and I had to drive to Framingham. Why would I do that? I learned about the best practices of other churches, I have some great friends I would not have met, and the satisfaction of making a difference. I want to do other things. Do I sometimes feel resentful? Is this what I love? Almost everything I do is what I want to do.

Chapter 2 : Sermon: The Insider's Guide to Volunteering - First Churches of Northampton, MA

Paul's letters were also full of advice, and challenge and even criticism. Having a culture of thanksgiving doesn't mean not being truthful. But it is always in the context of being thankful for people and their best selves.

Most of the books of the Christian New Testament are personal letters from Paul and his imitators, so we get many notes of praise and thanksgiving, so let's talk about how to write a masterful thank you note. It is not hard to write a basic thank you, but there is a real art to doing it well. Here is how I learned. There would be a day of reckoning in January when my mother would declare that all notes for all gifts must be written. My mother gave me a simple template: Thank you for the blank. The template still works. It's not hard to write a decent thank you note, even if you have bad handwriting and you're using a crayon, it will be OK. Even decades later I still have some resistance to getting my thank you notes done. Of course, I have a resistance to all writing projects, for fear that somehow my words will not measure up, and my thank you note will be lame, sounding like a Hallmark card. How do they stay in business? I guess because getting just the right tone is not easy, so we outsource it to a group of polite Midwesterners in a windowless office in Kansas City. Do you save thank you notes? I save them, even the Hallmark ones. I have received a few letters which I consider to be masterful, and I occasionally read them again. What do you think makes for the best thank you notes? Some notes come at just the right time, when people recognize you are doing something that is hard and they appreciate it. Other times people notice the small things, and give value to our behind-the-scenes work. Stories about how you have made a difference are always great, because otherwise how would you know. I imagine that if you get to heaven and find out the ten best things you have done in your life, that at least five of them you never knew about, because no one ever told you the end of the story. The masterful thank you notes are grounding, remind you of who you are, your best self, and affirm your place in the world. Peggy Anderson was a virtuoso at the writing her gratitude. She would send notes highlighting an idea from a sermon, then write how she grappled with it and came to a new awareness about something, which often expanded my own thinking. Or she would write notes that recognized the little things behind the scenes that no one else picked up, and she would bless those as important work. What was most valuable is that she paid attention. A thank you note does not begin with searching for a pen. It begins with noticing and valuing a person, in part for what you do, but also affirming who you are. True thanksgiving starts with mindful attention to another person. No one can know themselves without feedback. For all the importance placed on loving yourself and having self-worth come from within, we really do not know ourselves except in relationship and in community. The real question is what are we organized for, and one answer is, we are organized to give thanks to God for the gift of life. Every Sunday is a Thanksgiving. We are grateful to be connected to the source. A church must have a culture of thanksgiving. The worst temptation of being church is having a culture of judgmental moralists who keep people in line with criticism. That is a prevalent way of having an organized religion, but what if we are organized around deep thanksgiving? Paul and his imitators understood this. He opens his letter, not with an institutional critique of what is wrong with them, but with thanksgiving for their faith, for the ways God is bearing fruit within them, they are a people filled with grace and they are known for the fruit they bear. The letter appears to come at a time when the church felt under siege, a time of persecution and vulnerability, so to know someone saw their faith and gave thanks for them and their witness was a powerful thing. Someone is paying attention and valuing us. But it is always in the context of being thankful for people and their best selves. It is his poetic wonderment at who God is and what we can be in God that inspires us. How do we create this culture of Thanksgiving in practice? Here are some examples of how it works. I give every couple I marry the same homework. Because a good relationship needs four positive interactions for every negative interaction. That is how we heal and repair the inevitable friction between people. This formula applies to parenting, the workplace, volunteer work, all places where humans relate to each other. Employee satisfaction surveys show that appreciation for the work they do is more important in job satisfaction than salary. It is good to have both, but feeling valued is worth a great deal. This is a time when we truly need to call forth our best selves and deepest efforts. Just like Colossians was written to a community under threat of

persecution, we live in difficult and conflictual times. We must not lose our capacity to be thankful. We are getting ready for Thanksgiving weekend and many people are filled with dread about meeting relatives who incomprehensibly voted differently than we did. For many people Thanksgiving is becoming the anti-Christmas. If you choose or feel that you must share a feast with people whose opinions make you ill, how can we be thankful? How would this work? You may not feel like being thankful right now, especially with the world in such a mess. I believe that gratitude and praise actually does help us solve our problems, because it is a affirmation of life, we acknowledge that God is good, all the time. This is what keeps us human. May you have a Happy Thanksgiving!

