

THE OLD MEETING HOUSE

EAST MONTPELIER CENTER, VERMONT

April 2008 Newsletter

LETTER FROM DAVID CONNOR, Associate Pastor

Dear Friends,

As Ben Bernanke admits that our nation is truly in a recession, I am reminded of my earliest childhood memories. I am a child of the infamous Great Depression. My Presbyterian mom and Catholic dad eloped in early July of 1936, were married “on the road” in Amsterdam, NY, and honeymooned in New York City. Nine months later, I was born in Rochester, NY.

Some of my earliest memories are watching my mother carefully tear out coupons from the ration book, mix little yellow crystals into white “oleo” to simulate butter, and witness gaunt, unwashed men show up at the back door seeking yard work for money or food. My mom would make them a sandwich for clipping our shrubs.

The scarcity of the Great Depression continued after Pearl Harbor, as our country diverted more and more of its resources into the war. Although the war created jobs, many staples of life were rationed or available only through the black market.

Like most kids at that time, I was obsessed with the war. We played war, dug foxholes in vacant lots, tried to identify planes – which soared in our skies by the hundred, drew war battle scenes in

school, and memorized all the rankings from private to four-star general. We ate Spam, hash, canned vegetables and white bread and received War Bonds for our birthdays. And I remember the whole town going wild with joy, parades and communal hugging on V-J Day.

Our war in Iraq has now surpassed WWII in length. It has exacted a tremendous toll of death, injury, PTSD, and broken lives among our armed forces and immeasurable death, maiming, displacement, and destruction to Iraqis. While most U.S. citizens continue to shop, travel, recreate, and enjoy the good life, the incredible diversion of our resources (now rising into trillions of dollars) is widening the chasm between the few very wealthy and burgeoning numbers of poor and struggling families.

As we try to envision our future as the OMH community of faith, we need to face the certainty that our neighbors, here and throughout the world, will face even greater challenges ahead. The “R” word is segueing rapidly toward the “D” word, as homelessness, bankruptcy, inflation, loss of jobs, loss of retirement benefits, exorbitant college tuitions, inflated energy and food prices, and environmental degradation all become the rule rather than the exception.

continued page 2

PREACHING SCHEDULE

April 20:
Susan Cooke Kittredge
April 27:
David Connor
May 4:
David Connor
May 11:
Susan Cooke Kittredge
May 18:
Susan Cooke Kittredge

CALENDAR

May 4:
Senior High Youth Group, Charlie and Susan's house
May 5:
Christian Ed, Spiritual Life, Trustees Meetings
May 6:
Missions, Executive Board Meetings
May 9:
Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas Concert
May 11:
Sacred Dancer Patty Ackley-Warlick joins us for worship.
May 16:
Pat Donohue Concert

THE OLD MEETING HOUSE

STAFF, OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

Pastor: Susan Cooke Kittredge
Associate Pastor: David Connor

STAFF

Administrative Assistant:

Margaret McCoy

SS Superintendent:

Michelle Gardner

Music Director: June Morse

Choir Director:

Marcia Bowles

Sexton: Pat Forbes

Newsletter Editor:

Izabel Nielsen

Clerk : Jen Hollar

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Joanna Day

Sandy England

Mark Catlin

Shaun Stephens

Janice Waterman, Treasurer

Cherie Staples, Asst. Treas.

MISSIONS

Ann Stanton, Chair

Betsy Vanderlip

Judith Granger

Tim Noonan

Peter Holman

Fran Mallery

Stephanie Shea

Jody Yates

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Allen Ploof

Malcolm Fielder

Erik Esselstyn

David Schutz

John Mallery

Nathan Phillips

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Treasurer: Janice Waterman

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Heidi Tringe

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Richard Brock

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Linda Cueto

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Barbara Blackman

Sue Hackney

Louise Rauh

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Jed Davis

Margaret McCoy

Ricia Heintzel

Marianne Perchlik

Adri Luhr

Maureen Carr

OMHAM

Peter Nielsen, Chair

Carolyn Scoppettone

Charlie Kittredge

Connie Hare

Mark Catlin

Fran Mallery

Erik Esselstyn

Dana Lawrence

Letter from David, continued from page 1

We are truly blessed to live in this part of the planet, this exceptional state, and this excellent church community. The world that Christ looked out upon from the cross – the world of the “blessed” poor; the world filled with “the least of his brothers and sisters”—had the same percentage of homeless, hungry, exiled, out-cast, tortured and desperate souls as the world has today. However we plan and frame our future, Christ’s call to feed, shelter, share with, comfort, visit, bless and love these “least” of God’s children remains at the core of the gospel we live by. We need to be generous, committed peacemakers.

May the Holy Spirit open our minds, hearts, and spirits to God’s wisdom and grace.

