

Bangor minister publishes storybook

12/15/10 08:38 pm Updated: 12/16/10 04:54 pm

By Judy Harrison

BDN Staff



BANGOR, Maine — The Rev. Renee Garrett created Uncle Sol late one Saturday night about 10 years ago out of desperation when she could not find a story appropriate for forgiveness. That was the topic of her Sunday sermon to be delivered the next morning to the children of All Souls Congregational Church.

After the minister of Christian nurture told the story of how Uncle Sol and an alligator helped two friends mend their broken friendship, one of her colleagues suggested Garrett publish it. A decade later, she has done just that.

“Alligator Removal Services” is one of 23 stories in the minister’s just-published book, “One Man’s Roses: Tales from Uncle Sol’s Neighborhood.” In addition to the stories, which are all biblically based, the book has about a dozen black-and-white illustrations by Bangor artist Andrea Hand.

Hand also took the color cover photograph of a group of children who attend All Souls, Garrett said Wednesday.

In 2004, Garrett used a sabbatical grant from the Louisville Institute to attend storytellers’ workshops in Massachusetts and England. The next year, she spent a month in Eastport fleshing out some of the stories in her head and writing them down. Over the past six years, she has continued to do that.

“It’s a real different process to tell a story from your imagination than it is to write one down so other people can read it aloud,” she said Wednesday. “Editing and rewriting was torture.”

Uncle Sol is not based on any one man, Garrett said, and his neighborhood is not meant to be a specific place.

“He’s an amalgamation of about five guys in the congregation, two of whom have passed, who really care about the young people,” she said. “It’s also a play on the Latin word for sun, which is sol.”

Garrett said she wrote the book with three separate audiences in mind — ministers, parents and teachers. “One Man’s Roses” includes two appendices. One gives the theological foundation for each story and offers a series of questions that could be used to stimulate discussion.

The other is designed for adults in secular settings, such as public school teachers and parents who don't take their children to church, that could be used to explore character development. The suggested questions in this section don't reference Scripture.