

# Voices of *The Neighborhood*:

## Affirmations of Holly Reid

Transcribed interviews from  
The Neighborhood Café and Sunday Worship.

### Mary Beth

Mary Beth: So, I have two thoughts about Holly: first what I admire, what I appreciate so much is she's one of us...I mean she's been sitting in the pews with us, engaging this community and the services and the struggle of understanding, what the Word is for our community... forever. And I'm so inspired that she was able to kind of be still enough to hear this inner voice that said you've got to go deeper, you've gotta go more radical, you've got to give more than you're giving. And then shake her life up, and live in a tiny room with her husband and two dogs in New York City to figure out how to do seminary. And then come back to us with stories of struggle and faith and the power of the Word, right? So, if that's what Holly heard. If she can take such a radical change to her life, what does that mean for the rest of us? I love that challenge that she brings to us. And I also love how she preaches to us. She's preached to us many times now, and because she knows us so well—and we're such a diverse community—she can preach to every one of us in a very powerful way, right? I feel like she's speaking directly to me and I know that there are others in the community that are very different, that have very different life journeys than I do that also feel the same way. So that, that affirms for me that she's made the right choice.



The other...there was this incredible moment—I don't think she was quite finished with school yet—but she came to us on a Sunday and brought this video of women in prison. It was a remarkable video and in my memory, there was a “huge” crowd of us and we're sitting in a semi-circle and I remember that the women in the video in prison were also sitting in a semi-circle, and it felt to me like a complete circle. And we were hearing such painful, incredible stories about how women came to be in prison and how their faith journey inspires them in that place. So I felt such a spark or life, of new life, in this community that we share. And I'm so optimistic of what that means for our whole community. That this woman can bring women in prison to this little community in Bath, Maine and inspire us in such a profound way...what is that gonna mean for all of us in the future? I don't know, but I've got a front row seat to this experience and I'm loving it. Right? Yeah, yeah!

## Marilyn

Joanna (J,) We're sitting here with Marilyn and we're just gonna talk a little bit about Holly, we're sitting at the Neighborhood Café...

Marilyn: Hi, my name is Marilyn and I've known Holly since 2010, she's my mentor for the Tedford Shelter and I've been with her for a long time. She's gives me rides to church, we hang out, we go to the beach and I really believe she should be a minister because she has compassion for people...she really cares about people ... 'cause with her nursing career. I've heard her many times preaching and I think she'd be a good candidate as a minister.

J: Awesome, so when you get together with Holly what kinds of things...

Marilyn: We go out to eat, we visit my family's graves, and she and I celebrate my brother's passing every July 16<sup>th</sup>... we put balloons up in the sky, so we hang out, we just talk or we go have a cup of coffee and she gives my rides to church and to the Café.

J: I was wondering, does she do things that are traditionally thought of as pastoral roles, like does she study the scripture with you or pray with you?

Marilyn: She has prayed with me many times, she really has, and tellin' me and smiles at me and tells me everything's gonna be OK, we all love you at church, that she loves me. Yes, she does.

J: OK, is there anything else you'd like to share about how you know Holly or your relationship with her.

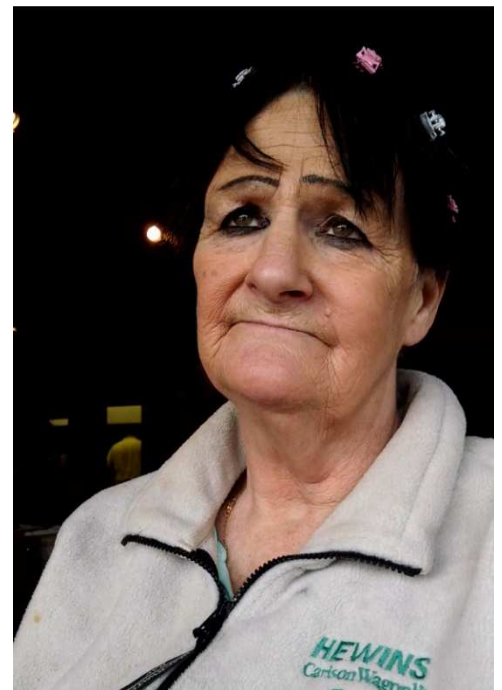
Marilyn: My relationship with her is really good, like I said I've known her since 2010. When she left for two years to go to school, I really missed her, when she went to New York.

