



The Old Meeting House
1620 Center Road
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January 2009 Newsletter

Letter from Lowell VanDerlip, chair of the OMH search committee:

We're still searching! Thus far we have reviewed 14 profiles from candidates. They all have come through the UCC conference office where we have our church profile posted on their website. The UCC office does not filter the applications we receive except to insure that the profiles are complete and represent pastors in good standing and who have completed the required criminal record check. We have recently advertised in the major Protestant professional magazine, Christian Century, and we are beginning to see interest coming from that posting. By advertising in the Christian Century we widen the net we cast to include ministers from other denominations besides the UCC.

The Search Committee has been meeting regularly spending much of our time reviewing profiles and making decisions about which candidates to follow up with. Of those we choose to follow up with, we have requested letters explaining their specific interest in the Old Meeting House Church and audio or video copies of services they have recently lead at their current church. We now have 4 candidates whose letters and videos were of interest to us and we are following up with them by calling their references. Following those reference checks the committee will choose candidates to interview. If an interview proves successful we may ask to visit a "neutral pulpit" where members of our committee will observe the candidate leading a service.

It's a rolling process. As we follow up with candidates at different levels, new profiles continue to come to our attention. "Search" implies a bit of mystery. One never knows quite where it will lead and when or how you will find and recognize what you are looking for. Certainly our process is difficult to predict when it will be concluded. But what we do know is that our committee is committed to doing a very thorough search and exercising whatever

Preaching Schedule

Jan. 18 – David Connor

Jan. 25 – David Connor

Feb. 1 – David Connor, Missions Service

Feb. 8 – Song and Witness Service

patience is called for until we find the right leadership for OMH. We often look back at the congregation's Futures Committee Report for guidance in being true to what our congregation holds dear and aspires to. We use the report's thoughtfully crafted statements about who we are and what we need to inform the criteria we use in evaluating candidates. In this way, the congregation is with us at every meeting and through every decision.

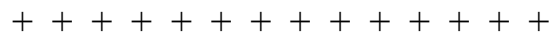
Susan's final service with us on January 4th was deeply moving for all of us. Her children, husband, our choir, the assembled musicians and Charlie Waterman did an exquisite job painting a picture of all that Susan has meant to us and how her presence has filled our hearts and lifted our spirits. One of her great gifts was to build a strong church community, one that will survive and even thrive after her departure. I think Susan went about this intentionally, knowing that change and transition will always come, whether it comes today or tomorrow. Come it will. She left this church a good deal stronger than how she found it. Bless her for that! We will need that strength. The road ahead is unpredictable. But, as Susan pointed out in her final sermon, it is precisely through the crucible of challenge that faith and strength are found. It is in darkness that light shines brightest. We have a strong community with a deep sense of stewardship to this church and love for one another. Our strength will be found and our light will shine.

We have a wonderful, hard working, and caring Search Committee. They are: Katie Gustafson, Jim Tringe, Jessie Taylor, Kim Sturgis, Diana Fielder, Marcia Bowles, Linda Cueto, Peter Gilbert, Richard Brock, Tim Shea, Wendy Soliday. Feel free to contact any one of us to share your thoughts, your fears, your thanks, your

ideas. I, and we, will keep you updated on the important work we do for the church we love.



Notice is given for the Old Meeting House's Annual Meeting, at the Parish House on WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28 at 7:00pm, following a dessert potluck at 6:30pm, to vote on the 2009 Annual Budget and to vote whether or not to accept a \$15,000 matching grant from the State of Vermont Department of Historic Preservation to replace the slate roof on the church (see Trustees report below).



Dear OMH Friends,
During this interim period following Susan's leaving the pastorate of the Old Meeting House, please feel free to contact me with any concerns, questions, pastoral needs, and so forth.

Home phone: 223-5426
OMH phone: 229-9593
Lamoille Family Center: 888-5229
Email: lfc@pshift.com
Ann's email: profstanton@aol.com

I'm available from 7 AM – 11PM daily and can be called earlier or later in any special circumstance.

David

From Spiritual Life

At our latest meeting, the Spiritual Life Committee started our typical opening discussion with this poem written by renowned poet Rumi in the 13th century:

*These spiritual window-shoppers,
who idly asks, "How much is that?" Oh,
I'm just looking.
They handle a hundred items and put them
down,
shadows with no capital.*

*What is spent is love and two eyes wet with
weeping.
But these walk into a shop,
and their whole lives pass suddenly in that
moment,
in that shop.*

*Where did you go? "nowhere."
What did you have to eat? "Nothing
much."*

*Even if you don't know what you want,
buy something, to be part of the
exchanging flow.*

*Start a huge, foolish project,
like Noah.*

*It makes absolutely no difference
what people think of you.*

We were surprised at how "current" the work seemed. It seemed to us that the poet's emphasis on honing in on what is truly important in life, seemed especially important to keep in mind as we endeavor to support the spiritual life of church family during this time of transition.

After discussing the poem, we recapped OMH's Christmas activities, reviewed a timeline of work for the upcoming year and made plans for a lay service in February. In addition, we gratefully

accepted Pastor David's offer to preach for the month of January, as the search for an interim minister continues.

As always, if you have any thoughts or concerns centering around the spiritual life of the Old Meeting House, please feel free to contact someone on our committee. God bless you!

Families of the OMH

Prayers for Ella May Speer and all Jim Hanna's family following his death in December.

Prayers for Lena Brazier

Prayers for Nancy Strong

Prayers for June Boardman's family. June died early this month. She was one of the church members from the 1960's who worked hard to make the Old Meeting House an active church again.

Parish House Gallery

All most likely know Diana Fielder and Victoria King as hardworking volunteers for the church, the foodshelf, the café, and pretty much everything that happens at the Old Meeting House. Only a few have gotten to witness some of their less public talents: quilting.

