



The Lantern

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church

May 2010

From the Pastor

Easter reminds us of our faith: a risen Christ. Spring reminds us there are seasons in which all seems to begin anew. We can't avoid this message when nature calls to us with fresh green hues and tender, colorful flowers. What a blessing life gives us, a this new chance. A church's faith is unchanging, but there are seasons, even here, when we are invited to start again, to discover what our faith means in this particular moment in time. Our installation service, here in just a few days, is set in a glorious Bennington springtime. My prayer is that our beginning months already completed will take deep root and flourish. It feels that way for me and for that I give my thanks to all who support this church in so many ways. The installation will seem to have, perhaps, one focus. Just remember, the focus is on all of us: this gathered community as we send roots deep down for a new chapter of work and faith at the Old First Church. Take a hint from the larger world; now is a good time to begin anew!

-Ken Clarke

Minister's Installation Service

Sunday, May 16th at 3pm will mark an important event in our church's history. Rev. Kenneth A. Clarke will be formally installed as the 24th pastor of Old First Church. Formal invitations to this service and the reception afterwards have been mailed to members and friends of Old First Church and congregations in the Bennington area. We also have extra invitations for you to take and send to your friends or anyone who you would like to invite to this celebration. Take this opportunity to spread our happy news!

If you can help with the reception by providing finger sandwiches, finger desserts, flowers (from your garden, which will be arranged by Marietta Hibbard), help in the kitchen or clean up after, we would greatly appreciate it. Please sign up on a Sunday morning Blog or contact Nancy in the church office.

Food details: We are asking our volunteers to provide at least 50 finger sandwiches or 50 cookies (nothing that requires a plate or fork) on a tray. We will have doilies available in the narthex on Sunday, May 9 for your tray. Feel free to take what you need. Food should be dropped off between 2:00 - 2:30 at the Barn on Sunday, May 16.

Flower details: Those wishing to provide cut flowers from your garden (or purchased) should plan to drop them off in the Church Parlor at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 15. Marietta Hibbard and others will arrange them and set them up at the Church and Barn for the event.

Old First Monumental Tag Sale

We've all heard the words "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle." Old First Church's Monumental Tag Sale on June 5th is a great opportunity to put these words into action. Reduce the clutter in your own home (all donations are tax deductible) and give others the chance to reuse or recycle those "treasures." In addition, the proceeds of our sale will support our church programs and the Peter M. Goodrich Memorial Foundation.

We are adding a new feature to our Tag Sale this year, a Silent Auction. If you have something special to donate that you think fits this category, please let us know. We hope that the Silent Auction adds an element of suspense and fun to our already jovial Tag Sale mood. We are quite excited as we already have some special pieces to tempt you, including 2 framed and numbered prints of our church by Mutsumi Kobayashi.

We are collecting items (please no books or clothing) for storage in the Barn attic NOW (during Nancy's weekday hours 9-1, M-F). If you have furniture or larger items to donate, we ask that you wait until Monday, May 24 to bring those items. This year we have reserved the Barn for 2 full weeks prior to the sale so we will have more time to set up and organize. If you need help with transport, please call Ken Walling or Marsha Pilachowski to arrange for pick up.

Thank you to the many folks who have already volunteered to help with the sale. We have many opportunities that fit every schedule, so let us know how you can participate. We need help during the 2 weeks prior to the sale for cleaning, sorting and pricing. We need bake sale items on sale day. We need all hands on deck for sale day, June 5th, for part of the day or longer. Be forewarned, we had folks last year who planned to stay to help for only a few hours, but decided to stay the whole day because it was so much fun. When our sale ends at 3PM Saturday we will need MANY hands to dismantle and clean up quickly and pack up leftover items to distribute to various facilities.

Does anyone have a tent or a lockable enclosed trailer? We are looking for these to use on sale day.

Thank you to all who have volunteered so far. Good times ahead! Don't miss out.



WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP

The Women's Book Group will meet at Marietta Hibbard's home, on May 20

at 7:00 PM to discuss the book *That Old Cape Magic* by Richard Russo.

If you would like to participate in the Book Group or need more information, contact Wendy Schmitt

Handicap Access Project

The Church Council has decided to form an ad hoc committee to study and develop a strategy for providing accessibility for the Church. Accessibility might include, but is not limited to, the Church entry, bathroom(s), and seating within the nave or sanctuary. Work on this committee may include overseeing the design process and reviewing design, but committee members will not develop designs themselves. The same holds true for construction. The primary focus of this committee is to develop and recommend a strategy or process for achieving accessibility. Focus on process and goals, imagination, and open-mindedness are key.

Might you be interested in serving on this committee? Also, if you have particular interests, expertise or experience that we might not know about, please do let us know. If you have any questions about this please contact Mike Briggs.

Please sign up on one of the Sunday morning Blogs or contact Nancy in the office if you wish to serve on this committee. If you have a specific area of interest or expertise that would be helpful to this committee, let us know.

Helping our neighbors

FREE SUNDAY SUPPER

Our church hosts the Free Sunday Supper at 2nd Congregational Church on May 9th. Thank you to all who have donated shelf stable items to “stock our shelves” for our monthly obligation. We will need perishable food items on the day of the dinner and if you could provide something for it, please bring it to worship and leave it on the marble table in the narthex. One of our volunteers who is helping at the dinner will be assigned to pick up the food.

Perishable items needed for May 9th are:

2 loaves of Italian bread & butter
4 bags of salad
Dessert - 2 pans of brownies or the like

Lunch at Harvest House

We continue to collect food for the Harvest House who provides a warm meal each day to people in need in this area. Your donations have made a tremendous difference in how many they can feed on a daily basis. Donations can be brought to the church office or left in the box in the church narthex.

Items needed:

Canned Vegetables	Coffee	Pasta sauce
Velveta Cheese	Canned meats	Ziplock bags
Macaroni noodles	Alfredo sauce	
Cr. Mushroom soup		

Open Church

The Open Church season officially begins on Sunday, May 30, 1-4 PM. We will be open again on Memorial Day, Monday, May 31 from 10-Noon and 1-4 PM. Can you host one of the shifts?

The Open Church program runs on weekends only in June and we need volunteers to sign up to host. Please contact Marietta Hibbard or Nancy in the office if you can help!

Church Directory

Contact Ken Walling (447-4844 or email: kewalling@myfairpoint.net) if you haven't had your picture taken yet for the new directory!

Lawn Mowing Season:

We are looking for volunteers to mow at the Barn and Church. If you would like to help with this, please let Nancy in the office know. We will list open dates in the Blog and ask for help in the weekly emails.



Old First Church Cookbook

Have you submitted your favorite recipes yet? We need MANY more! Please email, mail or hand deliver recipes to the church office by May 21.

Trek For Health...

The Old First Church team called "Feet First" is participating in the Southwestern Vermont Health Care Trek for Health for the 3rd year in a row. Weekly results will be published in the Saturday issue paper and we encourage everyone to check on the progress of our 8 team members and give them your encouragement to keep on trekin'!

Sandy Bechtel
Tony & Jeanne Conner
Candy Cuthbert
June King
Tom & Wendy Schmitt
Valerie Shemeth.

