

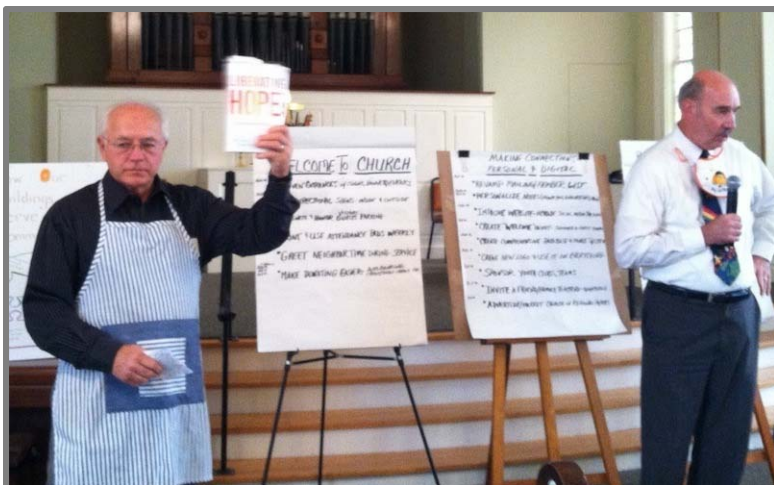
CONNECTIONS

PASTOR'S LETTER --- BIBS OR APRONS

Jesus said: "... whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, ... just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve."

This past summer our Church was selected to be one of four Vermont UCC **"NEXT LEVEL"** churches. The four churches selected are of similar size (about 100 at worship service) and each are experiencing relative stability and are desiring to grow in vitality. A steering committee for our Church was selected (**Kathleen Cote, Alex McGuire, Sharon O'Daniel, Kitty Oxholm, Rich Strum, David Tatlock and Paul Vachon**). Through this program (fully funded by the Vermont Conference) we began a year-long relationship with **Rev. Mike Piazza**, who is the co-founder of a non-profit organization entitled "The Center for Progressive Renewal" based in Atlanta, Georgia, and closely affiliated with the United Church of Christ. Two weeks ago he visited Vermont and stopped by to spend a day with us. The Church community was invited to meet with him over lunch and the steering committee to meet with him in the evening. Mike's week in Vermont culminated in a day-long workshop in Bethel. All together 18 people from our Church had an opportunity to meet and hear Mike as he shared his perspective of our Church setting. Some of us also read his book: Liberating Hope – Daring to Renew the Mainline Church.

Last Sunday the Church community, along with the 18



Mark Your Calendar

November 2 – Communion Sunday

Deacon's Fund collection

Second meeting about future vitality of Women's Fellowship.

November 9 – First meeting of Women's Fellowship Committee in Manse choir room after worship service.

November 11, Tuesday – Veterans' Day

November 16 – John Graham Shelter Thanksgiving fixins due (see what's needed under Bulletin Board, page 5).

Meeting in Fellowship Hall for those who read *Wonder* to share thoughts and reactions at coffee hour.

Confirmation Class will meet after the service.

November 23 – Stewardship Celebration Sunday

Luncheon after Church service put on by Diane Tracy and Shelly Shackett. Don't miss the famous corn casserole and thank you for your pledges!

Enjoy the Altar cornucopia arranged by **Karin Hardy** every year to celebrate the fall blessings of God.

November 27, Thursday – Thanksgiving

November 30 – Advent begins. First candle lighted.

Volunteers needed in the afternoon to cut and set up the spectacular Sanctuary Christmas tree. Tall ladder required. Contact Gary.

Chessy Kelley will lead a yoga class for the Sunday School.