At the Parish House many of their quilts are on display for the next month. Please stop by to see these gems.

Contact Wendy Soliday at 229-9594 or wsoliday@aol.com or Cherie Staples at 476-2541 or skyeearth@aol.com if you would like to suggest future exhibits.

From the Christian Education Committee

In Susan's exit interview she mentioned that the Old Meeting House should develop "Safe Church" guidelines. The guidelines would ensure a safe environment in which children, young people and adults can learn about and experience God's love. Adri Luhr volunteered to contact the UCC for guidelines for use by the Christian Education Committee in the development of guidelines for the Old Meeting House.

Sunday School Superintendent, Michelle Gardner, announced that she was informed by the Executive Board that the Old Meeting House will no longer fund the Superintendent position. There was considerable discussion about how the duties would be performed if Michelle decides not to continue as Superintendent. After a lengthy discussion, where there were more questions than answers, it was decided to table the discussion until the Committee could obtain answers to the questions.

The minutes of the Christian Education Committee meeting will be sent to the Sunday school teachers to keep them informed. Sunday school teachers are also welcome to attend the Christian Education Committee meetings.

Edna Martineau, Chair

From the Trustees

State Awards Grant to OMH!

In a letter dated three days before Christmas the Trustees of the OMH received notice that the grant application submitted to the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation by the Trustees had been approved for the maximum amount of \$15,000. As noted in the last newsletter, our expectations for grant approval were not high. However, thanks to the grant writing skills of David Schutz and the photos taken by David Lewis documenting the condition of the roof our submission was one of 15 applications approved out of the 43 applications submitted. It probably didn't hurt our chances that the members of the grant review committee were well aware of the truly historic nature of the OMH. The grant purpose is to assist the OMH in replacing the slate roof on the church. The current roof was installed in 1895 and in recent years has shown signs of rapid deterioration. Because this is a matching grant that will require expenditure of at least an equal amount of OMH funds, acceptance of the grant will be considered by the entire congregation at the annual meeting on Wednesday evening, January 28, 2009.

Dinner Roulette

Dinner Roulette is an evening of various small groups gathering in people's homes. Those who wish to participate sign up, and names are randomly chosen from a hat (hence the name Dinner Roulette). It is a fantastic way to get to know others in the congregation.

► Next week there will be a sign-up form to fill out with options of:

Family Dinner or Adult Dinner, Host or Guest, Friday, Feb. 13 or Saturday, Feb. 14.

The groups are small, generally 6-8 people. It is a pot-luck evening and hosts are asked to contact their guests to work out the particulars of time, menu and directions. I am always amazed at how nice it is to get to know folks, some of whom I've worship with for years, through an evening of good food and conversation. It brings yet another level of connectedness to the congregation. – which, at this point in time, is certainly welcoming. Please consult your calendars and consider signing up. It might be a really nice way to spend Valentine's Day!

Lend a helping hand...

A young man is looking to rent a room in the Central Vermont area. and a level of support for what he is going through at this time in his life. He is 26 years old and was recently released from prison where he served a year for a lascivious encounter with his step sister. Throughout his sentencing procedure, he consistently accepted his responsibility for his actions and is continuing to learn new levels of

honesty and acceptance. He has a good support system around him, including parents, a therapist and a probation officer, and has compelling desire to turn his life around, but he needs a room to live in and a family willing to take him in. If anyone is serious about taking him in, his mother – an Episcopal priest – is more than willing to talk with you and share any information that you think would be pertinent. If anyone is interested in pursuing this further, please contact Nancy Vachon at 223-7930.

Parents & Infants Together

A nurturing and supportive class for parents-to-be and parents with babies newborn to twelve months. We will share ideas on sleep, food, caregiving, infant development and play along with songs and lap games for babies. We will also create one or two simple toys for your baby.

Time: Wednesdays, 10:15 – 11:45 am

Dates: January 28th – March 25th, 2009.
(not Feb 25th)

Location: The Old Meeting House

Cost: \$100 for eight week session.

Registration required. Class size is limited. To register please call the Orchard Valley Waldorf School 456-7400.

This class will be taught by Joan Kahn. For more information on the class contact Joan at 223-3005 or jkss@pshift.com

Missions Spotlight

For the last 15 years, the Old Meeting House has tithed 10% of its general budget for missions. Past Annual Reports provide exact figures of where that money goes. Large chunks go to our local community – for example, to Onion River Food Shelf and fuel assistance; other large sums go to Our Church’s Wider Mission (the UCC international fund) and to Kenya, where we fully fund one teacher at the Masai Ranch School.

On Feb. 1, Missions is leading a special service of Missions and Music, where musicians in our congregation will offer us their talents and members of the Missions Committee will briefly describe recipient organizations. We are seeking prayerful guidance from the congregation on how to spend our Missions dollars. You will have an opportunity to “vote” for your top five priority missions and to offer additional suggestions.

As a preview, here is a list of organizations to which we currently contribute as a committee:

Local Organizations:

Food

Onion River Food Shelf
Montpelier Senior Meals
Twin Valley Senior Meals

Shelter/Warmth/Safety

Good Samaritan Haven
Battered Women’s Center
Another Way
CV Fuel Assistance
OUR House
People’s Health/Wellness Clinic

Education

Good Beginnings

National/International Organizations

Food/Shelter/Safety

Our Church’s Wider Mission

Education

Bangor Seminary
Andover-Newton Seminary
Planting Hope
Teacher, Kenya Masai Ranch School

Note: This list does not include the One Great Hour of Sharing and Neighbors in Need offerings, nor does it include holiday meals, PINS Christmas presents and Easter baskets. Those contributions are made by individuals in addition to our group’s 10% tithing.