
THE OLD MEETING HOUSE

EAST MONTPELIER CENTER, VERMONT

October 2008 Newsletter

LETTER FROM THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

Dear OMH Friends,

As you probably know, the Search Committee has been meeting since last June laying the groundwork for the “search and call” process to find the next pastor(s) of the Old Meeting House Church. Working with the United Church of Christ Vermont Conference, our major task over the summer was to complete a church Profile for posting on the UCC website to publicize the position to potential candidates. The Profile, a comprehensive 26 page document, describes our church, our history, our membership and financial status, the surrounding community, our current leadership, and our aspirations for the future. As of September 10 our Profile was posted on the UCC website and they have already received several applications.

On October 1 the Search Committee meets with Dr. Lynn Bujnak, our UCC conference staff contact. At that meeting Lynn will share with the committee the applications received to date and will give the committee guidance on reading resumes, checking references, responding to applicants, and all the issues attendant to the search and call process. “Search and call”, as the quest for a new pastor is referred to, is not simply a hiring process. Search and call is guided by a strong sense of our history and current church community, the type of leadership that would deepen our collective spiritual lives, and finding the

individual(s) who has the qualities to meet our needs and whose own spiritual growth would be nourished in ministering to our church community.

I think I speak for all members of the committee in saying that we are excited to finally be at the point where we will begin looking at candidates. We were fortunate to have moved relatively quickly through the “paper” phase of the search and call process to be where we are today. We were greatly assisted by the fact that the Futures Committee which preceded us did such excellent work communicating with the congregation in defining who we are as a community and our needs and expectations for the future. Nevertheless, despite our anticipation and excitement, this is a time of uncertainty for both the membership of the Search Committee and the entire church community. There is no set time schedule for when the process will be completed and a new pastor will be found. We will be thoughtful, deliberate, and sensitive as we search to find the right match both for our church and for the well being of our new pastor(s). Any of you who have been involved in the hiring process know that it “ain’t over ‘til it’s over” and many unforeseen circumstances can steer the process in unexpected directions.

This is a time for us to gather around and place our faith in God and each other.

PREACHING SCHEDULE

Sunday, October 5
Tresa Lever

Sunday, October 12
David Connor

Sunday, October 19
David Connor

Sunday, October 26
Tresa Lever

THE OLD MEETING HOUSE

STAFF, OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

Pastor: Susan Cooke Kittredge
Associate Pastor: David Connor

STAFF

Administrative Assistant:
Barbra Ploof
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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Janice Waterman, Treasurer
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Fran Mallery
Erik Esselstyn
Dana Lawrence

This marks the second time in the memory of many of us that our church has gone through the resignation of a beloved minister. And yet we learn and strengthen our faith through weathering these changes together. A part of our Profile puts this well: “Undergoing these transitions [our two most recent changes in leadership] taught us much about who we are and what we value as a community. It helped us strengthen our notion of the “priesthood of all believers” and reminded us that even a valued and beloved minister is a vehicle or vessel, not the church itself. Though difficult, the current change in leadership holds the potential to deepen our commitment to our church community and to appreciate our place as stewards of a vibrant church community that has experienced many changes during its 185-year history.”

It is in the spirit of keeping the faith and being good stewards of our church that the Search Committee pursues its work. We will do our best to communicate with the congregation as there is news to share. We always welcome questions or suggestions from congregants. While recognizing that members of the search committee are bound by rules protecting the confidentiality of applicants, in all other regards we seek to maintain an open and transparent process. So feel free to check in with any member of the committee. I can be reached at home (223-6168) or by e-mail at lowellvanderlip@msn.com.

Lowell VanDerlip

From the Missions Committee

Contributing to Our Community

Missions Committee would like to thank everyone who helped in the September Sort-a-Thon. We put in a lot work, earned “money” for our two Food Shelves (Montpelier and Onion River] at the rate of \$2 per hour per person, and enjoyed the opportunity to see how the Food Bank works. People are welcome to call up and volunteer on their own, without a group. There is a Sort-a-Thon twice a month.

