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Kiki Traver, Moderator

**August, 2009**

Dear Old First Friends and Family,

Join us at 9:30 for worship each Sunday in August. *Please note the summer's time change.* Come to meet God in community -- through scripture, prayers, sermon, hymns and conversation. We celebrate the Lord's Supper on August 2 with the Reverend Lindsay Harren-Lewis preaching. This will be Lindsay's last Sunday with us as she and her husband are moving to Pennsylvania. It has indeed been a blessing to get to know Lindsay and have her preach at Old First on several occasions.

Our **SUMMER HYMN SING** takes place on Sunday, August 16. If you have a favorite hymn, be sure to let us know on the Sunday morning Blog or contact Nancy in the office. Our organist asks the congregation to sit in a pew toward the front of the church so he can see and hear us better that morning.

We continue our program of volunteer **LAY READERS** on Sunday; would you like to be one? Our readers read the first scripture lesson and lead the call to worship and opening prayer. You can sign up to be a reader on the Sunday morning Blog's or contact Nancy in the church office.

A **CURCH PICNIC** will be held on Sunday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> (rain date August 30) starting at Noon, at the home of Hal and Betsy Ehrenfreund on Hedges Lake in Cambridge, New York. We will need to have an idea of how many people plan to go so they can order enough chicken and corn on the cob. Be sure to sign up on a Sunday morning Blog or contact Nancy in the church office. If you can provide a salad, dessert or drinks, please let us know. You might want to pack a bathing suit and towel for swimming and bring a hearty appetite for Hal's famous grilled chicken!

Our **OPEN CHURCH** program NEEDS volunteers, especially on weekends! If you can volunteer to take a shift or two, please let us know. If you've never hosted before, but would like to, Sam and Marietta Hibbard would be happy to train you. We especially need coverage on Bennington Battle Day weekend (August 15-16).

Normally our boards and committees take the summer months off from *meetings*, but this isn't a "normal" year at Old First. The Pastoral Search Committee will be meeting every Tuesday (except on the last week of the month when they'll meet on Wednesday). The Deacons will meet on Tuesday, August 4 at 4:30pm; The Personnel Committee meets on Sunday, August 9 at 9:00am (at the church); The Trustees will meet on August 18 at 5:45pm (at the church); The Council will meet on August 19 at 5:30pm and the Women's Book Group will meet on August 20 at 7:00pm (at Sherelle's house). If you are part of any of these boards/committees/groups, please try to make it to your respective meeting and be sure to let Nancy know in the office if you can make it so we will know if we have a quorum.

# The Lantern

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church

## PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

Since the last Pastoral Search Committee report, our pastor opening advertisement has appeared in two magazines, *The Congregationalist* and the UCC (United Church of Christ) magazine. *The Congregationalist* ad may be seen on the glass table in the narthex. We are getting many applications from these ads.

The format for our pastor search has crystallized into a procedure that yields for us a good basis of evaluation. Each candidate is requested to send a resume and a Minister Information Form where he/she includes brief essays about theology and religion in life. Then, if promising, we request a DVD or audio tape of one or two sermons that we listen to. If still promising, we schedule a telephone conference interview that lasts at least 1/2 hour and may last an hour. We ask questions that we have outlined ahead of time for consistency of comparison, and we converse about personal life to try to know the person as much as possible in the time available. It is amazing how much in synchronization we are in our opinions after this process.

We have applications now from 17 people, including two women. We have turned down at least 6; I say at least because several others are likely to be turned down but we haven't concluded our procedure with them yet. We have two who are quite promising but there are 3 or 4 more for whom we must carry forward to compare. We are meeting once a week, interviewing one per week, and if the right person clearly appears we will move the procedure to the next point which is the pragmatic one of actually presenting him/her and negotiating the job. We will not wait to complete all of the procedure with all the candidates if we feel we have found our pastor. After a slow start, we feel confident now that we will.

## WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP

The Women's Book Group will meet at Sherelle Mills' home on *Thursday, August 20, at 7:00 PM to discuss this month's book, My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult.* Newcomers are always welcome.

For more information, contact Wendy Schmitt.

## Preaching this Month.....

8/2: Lindsay Harren-Lewis

8/9: Don Erickson

8/16: Hymn Sing Sunday!

8/23: Gunther Pagel

8/30: Rick Spalding

## Sunday Morning Discussion Group

The Living the Questions discussion group is taking the month of August off and will resume in September.

## Green Mountain RSVP Volunteer Opportunity:

### Travel Trainer

Teach a senior or disabled person to ride the bus (Green Mountain Express). This may be done in a group setting or one-on-one. They will learn how to read the schedule, how to pay, and how to get on and off. Training provided. Give someone the gift of independence. Please call RSVP at 447-1545 for details.

## Council on Aging Seeks AmeriCorps Recruits!

Are you ready for a meaningful experience? Are you interested in working with seniors? Neighbor to Neighbor AmeriCorps is currently recruiting applicants, ages 18 and older, to assist elders in Bennington and Rutland Counties. Benefits include \$12,500 living allowance, \$4,725 educational award, health insurance, mileage reimbursement, monthly trainings, and diversified work. The service year begins September 21, 2009 and runs through August 20, 2010. For more information and an application call Kelly Thompson at the Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging, 786-5990 or (800) 642-5119. You can also visit the website at [n2namericorps.org](http://n2namericorps.org).

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*August, 2009*

*Vermont's Colonial Shrine: Welcoming all to share God's light,  
and proclaiming God's embracing love since 1806*



The trip to the *Peace Pagoda* in Grafton, NY has been postponed. There were only a few people who could make it on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and many more who wish they could but will be away that weekend. We are considering dates in October, possibly the 11<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup>.

Look for more information in upcoming newsletters and the weekly "This Week at Old First..." emails. If you aren't receiving weekly emails from the church, please contact Nancy in the church office with your email address and she will gladly add you to the list. It's a great way to stay current with happenings at Old First!