Chapter 3 : Calvary Baptist Church

One of my fellow elders teaches at a local seminary. He sometimes invites me to speak to his students from a pastor's perspective about sermon preparation, preaching, and church ministry. During a recent lecture, one of the students asked me, "If you could go back and give advice to yourself as a

The trouble with good advice is that it usually interferes with your plans. Good advice is what your own kids disregard but save to give to their kids. Business is made up of ambiguous victories and nebulous defeats. Claim them all as victories. Keep track of what you do; someone is sure to ask. Be comfortable around senior managers, or learn to fake it. Never bring your boss a problem without some solution. You are getting paid to think, not to whine. Write down ideas; they get lost like good pens. Always arrive at work 30 minutes before your boss. Be sure to sit at the conference table-never by the wall. Help other people that network for jobs. What goes around comes around. Always have an answer to the question "What would I do if I lost my job tomorrow? Avoid working on the weekends. Work longer during the week if you have to. The most successful people in business are interesting. When the opposite is true, hold steady and wait it out. Understand the skills and abilities that set you apart. When ever you have an opportunity, use them. People remember the end of the project. As they say in boxing," Always finish stronger than you start. Never have more children than you have car windows. Never loan your car to someone to whom you have given birth. Pick your friends carefully. Remember all those women on the Titanic who waved off the dessert cart. Know the difference between success and fame. Success is Mother Teresa. Never be in a hurry to terminate a marriage. Remember, you may need this man or woman someday to finish a sentence. There are no guarantees in marriage. Never go to a class reunion pregnant. Forget each kindness that you do as soon as you have done it. Forget the praise that falls to you the moment you have won it. Forget the slander that you hear before you can repeat it. Forget each slight, each spite, each sneer, whenever you may meet. Remember every promise made and keep it to the letter. Remember those who lend you aid and be a grateful debtor. Remember all the happiness that comes your way in living. Forget each worry and distress; be hopeful and forgiving. Remember good, remember truth, remember heaven is above you. And you will find, through age and youth, that many will love you.

Chapter 4 : Beauty Tips For Ministers – Preaching Tabs

The Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence is an inclusive and welcoming intergenerational congregation of diverse spiritual beliefs and practices. Our mission is to build a caring community where children and adults can safely learn and grow, where we are supported and challenged on life's journeys, called to service and to our higher.