J: Do you know that she was going to school to become a pastor?

Marilyn: Yes, I did.

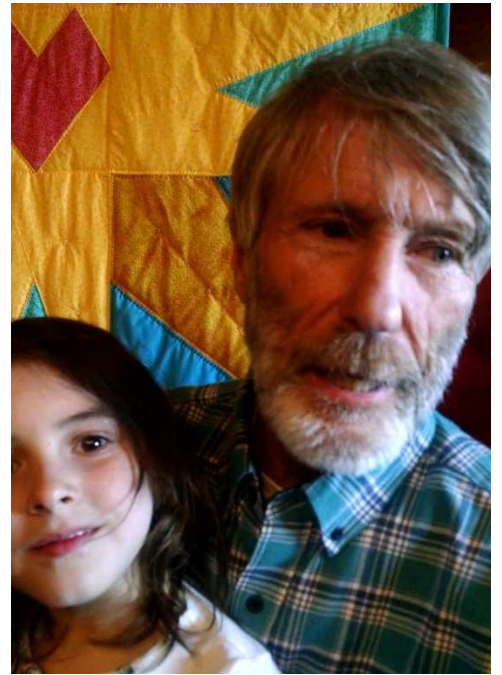
J: Did you find any changes in her from between the time before she left and when she came back?

Marilyn: No because she's always been loving and kind and she's always had a passion for people, so I really think this would be a good ministry for her...



## Steve

Steve: Well, I'm Steve King and I've been at this church since I was six years old, and I'm seventy three now, so I've seen a bunch of ministers come and go and I think that Holly will make a wonderful pastor. She has been really helpful helping us with our café...she was a great contributor to that. She went down and studied in New York City in order to become a pastor which is going to be a tremendous advantage to her as far as making sermons goes and as far as pastoral business goes. Um, she's well-travelled, she's been to the west coast, she's a Mainiac, too, course I like that. I've heard several of her sermons and they've been very well planned, and very positive and very informative also. So, I think Holly's gonna make a great pastor for the UCC.



## Allen



Allen: Hi, my name is Allen, I've been coming to the Neighborhood Café for some time now. Holly, in general, she's a wonderful person, very positive, very easy going, very caring. She has great ideas and her positive acts, in fact her sweetness...I can't find a better person for the job! And I think she will work out very good. To show an example, I work with her in arts and crafts...she's always very helpful and she always has something good to say about everybody and everything and I just think she's great for the job.

## Karen

Karen: Mm-hm, I've actually know Holly for a number of years, my mind is going back to the beginning of my knowing Holly when we participated in a most wonderful project together at church. And it's called the Neighborhood Café and it has flourished over many years and Holly was such an integral part of this café which became, really, an institution in our community and people from all walks of life come to this café, once a week and it's very beautiful. Holly is particularly, and I go back to the experience at the Café, she was particularly



valuable in that group, that small group of people that began the Café because she held so many wonderful ingredients in her. She was a serious person who really cared deeply about the people who were going to come to the Café, she would find humor in so much of life, she was a person that people could talk to, and this was so important at the Café, to make people welcome. She would be a wonderful greeter and she was a wonderful kitchen person with all the other people that worked in the Café. She just has an invaluable spirit when there's a group of people doing something and I just think she has special qualities ...that would make her a wonderful minister...

Bill: How do you experience the power of love in Holly

Karen: You know, I can say that whenever I see her, and now I don't see Holly so often, and when I see her I immediately feel that she cares about me, that she loves me...let me think a minute...I would say that I experience Holly as a very, very accepting person. I always feel that she is present and ready for whatever I am bringing to her and I have found that often times I have shared things with her that I didn't expect to share because there's something about her that feels so---that is---so trustworthy and that I know from knowing her for a number of years that she is somebody one can really speak their heart to.