We are instituting a First Sunday Food Shelf Special, beginning in October. You are asked to bring a particular item of food on Communion Sunday, to shore up supplies of scarce items. The Food This first month,

October, we request canned fruit. November will be baked beans. December will be canned meals. We'll put a reminder in the bulletin and, hopefully, on the website.

On Sunday, Oct. 5, we will be collecting a special offering for Neighbors in Need. This money supports UCC ministries of compassion and social justice throughout the United States.

- Two-thirds of the total supports a wide variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects. For example, Justice and Witness advocates on issues such as the federal budget, voting rights, immigration, health care, hate crimes, civil liberties and environmental justice. You can see more details at UCCTakeAction.org

- The remaining third of the money supports the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM). There are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one multi-tribal urban congregation which are supported by CAIM.

Additional information is found in the bulletin inserts that appeared at the end of September and early October. There will be special envelopes for this offering. By linking up with UCC efforts, both nationally and internationally, we are able to contribute to ongoing efforts far beyond our own small congregation. The Missions Committee hopes that you will be inspired to contribute generously to Neighbors in Need.

From the Christian Ed. Committee

Sunday School Up and Running

We have much good news on the Sunday School front! We have all classes up and running and lots of energy and enthusiasm in the Parish House these days. Our two wonderful and devoted nursery teens, Beth Sturgis and Jenn Swasey, have teamed up to teach the 3-5 year olds. This class was not held last year due to the fact that we could not find teachers and the children did not want to leave Beth and Jenn!! Now that we've given them the teachers they wanted, the little ones are happily running to Sunday school again! Jed Davis and Merrick Grutchfield continue as

our 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade teachers. Catherine West and Tim Noonan & Maureen Carr are co-teaching our 3rd, 4th and 5th grade classes. These teachers have been very devoted to our Sunday School program over the years and really deserve a warm thank you from all of us whenever we see them.

Jr. High Youth Group has not one, not two, but three adults ready and willing to lead them each Sunday! We haven't worked the schedule out entirely, but the leading of the group will be shared by Brian Vachon, Marilla Hewitt and Beth Ann Porter... thank you all!! Stay tuned during announcements for more on this group. The Senior High Youth Group is our only group that could really use an organizer in Susan's absence. Even if only one or two activities were organized for this fall, it would be great to not lose this dynamic part of our congregation. Please contact me if you have any interest in helping with any portion of our Sunday School Program.

From The Spiritual Life Committee

Spiritual Events

The Spiritual Life Committee had the privilege, this summer, to welcome several lay ministers to the Old Meeting House. Among those who shared their talents with our congregation were: John Patterson, Francis Brooks, Elizabeth Towle, and Theresa Lever. At our recent meeting, we discussed the summer schedule and concurred that things had been running fairly smoothly during Susan's sabbatical, though we all miss her very much. We enjoyed having the insight and inspiration that these visiting ministers provided. We are truly thankful to have so many gifted leaders in our midst.

We also spent some time at our last meeting discussing, of all things, this newsletter. Now that the Old Meeting House has been using an online format for our newsletter for several months, it seems appropriate to take a look at how that has been working. Toward that end, the Spiritual Life Committee will be trying to take the pulse of the congregation about how the online newsletter is serving people's needs. Don't be too surprised if you get a phone call or an e-mail from one of our members about this. Some of you receive the newsletter in print form, as well. So, if you want

to contact us directly with comments or suggestions, please be sure to specify which form of the newsletter you are currently using. We are hoping to gain some useful feedback to make this newsletter an even better means of reaching out to all of you.

Confirmation Service for young people who will become full members of the Old Meeting House congregation will be held on Sunday, November 9th, beginning at 9:30 a.m. The Confirmation students will lead the worship service they are now preparing, and they invite all members of the congregation to join the celebration.