It is a Steinway baby grand, which came into our family in , a gift to my grandmother Charlotte in celebration of her high school graduation. The piano was given to Charlotte by her maiden aunt Emma Roedter, an accomplished concert pianist and piano teacher who was apparently eager to encourage similar interests in her niece. I remember my grandmother as an avid musician and organizer of many musical societies. So, from the beginning, even the piano itself has represented a legacy of connection between the generations of our family. I learned to play on that same instrument in my childhood home in Boston. When my daughter Madeleine began to ask to play the piano, my father was thrilled to help move it to our home in Holyoke. The piano was delivered exactly a week before my son. For the better part of a year Madeleine and I approached the piano bench in an unstructured way, playing around as the opportunity presented. Initially, it was a bonding spot. I clearly remember one hot afternoon on a walk when we both melted down and were definitely not using our quiet voices with each other. We came back to ourselves and to each other through a shared joy. After Madeleine began piano lessons and our practices became regular and structured, this was not always the case. While we still find moments of harmony, we also have moments of intense struggle. Our assignment was to begin with a recent incident that we thought might prove fruitful for reflection. They all have my profound thanks. Some of the insightful questions they asked me structure my further reflections at the end of this sermon. Here is the gist of what I wrote for them: My daughter Madeleine has been taking piano lessons for three years. The morning of our first spiritual reflection workshop, she and I spent some time arguing at the piano bench. My request for her to play a piece again led to a sudden case of the flops, a time-tested time-waster in which the piano bench becomes the only thing which keeps Madeleine from being a puddle on the floor. You are always yelling at me. And yet, what sort of loss would I feel – would she feel – if we stopped playing the piano, if we fixed that conflict through avoidance? The next day she spent 20 minutes playing two lines of The Entertainer over and over until the notes sung out from her fingers beautifully, all without a word from me. Reverend Janet had urged us to let our minds wander out from our story until we found an image to explore in our writing. Sitting quietly and letting my mind wander was a recipe for a tired mother to fall asleep, but some days later I somehow latched onto the image you likely all remember from so many wildlife shows of a mother lion holding her cub gently in her teeth by the scruff of the neck. As I puzzled over it, what spoke to me about this image was the idea that the mother lion, to carry her child in this way, has to make one of the most dangerous parts of herself, her mouth, into an instrument of care. This friend, Rebecca Holter, a brilliant woman who is homeschooling seven children, explained: Rebecca chose Proverbs We both wanted to make our actions match our beliefs. It is a book given to me by our piano teacher, Christine Olson. Ideas for Making It Easier is written by Edmund Sprunger, a Suzuki violin teacher and also, certainly not coincidentally, a trained psychotherapist. I opened to one dog-eared page and read: Your being present and shutting up is very different from your being absent. Perhaps, I thought, I need to knit myself a lion cub. The piece had caused some controversy because the author depicted the monastery as filled, not with pure souls, but with people battling their inner demons. And it is that. But the process of writing my reflection allowed me to remember that it is spiritual work, and part of the ongoing challenge of being the person I wish to be in both my family and the larger world. Here, my sermon starts for the third time, reflecting on the reflection I wrote last winter. Janet Spongberg reflected back to me how the piece and my reading of it allowed her to see me as the grounding force of what she called: Janet knows my children only through USNF, but I know that she has been, and will be, there for them both in profound ways. She is, in a small but nonetheless significant way, helping me parent them. As I began to write about the family piano, this idea of the parenting partnerships I have found here at USNF was affirmed in a truly unexpected way. The family story has always been that my great-great-Aunt Emma was one of the founders of the Cincinnati

Symphony Orchestra. Further sleuthing revealed that one of the earliest financial backers of this endeavor, someone Emma would no doubt have worked closely with in, was a man with a suspiciously familiar last name, a man who turns out to be the great-great-grandfather of my friend and fellow youth group advisor here at USNF, Lawson Wulsin. As I spend long hours with many of your children, often working with Lawson and with the other wonderful adults on the youth group and high school OWL teams, and as I appreciate the youth group members and other adults in this congregation who care for and teach my children, I truly understand how the work of parenting well is enabled by our partnerships with others. That my partnership with my wife, Cathy, is the obvious reference here does not make it any less important; without her I would neither be on this journey, nor would I have retained my sanity. But because this sermon is also about the piano, and the practicing, I want to share some of what I have learned from someone whose partnership has been much more than I expected: When Madeleine and I began this journey I was determined that, because I regret not being able to play piano by ear, my child should learn to play by ear first. So, we chose a Suzuki-trained teacher. Christine was brave enough, and perceptive enough, and flexible enough to recognize relatively quickly that Madeleine needed another path than the one I had chosen, without giving up completely on what might benefit her from Suzuki. And Christine has also shown me where my daughter has skills I had not even recognized. Christine allows me to see Madeleine in a different, often kinder, light. Perhaps most of all, Christine has given me and my daughter the gift of modeling patience at the piano bench. The other partnership I want to talk about in this story of piano and parenting is the one I am building with Madeleine herself. Jan Nettler asked me the reflection question that opened this up for me. How, Jan wondered, does this practice of piano with my daughter compare with our experience doing circus arts, something Madeleine has been studying nearly as long as the piano. The easy answer is that they are different mainly because I know more about piano, whereas Madeleine is much better than me at circus. Circus keeps me humble. And when we do circus together, my support is often a little more literal—like when I am the base and she is the flyer in partner acrobatics. And it can also be a little easier to see the high stakes. Last summer Madeleine went and tried the flying trapeze, and somehow she convinced me to get up there too, to try flying. I read something recently that captured the rush—and its connection to parenting and partnership. This is from the recent memoir by Buzz Bissinger, whose adult son Zach was brain damaged by premature birth. Zach convinces his father to try a towering bungee jump at an amusement park. My arms are wrapped around Zach. His arms are wrapped around me. His eyes are closed. We fall faster than I thought possible. Then we swing high, flinging out into the sky. I feel an exhilaration I have never felt before. I am screaming at the top of my lungs. Zach and I merge into one, arm around arm, shoulder against shoulder, the press of his body against mine. I never had that when he was an infant in the hospital. But now he is my lifeline, and I am his. I cannot forget his arms clutching me, needing me. Nor can I forget the liberation I felt, which occurred only because of his resilience in making me do something I never would have done without him. Then, for a long time, we continued only at my insistence. When I suggested to Madeleine that I might make a summer service out of my reflections on our piano-playing, she immediately offered to provide the music today. But when we argued again at the piano bench last week and, I, in a fit of frustration will I never learn? You can practice to play the piano. Or you can practice to not play the piano. I keep trying to practice how to be the parent I want to be, rather than practicing how to not be that parent. Together, we are practicing.

