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Pastor Julie Olmsted of Northfield's Trinitarian Congregational Church leads a "CrossTalk" discussion on sin and salvation Wednesday at Cameron's Winery.

Bringing the church to the winery

Pastor Julie Olmsted holding religious talks at Cameron's Winery

By SHELBY ASHLINE
Recorder Staff

NORTHFIELD — While sipping coffee in Cameron's Winery Wednesday morning, Roy Patno listened to Pastor Julie Olmsted speak passionately about sin and salvation.

Now and then, Patno would scribble some notes on

a pad of paper, and Olmsted's words inspired murmurs and nods from the nearly 20 men and women in attendance.

Patno is a regular attendee of "CrossTalks," a series of discussions centering on topics like communion, baptism, prayer, sacrifice, sin and spiritual discipline led by Olmsted, pastor at Northfield's Trinitarian Congregational Church.

"I've been to a lot of Bible studies," said Patno, who attends the Trinitarian but resides in Hinsdale, N.H. "What I like about this group is there's discussion ... I think it's important to under-

stand what people believe."

Olmsted decided to pioneer CrossTalks, which kicked off on March 1, in the hopes of following what she says is a trend among Protestant churches, as well as get out in the community and include residents who might not otherwise attend church.

"We like to be outside the four walls of the church," Olmsted said.

Olmsted hopes that through CrossTalks, attendees can have their assumptions challenged through open discussion. For attendee Gail Bedard of North-

field, CrossTalks are a means of spiritually focused self-evaluation.

"It really gives you the chance to take a look at yourself and your life in general," Bedard said.

Plus, Bedard noted a sense of camaraderie between the attendees, many of whom are members of the Trinitarian, and the informal, inviting environment Olmsted aims to create.

CrossTalks are held each Wednesday at 10 a.m. at Cameron's Winery, and will continue through Easter. Next week's discussion will center on spiritual practices.