Also on our minds this time of year is, of course, Christmas! Yes, we know there is plenty of time before that busy season is upon us, but we are already talking about services and music and planning. Christmas Eve services this year will be held at 5 and 7 p.m. (led by Susan Cooke Kittredge) and 9 p.m. (led by David Connor).

Meanwhile, we hope you are enjoying this exhilarating time of year. In Autumn, God's creation seems to burst forth in beauty, reminding us in one breathtaking moment of the treasure that our natural world holds for us all year long. Peace.

Fall Harvest Recipes

Vanilla-Bean Baked Apples

Ingredients

Makes 4

4 thick-skinned mildly sweet apples, such as 'Rome Beauty'

3 tablespoons packed dark-brown sugar

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened

2 tablespoons finely chopped toasted pecans, plus more for sprinkling

1/2 large vanilla bean, halved lengthwise, seeds scraped and reserved

1/8 teaspoon salt

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Using a cylindrical apple corer, core apples three-quarters of the way down. Fit snugly in an ovenproof skillet or a loaf pan.

Stir together sugar, butter, nuts, vanilla seeds, and salt in a small bowl. Divide sugar mixture among apples (about 2 teaspoons each). Sprinkle with nuts. Bake until apples are soft, about 1 hour. Serve warm with pan syrup spooned on top.

This seasonal dessert will comfort and warm you during the cool autumn nights. Not only is this dessert quick and easy to make, it can be elegant for a dinner party, or just the right flavor for a night by the fire with the family.

I find that even if you are impatient, wait as long as possible for the apples to get soft. The apples will soak up the flavors and be sweeter and easier to eat.

Izabel Nielsen

Roasted Pears and Sweet Potatoes

Ingredients

Serves 4

2 sweet potatoes, sliced 1 1/2 inches thick
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon dry mustard
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon cayenne
Coarse salt
2 Bartlett pears, cored, quartered, and halved

Directions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Scrub 2 sweet potatoes. Quarter lengthwise; slice diagonally 1 1/2 inches thick. On a rimmed baking sheet, toss slices with 2 tablespoons olive oil, 1 teaspoon dry mustard, 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger, and 1/4 teaspoon cayenne; season with coarse salt. Roast, tossing occasionally, until crisp-tender, 20 to 25 minutes.

Core and quarter 2 Bartlett pears; halve crosswise. Add to the potatoes; toss all with another tablespoon oil. Continue roasting until potatoes are fork-tender, about 10 minutes more.

This dish combines the seasons most delicious and abundant fruits and vegetables to create a stimulating flavor. The combination may seem odd at first for those of us who have never worn mix-matched socks or sprinkled cayenne pepper in our hot cocoa, but one bite and this will become a traditional autumn dish. Again, this dish is fairly quick and easy, and served at whatever occasion or weeknight presents itself.

I tend to like sweet potatoes roasted a little longer, so they are soft and sweeter, but for this dish you want the sweet potatoes and pears to be on the firmer side. The crunch gives it spunk, making it look more appealing (who wants to eat mushy fruits and veggies?) and taste more flavorful.

Izabel Nielsen

Thank You

Letter from the Editor

Dear Friends of the OMH,

I want to thank you for your support with the newsletter over the past year. I have been blessed with the opportunity to work with the community and develop new skills.

As you may know, the Executive Board has decided to make some changes in the staff and I will no longer be the Newsletter Editor. I am sad to lose this opportunity, but have faith that others will present themselves to me in the future. I hope that the kinks in the OMH transition will work themselves out, and that the new changes will spark new ideas and maintain a creative environment.

Thank you once again for being part of the newsletter, whether you were a contributor, reader, or supporter. As the OMH moves in new directions, we have to remember that contributing to and supporting our community will improve our spiritual lives.

Best wishes,

Izabel Nielsen



Photo by Izabel Nielsen

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