Chapter 5 : 11 Tips for Better Preaching

Northampton Assembly Of God in Northampton PA. Find Northampton Assembly Of God business details including phone number, location and services relating to Church - Hotfrog Business Directory.

He graduated from Harvard and was the first librarian at that college. He served as pastor at Northampton, Mass from until his death. The Dictionary of American Biography states: He uses as his text Matt There may be a great deal of preaching, but that does not meant that it is good preaching. Stoddard holds that many preachers are moral men and learned men, but those things do not make for good preachers. Experience fits Men to teach others. Stoddard suggests all preachers do self examination. He sees minimizing having a specific time where one was converted as a sign of a lack of regeneration. Good preaching always stresses that humiliation must precede faith. It comes from brokenness, not progress. Men must see their Malady, before they see their Remedy. Men must be led into the Understanding of the Badness of their Hearts and the strictness of the Law, before they will be convinced of the Preciousness of Christ. Men that can heal their own Consciences, will not come to Christ for Healing. Men must be driven by Necessity indeed before they come to Christ. Many Men are in a deep Sleep, and flatter themselves as if there was no Hell, or at least that God will not deal so harshly with them as to damn them. Bad preaching misrepresents justifying faith. Some preach that it is possible to understand all that God says or requires of us. Justifying Faith is set forth in the Scripture by many figurative Expressions; coming to Christ, opening to him, sitting under his Shadow, flying to him for Refuge, building on him as on a Foundation, feeding on him, [etc]. These Expressions do imply not only an Act of Understanding, but also an Act of the Will, accepting of him, depending on him. My copy jumps from Point 4 to point 6. It stands because it IS the Word of God. Many preachers are unwilling to call people to account for the inconsistency of their behavior with their supposed profession of faith. We are often too meek to call people to account in our preaching for the inconsistencies in their walk. There is so little conversion. Even those who make a profession of faith, lead unsanctified lives. As Stoddard puts it: You can find the entire text of the sermon here. If we give people the impression that good behavior is a sign that we are under grace, that is not good preaching. If any give false signs of godliness, that is not good preaching. It is able to be done by un-regenerate persons as well. We do not do well to allow people to think they are saved simply because they act in godly ways. From such loose signs people are in danger of taking up a false persuasion of their godliness.

Chapter 6 : Hard Wired for Faith

Sermon by Rev. Todd Weir September 24, Matthew Click above to listen There is one person in every group who has mastered the art of slacking. You have been cleaning up the kitchen for an hour, and the slacker comes near the end, "Anything I can do to help?".