December 5, Friday – Decorating the Sanctuary and Church doors for Christmas with wreaths and garlands. Volunteers gather at 5:00 with pizza after. Join the fun!

people who met with Mike, was invited to gather after worship to list ideas of change/renewal which seemed to be both appropriate to our setting and do-able. The idea of **change** seems to be a good and healthy thing to conceive of until particular changes are considered, recommended or implemented, then the challenges to change come out. Here is where Mike Piazza's insights are extremely helpful. Mike's most memorable line that seemed to resonate with all of us was: "**It is time to take off our bibs and put on our aprons.**" Are we here to be served or to serve? Mike challenged us to focus more attention on those in the wider community with whom we wish to connect. How do we present ourselves to those passing by the front of the Church? Do we have meaningful interior signs to assist visitors in getting around? How do we welcome people? Do we usher them through the maze of the building (known to us but unknown to someone new) to the back of the Sanctuary so they do not enter in front of the whole Church? How do we keep track of those visiting, those attending, and how do we follow up?

One thing I know is that **change will happen**, planned or unplanned, and when we experience it the question will be: Are we wearing bibs or aprons? Do we want to sit back and be fed or do we want to reach out and feed?

"The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve." Can we do likewise?

In Faith,

Gary

What Being a Steward Means to You and the Church

Something new will soon be on the way to your mail box. This year there will be two or perhaps three envelopes to open with a detailed breakdown of where your pledge dollars go. (And that where is **amazing!**).

Lately, Gary and Betty have been working hard to try to allocate Church dollars, including Gary's salary and Mike's, into five areas of ministry: Worship, Faith Formation, Pastoral Care, Outreach and Mission, Church Vitality. You will receive a summary for each with bullet descriptions of how the money has been and will be used. **Take a look, and you will see just how much is accomplished with any and every dollar you pledge.**

It takes all of us working together to spread God's word, maintain our missions here and abroad, and keep our building sound and open and useful for the Church community and the community around us.

We have the reputation of being a caring church. With your help and financial assistance, that reputation won't waiver and will even expand in new, important ways. As you read the bullet lists you will see just how much Gary does and **we all do to support him** -- sharing our faith, our joys and our concerns and reaching out to others in need.

Thank you for your pledge. Please come to the special thank you luncheon, put on as usual by **Diane Tracy** and **Shelly Shackett**, after worship service on **November 23rd**. It is always a **feast** and a good way to share in the joy of our Church with newcomers and longtime members.

Meet the New Organist



By now you have all enjoyed the new life **Jennifer (Jenny) Bower** has brought to our 1879 Hook and Hastings organ. It turns out that organ was in part what attracted her to our Church. She happened to see our search letter on a bulletin board at UVM, where she is in grad school, and we became the lucky church to have her every Sunday. We sent her a series of questions so you could learn more about her. Her interesting answers make up this Bio. **Welcome Jenny!**

"I was born on June 16, 1990, and grew up in St. Louis, Missouri. I'm an only child, daughter of **John** and **Carolyn Bower**. My Mother was a reporter for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch for 30 years and then an elementary school teacher before retiring, and my Dad worked in a variety of fields, from hypnotherapy to piano sales.

I attended Parkway North High in St. Louis. Then I spent 6 years at Oberlin College, where I graduated with bachelor degrees in organ performance and geology, as well as a master's degree in historical performance, specializing in historical keyboard instruments.

I chose Oberlin because it seemed like the only place where I could pursue science and music to a relatively equal degree. My Dad loves music and always wished that he had started playing piano earlier in life, so he introduced me to musical instruments around age 4. I guess I stuck with it! I started playing the organ in high school because my Mom's church needed an organist, but I didn't really get serious until Oberlin, when I was lucky enough to study with James David Christie. He introduced me to historical instruments and really helped me fall in love with the repertoire. I am especially interested in historical, and more specifically, mechanical-action organs, because they have a lot of personality as instruments, and because of the way the pipes "speak" under my fingers, and I can better control the sounds I get out of the instrument. I'm also attracted to unique sounds, and historical organs are great for that. I've heard reed stops that sound like ducks and flute stops that sound like melted butter.