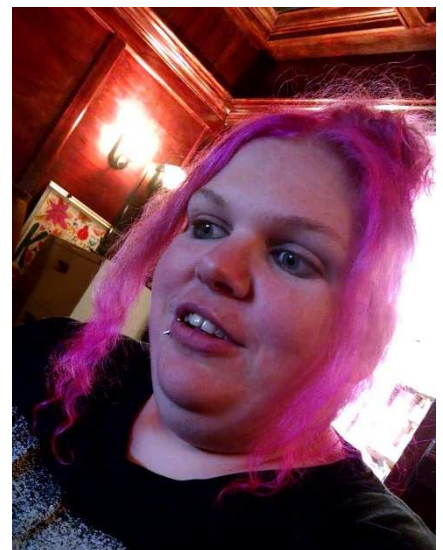
### **Kelly.**

Joanna: So tell me about Holly, what do you think about her, what does she mean to you?

Kelly: She means the world to me, Holly is amazing. She's a very caring and loving person, she loves life, she goes out of her way to do things for me and other people.

J: How long have you known her?

Kelly: I've known her for about 10 years. And I feel like she deserves to be a pastor because, like I said, she cares about people. Holly has passion for people.



### **John**

John: Well, I think Holly would be an exceptional minister. She has compassion that is extraordinary, she gives wonderful messages, she can laugh at herself, she can make a point that's phenomenal... you just know with Holly that it's the real thing. She's just a wonderful person and as far as I know, there's not much you can say about Holly that isn't positive and she just kind of lights up a room when she's in there. Even when she's nervous about a message, which you'd never really get from her delivery...they're always phenomenal. She is the real thing.

Bill: Do you think of any particular time with her, working alongside her...in meetings or socially...

John: Well, meetings, yes, and yes, social too...on the boat in Casco Bay...she was one of the few brave enough to get into the water...it was like 40 below to me...and the indignity of having to be dragged out of the water, but she took that with great aplomb. And of course with meetings, she's very professional, she knows what to say. She's a good leader, she is. She has good leadership skills, lots of personality.



### Ed

Ed: Yeah, I've known Holly for just a little over a year, since I've been goin' to church here and me and her, we talk about different things, she's pretty knowledgeable and she knows what she's talking about. She's done a few services here at the church and I like her services, I think she'd be a good ordained minister.

### Tree

Tree: Well, I think Holly would make wonderful minister because she's is very down to earth, very genuine and has so much integrity...very humble but in such a real, real way. I mean she really does sees herself as just a regular person, and yet she's so gifted and so able to do many, many things. When I first met her, when she first started coming to our church up on Congress Ave in Bath, she would often ride her bike to church and she'd come in all sweaty—from Bowdoinham, I mean we're talking an hour or two—and she'd arrive all sweaty and smiling and get into a dress and then just be so present with everyone. She just, she can do so many things, there are no limits for Holly...she decides to do something and goes through with it. I think she's swum across Casco Bay a few times, I mean she's just remarkable! And when you meet her, you think, 'Oh, what a nice person', you just connect with her. She's friendly, she really cares about people, she really truly does, it's not something put on. It's honest and real and again the integrity piece...when she says she's going to do something she does it and you know, if something happens, if she can't, she just lets you know, there's no guilt, just this is how it is. She'll apologize, but she'll go just go so many extra miles for anyone. She does everything she can, and yet at the same time-- and this is just, she's got so many facets going for her—she has good boundaries, too! So, in the midst of that doing things for



people, serving, loving, she's got good boundaries, too. She takes care of herself too and that's really, really important. That's a really important piece for a minister. Yea, she's a servant and she takes care of herself.

And her preaching! My goodness, I didn't know she had that gift, too, until just this past year when she's preached at our church a few times. She's strong and yet she's gentle at the same time, and has incredible insights and has a really, really strong passion for justice. All those pieces are important for a minister and for someone who loves God and wants to share the love of God with others. So, there you go. I'm very happy she's my friend and I really look forward to her being a pastor, I think she already is a pastor.