Shalom,

David

Families of the OMH

- Prayers for Nancy Strong.
- Prayers for Nancy Thomas’ father.
- Prayers for Lowell Vanderlip’s brother.
- Prayers for Jim Hanna.
- Prayers for Tony French.
- Prayers for Andy Christiansen and his family following the death of his father, Stanley.

Thank You Barbara Ploof!

After many years of faithful and indefatigable service, Barbara Ploof is stepping down as our Administrative Assistant, effective April 15.

Thanking Barb for all she has done would take a very long time and we would never be able to name the many hidden things she sees to or acknowledge appropriately her remarkable attentiveness and care. No doubt we will find discover some of these in the months to come, when we wonder why something isn't flowing quite as smoothly as it has in the past.

Barb has been invaluable to me; there is no other way to say it, and I'm a little nervous to move ahead without her. The good news is that she is who she is and will certainly still be an active and participating member of our congregation.

Thank you, Barb!

Susan

Welcome Margaret McCoy!

Freshly trained by Barb, Margaret McCoy steps into the job of Administrative Assistant on April 15. Margaret is no stranger to the workings of the OMH, both as a member of the congregation and creator of our web site. Margaret brings superlative technological skills, natural grace and great energy to the job.

Part of what Margaret will be doing is updating our databases, so please do assist her by making sure she has your correct contact information.

As we move together in this transition, let's all be a little extra observant and not assume that someone else will take care of a glaring need, should it present itself. Please introduce yourselves to Margaret if you haven't officially met before, she has a lot of faces to put to names.

Welcome, Margaret!

Susan

New Members' Meetings

In late May and early June we will be holding 3 meetings for people who wish to know more about the OMH and are considering membership. Everyone is welcome at these gatherings and we look forward to a great group. Barbara Blackman will be joining us a representative of the Spiritual Life Committee.

The meetings will be held at our house in Middlesex from 6:30-8pm on the following dates:

Wednesday May 28

Wednesday June 4

Wednesday June 11

Reception into membership for those so desiring will take place during worship on Sunday June 15.

Cooks Needed!

On Sunday May 4, the Senior High Youth Group will be preparing a meal for the Good Samaritan Haven. We would love to have some younger kids (age 7 and up) join us. Please contact Susan if you'd like to help at scookekitt@mac.com or 229-0840.

Hospitality Committee Under Construction

As of June 1 Gary Lewis, who has generously chaired the Hospitality Committee for many years, is stepping down. With her departure a very large cavern is revealed. Thank you, Gary, for a job so wonderfully done.

The Hospitality Committee's primary responsibility has been to organize Coffee Hour for the year. I feel certain that this can be readily accomplished with some eager and efficient helpers. Since the Junior High Youth Group, under the great guidance of Elizabeth Davis and with Beth Ann Porter's help in the kitchen, is cooking, we will have their gifts as well.

Coffee Hour is a great time to chat with friends and get to know people in the congregation you may have seen but rarely spoken with. Please help us make sure this tradition continues. If you would like to be part of this effort, please contact Susan at scookekitt@mac.com or 229-0840.

OMH Junior High Youth Group

It seems hard to believe that we are about to finish the second year of the Junior High Youth Group. It's been another great year of learning and evolving, with an eye toward how this group can most ideally interact with each other, the church and the broader community. While we continue to be frustrated by the many restrictions preventing this age group from participating in their choice of mission work, we have discovered a more significant role in the church community and our hope is that it has been as enjoyable for all of you as it has for us. We are indebted to Beth Ann Porter for sharing her passion for cooking and for guiding us as we use baking as our medium. The kids have greatly enjoyed baking for all of you most Sundays for the second half of the year. The students have shown great maturity and enthusiasm not only for the baking of items to be shared, but in stepping up to have a more significant role in Coffee Hour overall. Thanks to everyone who has shown appreciation and encouragement and also to those who have shown patience as we've learned to work with and among other established practices.

While some of our older JHYG members prepare for confirmation and for the transition to Senior High Youth Group, I too will be preparing to transition out of my role with this group. Some three years ago when I first spoke with Susan about recreating a group for our Junior High students, we both agreed that it's a group best led by a none parent. As my son John will enter this group next year, I am stepping down from my role and am eagerly looking for someone to step in to work with this great group of young people.

The time commitment is not significant. I have never considered myself their teacher or leader, but merely a resource and sometimes coordinator. If anyone has interest in discussing what it might be like to work with this group I'd love to share more details.

It has truly been my distinct honor and pleasure to work with this great group of young people. It is both exciting and reassuring to have come to know the thoughtful, poised, generous and intelligent people that are the future of our church.

Best,

Elizabeth Davis

Sr. High Youth Leaders Needed!

As I will be on sabbatical next fall, we need new leaders for the Senior High Youth Group for the '08-'09 year.