I started graduate school this year, and they try their best to make us talk like that. Mostly, I am going to tell you about discovering a definition of faith that speaks to both my intellect and to my heart. And why I believe that faith—by that definition—guides our healing from despair. I am interested in how we carry the pain that is visited upon us—in our brains, and bodies and behaviors, and also in in our relationships and communities. And our even more amazing discoveries about the flexibility of brains to heal from these experiences, and what helps people access their powers of resilience, survival and recovery. Maybe we carry the trauma of interpersonal violence; maybe we carry another kind of despair. If we live long enough, we will each have moments, days or even years when our hearts are breaking. Maybe this is one of those moments. I think that faith has something to offer us in those moments—every one of us—even the most godless among us. Even more—we have something to offer one another. For my research I examined the despair caused by interpersonal violence. Maybe you also know a community like this? Maybe you are even blessed to be part of a community like this? Up in the attic, I looked to the evidence-base to answer my questions about trauma, spirituality, and community. And I was stunned to discover a terrible stinginess in the scholarship. But in study after study, researchers examined extremely narrowly defined practices of religious coping. It was as if they thought spirituality served survivors only as an option on a checklist of adaptive strategies. Transcendence and the essential, existential questions raised by the experience of violence—Why? What hurt most was the way these frames erased my experience as a spiritual person. George Vaillant is a Harvard research psychiatrist. We have evolved to love and care for one another, because if we did not, our babies would be eaten by predators. All humans are hardwired for positive emotion, and these positive emotions are a common denominator of all major faiths and of all human beings. And besides, George Vaillant already wrote that book. It felt true to me in my gut. It knocked out the stingy, inadequate definitions of spirituality that would exclude me, and my friends and teachers. It put words to the feelings I have in this Great Hall and in the heart-breaking and sacred moments of my life. We are biologically predisposed to these emotions. Our evolution as a species has selected in favor of these capacities. They are indications of our humanity, and they help our species to survive. My wife and I once engaged a color consultant to help us figure out how to paint two adjacent rooms in our home. This woman stood in the liminal space between them, held her palms open, and did a little dance side-to-side, to show us how the colors had to evenly weight the two rooms. This is exactly how I felt when I read Vaillant. Like my two sides, the mystical and the humanist, the broken hearted and the intellectual, were dancing together, perfectly balanced. How does trauma affect the spiritual self? Faith—involves basic trust that the world has meaning and that loving-kindness exists. Such faith should be our human birthright. An atheist may have faith. The absence of faith is nihilism, not atheism, not disbelief in a lexical God. Vaillant defines faith as meaning and connection. And this relates so closely to the experience of interpersonal violence that I got another of those scholarly buzzes. How can the world make sense when the one we love is gone? How can loving kindness exist when this, specific love, has been taken from us? Not just cognitive, not just clinical, not just emotional. And therefore, we cannot consider ourselves recovered from grief, from trauma, from despair, until these two pillars of faith—meaning and connection—are restored. In those times, faith reminds me that I find meaning in the balance between that which is knowable and that which is unknowable. And faith reminds me of the existence of kindness, my witness and experience of loving kindness. We each hold private gratitude for the love that blesses our lives. It is also irritating and injuring one another—most often by accident, but sometimes on purpose. And we may never be able to answer why. But cruelty is, in fact, the minority experience. Human beings are hardwired for connection. And we are evolving towards more cooperation, more compassion, more love. Grief breaks our hearts. But we grieve only because we relentlessly turn toward one another. If our lives are marked by loss, it is because we love, we love, we

love. And in doing those small kindnesses, we weave a pattern of kindness in which we can have faith. Whether or not cities are burning. Tippett, When we love each other, perfectly and imperfectly. Journal of Religion and Health, 34 1 , p. February 20, Paul Elie: Faith Fired by Literature. Tippett Executive Producer , On Being. Krista Tippett Public Productions. A scientific defense of faith. Our Mission The Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence is an inclusive and welcoming intergenerational congregation of diverse spiritual beliefs and practices.

Chapter 7 : Jonathan Edwards and the Great Awakening

In William Carey, a shoemaker/pastor from Northamptonshire, was burdened by the needs of the worlds people. He stood before a counsel of representatives at a ministerial meeting in Northampton. He explained his burden to share the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ. He was rebuked by the.

Chapter 8 : Sermons about Advice - theinnatdunvilla.com

Get this from a library! Advice to young converts.: a letter from the late Rev. Jonathan Edwards, of Northampton, to a young lady at Suffield, Conn.: To which is added, a discourse, recommending religious conversation: and an extract from a sermon on Christian conversation.

Chapter 9 : Practice: Piano, Parenting and Partnership

Solomon Stoddard was a Congregationalist minister in Massachusetts who lived from / He graduated from Harvard and was the first librarian at that college. He served as pastor at Northampton, Mass from until his death.