We have been meeting once a month, generally on Sunday afternoons, at our house, but this is by no means cast in stone; it was just the most convenient time for all. As we have engaged in other activities, our dates and venues have, naturally, changed.

This is a wonderful group of young people and Charlie and I will miss them dearly. The only requirement for anyone considering leading this group is that you do not have a child who is a member—or potential member—of the group. Take it from someone who knows: this is a recipe for disaster.

New Members Meetings

New Members Meetings will be held in late April and May. We are looking towards receiving those interested in joining the Old Meeting House on Sunday May 18th. If you are considering membership in the Old Meeting House or are just interested in learning more about our church, please let Rev. Susan Cooke Kirtledge know as soon as possible. She can be reached at: scookekitt@mac.com or 229-0840. A series of three meetings will be set up to accommodate the schedules of the participants.

Sacred Dance May 11

During worship on May 11, Patty Ackley-Warlick who is a sacred dancer will be joining us. This will be Patty's third time at the OMH and we eagerly look forward to her coming back. Part of the service will be devoted to experiencing scripture and our faith through the evocative nature of dance and movement.

Patti will be conducting a workshop at the Parish House on Saturday morning May 10 at 9am for anyone interested in participating. You definitely do not need to be a dancer! As May 11 will be Mother's Day, we welcome all mothers and anyone who has ever had one.

If you would like more information or if you are interested in participating, please contact Susan at scookekitt@mac.com or 229-00840.

Mission Spotlight

Each year, The Old Meeting House donates \$4000 to the UCC Global Ministries fund. We have recently been getting a newsletter from these folks, providing us with a small window into the workings of our mission donation. Here is the April 2008 story, Learn War No More, from that newsletter. It seems to go so well with David's Pastoral Letter, that we offer it to you.

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. -Micah 4:3

Recently I was deeply honored to interpret at the "Inter-Religious Conference on Article Nine of the Japanese Peace Constitution", organized by the National Christian Council of Japan. Article Nine of the Japanese Constitution renounces war as a means of solving international disputes and prohibits the maintenance of armed forces. This cross-cultural exchange included over 200 people from Japan, India, Korea, China, and America. Muslims, Buddhists, Christians and Hindus all came together, out of a deep commitment to our religious traditions, to affirm a common commitment to protect life. It was a community that declared "No More War!"

The Japanese constitution is scheduled to be reviewed in 2010, and there is an internal struggle between powerful nationalist political forces who want to do away with Article Nine, and other grass roots people's movements who want to renounce war once and forever. The voices we heard at the conference were the voices of religious people who refuse to stand in despair, and who dream together of an alternative world where people would learn war no more. One of the closing prayers still stays with me and I share part of it:

*O God of love
Into a chalice, we have poured our stories of the wounds of war
Into this cup, you have dropped your tears of compassion
But also your breath, your grace, your power to transform.
In moments when we dance on the edge of despair
Help us remember this cup of stories and longing
And drink strength from new global bonds of solidarity
Fuel us to be co-authors to break open a new moment in history
And chart a path to abolish war forever. Amen.*

Jeffrey Mensendiek serves with the Council on Cooperative Mission as Director of the Gakusei (Student) Center in Sendai, Japan.

Newsletter Editor Up and Running!

Izabel Nielsen will be the editor of our new e-newsletter this year. She will be collecting, editing and formatting our newsletter. Please help her by sending your submissions promptly on the date due to: newsletter@oldmeetinghouse.org.

Congratulations, Izabel, the newsletter looks great.

The newsletter deadline will be Wednesdays following the Executive Board meetings, and publication will be no later than the following Monday. New ideas for content are welcome! Please discuss your ideas with Izabel.

From the Futures Committee Discussion Moving Well

Over the past month the Futures Committee has been listening carefully as members of the congregation share their thoughts on how the OMH should move forward during the upcoming period of pastoral transition. Individuals have shared their views, and two group meetings — each of about 20 people — held nearly three hour conversations.

This conversation will wrap up on April 18. At that time the Futures Committee will analyze all the input that has been received and begin to draft a recommendation to the Executive Board.

This recommendation will outline the type of pastoral model(s) that we feel would best serve the expressed needs of the congregation. The Executive Board will then call a Search Committee and instruct them on the shape of the position they shall seek to fill. These are critical steps, and they will be taken cautiously but quickly. The Search Committee is likely to be formed by the end of May.

Please feel free to contact members of the Futures Committee throughout this process to share your thoughts or concerns.



Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas

Friday, May 9, 2008, 7:30 pm

The Old Meeting House

General Admission: \$15

Tickets available at Bear Pond Books, at coffee hour, or online at www.oldmeetinghouse.org.

“Fraser, one of the most respected of all exponents of the Scots fiddle, would look long and hard to find a more appropriate cellist as a partner. Haas can switch just as effortlessly as Fraser from a gentle singing tone to driving, dancing melody. A positive joy.”

— The Scotsman

The musical partnership between Alasdair Fraser, long regarded as Scotland’s premier fiddle ambassador, and the sizzingly-talented young California cellist Natalie Haas may not seem an obvious one. Fraser, acclaimed by the San Francisco Examiner as “the Michael Jordan of Scottish fiddling,” has a concert and recording career spanning 30 years, with a long list of awards, accolades, television credits, and feature performances on top movie soundtracks (Last of the Mohicans, Titanic). Fraser has been sponsored by the British Council to represent Scotland’s music internationally, and received the Scottish Heritage Center Service Award for outstanding contributions to Scottish culture and traditions.

Natalie Haas, a graduate of the Juilliard School of Music, wasn’t even born when Alasdair was winning national fiddle competitions on the other side of the Atlantic. But this seemingly unlikely pairing is the fulfillment of a long-standing musical dream for Fraser, whose cutting-edge musical explorations took him full circle to find a cellist who could help him return the cello to its historical role at the rhythmic heart of Scottish dance music.

Workshops with Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas

Saturday, May 10, 9:30am to noon

\$30 each

Alasdair Fraser will lead a fiddle workshop and Natalie Haas will lead a cello workshop on the morning after their concert. These 2.5 hour group classes are open to musicians of all levels of ability, and of course classical players are welcome. No experience playing Scottish music is necessary.

The fiddle workshop will take place in the Parish House; the cello workshop will be in the church. To register, contact arts@oldmeetinghouse.org



Pat Donohue

Friday, May 16, 2008, 7:30 pm

The Old Meeting House

General Admission: \$15

Tickets available at Bear Pond Books, at coffee hour, or online at www.oldmeetinghouse.org.

“Pat Donohue is one of the greatest finger pickers in the world today.”

— Chet Atkins

From swing to jazz to bottleneck blues to folk, Grammy-winning acoustic guitarist Pat Donohue plays it all with a flourish of artistry and melodic inspiration. Chet Atkins called Pat one of the greatest finger pickers in the world today; Leo Kottke called his playing “haunting.”

(continued page 7)

(continued from page 6)

Pat is certainly one of the most listened to finger pickers in the world. As the guitarist for the Guys All-Star Shoe Band of Minnesota Public Radio's A Prairie Home Companion, Pat gets to show off his savvy licks and distinctive original songs to millions of listeners each week. His decade-long association with Garrison Keillor's popular program has led to some unusual gigs: There was the after-show club date in Berlin, when Wynton Marsalis showed up to sit in with Pat and the Prairie Home band. Or playing music on camera for the Prairie Home Companion movie with director Robert Altman and stars Meryl Streep, Lily Tomlin, Kevin Kline, John C. Reilly, Woody Harrelson and Tommy Lee Jones.

Besides the weekly radio broadcasts, Pat plays about 30 concerts a year nationwide. Pat's musical tastes are eclectic. Though he considers himself foremost a folk guitarist, Pat's influences are rooted in bluesmen Blind Blake, Robert Johnson, Charlie Parker, Duke Ellington, Muddy Waters and Miles Davis. He manages to blend jazz and blues with folk, and the mix is seamless. Over the years he has captivated audiences with his unique original compositions, dazzling instrumentals and humorous song parodies, including *Sushi-Yuck!* and *Would You Like to Play the Guitar?*

Muddy Gras a big success!

Muddy Gras 2008 and its community dinner were a big success! Many thanks go out to all who participated. Special thanks to Beth Ann Porter for leading the crew who cooked and served the dinner. 101 people were served and it was delicious! Special thanks also go to June Morse for working on music with so many of the Muddy Gras acts. June rehearsed for weeks with people and performed throughout the entire show. And thanks to Connie Hare, Producer and Dana Lawrence, Associate Producer for juggling so many of the logistics that made the show a success.

And here's some good news, the Old Meeting House made \$1600 for it's fundraising budget! Thanks to all who made this happen.

So how about next year?

THE OLD MEETING HOUSE NEWSLETTER

THE NEWSLETTER
IS AVAILABLE FOR
DOWNLOADING AT:

www.oldmeetinghouse.org/newsletters.htm

DEADLINE FOR MAY ISSUE:
WEDNESDAY, MAY 7

PLEASE SEND ALL
SUBMISSIONS TO:

newsletter@oldmeetinghouse.org

BE CREATIVE!

SUBMIT PHOTOS, POEMS,
PRAYERS, BOOK REVIEWS,
MOVIE REVIEWS, OR ARTICLES
ON ANY TOPIC OF INTEREST
TO THE CONGREGATION.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
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