My interest in geology also goes back to my childhood. My parents took me camping from a very young age, and the first thing I ever wanted to be was an entomologist. I've always liked being outside, so I decided to major in Environmental Studies until I realized it was very policy-oriented and light on science. Geology had very laid-back professors, and we went out in the field a lot and I liked that. Plus, I found out I could apply my interest in soils and ecology. I had a great mentor who encouraged me to go further and apply to some graduate programs that interested me. UVM was the only one that offered funding at the time - plus, I thought it would be fascinating to study lead in urban soils, which is the subject of my project. When my Mom was a reporter, one of her big stories was about radioactive waste that was dumped near St. Louis. She's made me really interested in the environmental issues that face city dwellers, especially related to contaminants such as heavy metals and radiation, and how science could maybe work with citizen science and journalism to help solve some of these issues."

Jenny is not new to being a church organist. Besides her Mom's church, she has played for a Methodist and Episcopalian congregation when she was at Oberlin. **We ARE lucky to have her!!**

Table of Grace Free Dinner Recap

Now starting it's third year, the Table of Grace monthly free dinner is always the 4th Friday of the month (none in December). It is a true ecumenical effort, with five churches involved (N. Ferrisburgh Methodist, Vergennes Methodist, St. Paul's Episcopal, St. Peter's Catholic, and our Church) on a rotating basis. It was our turn on October 24th, and we served **110**, including 40 take-outs. Basin Harbor Club filled our frig with free food, so the menu not only included roast pork, but fingerling potatoes, carrots, and mixed green salad with tomatoes and cukes, plus homemade applesauce courtesy of **Ann Collier** and brownies from a host of Church cooks (delicious!). Special thank yous also go to **Mary Jane Washburn** and **Connie Simino** for peeling and slicing the world's largest carrots and to the entire crew of cooks, carvers, servers, and clean-up ---16 VCC members, aided by 5 experienced Methodist volunteers to keep us all on track and put satisfied smiles on our 70 diners. Thank you all again for your generosity of time and spirit to support this important Church mission.



Mission Committee: Marcia Mazeine, Chair, Mary Ann Castimore, Jan Harrington, Andrea Kerin, Mary Kerr, Alice Maurer, Jeanne Peters, Larry Simino, Mary Jane Washburn

Prison Prayer Exchange

Cribbed from Gary's e-mail to us all on October 30:

Our Church functions in many roles for many people, here and around the world. We have been blessed with vital, involved and engaging people to focus and lead many efforts of mission and outreach. A month ago, **Larry** and **Connie Simino** stopped by to visit **Russ** and **Lenore Gates** in Pennsylvania. Russ was the pastor here from 1973 to 1985, and he and Lenore were pivotal spirits in re-energizing our Church after a number of difficult years. Russ is now the Protestant chaplain at Graterford Prison in Pennsylvania. In his service to God and to those incarcerated, he invited us, through Larry and Connie, to be a "Prayer Partner Church." Larry recently brought this up to the Mission Committee, which was very supportive. Our primary responsibility would be to hold the inmates in prayer and to exchange prayer requests (notes) using only first names and no addresses. All correspondence to and from here would go through our Church mailing address. This would be a true exchange, with inmates praying for our requests to them as well.

Right now there is one specific need that we can assist with. The inmates would really appreciate wall calendars and also pocket calendars. (If you are at all like me -- tis the season in which we receive calendars from all kinds of organizations.) We will have a box set up at the rear entrance to the Church for donated calendars. Caution: The prison authorities will not allow calendars with spiral bindings, but we might be able to make them acceptable. **If you have 2015 wall and pocket calendars to donate – please bring them in before Thanksgiving.**

Bulletin Board

Watch this new Connections page for updates on Mission activities, detailed notices of special events, meetings, and fund raisers, happenings or needs outside the Church community, and any other news. Organized by date.

- Women's Fellowship is alive and kicking! Two meetings (October 19 and November 2) celebrated a turnout of 31 and 25 respectively. (Note: That was more people than attended many of the meetings of the past!) During the second meeting an Interim Committee of 12 was formed to organize the ideas generated at both meetings and gather more information about the Colby Fund's principal and interest and perhaps Eliza Stevens Colby herself. That committee will meet after worship service on **November 9** in the Manse choir room. **It is exciting to see so many interested in continuing this once vibrant group.**
- Would you like to get rid of some of that Christmas paper that has collected in nooks and crannies through the years? The Holiday Shop at HOPE in Middlebury is looking for partial or full rolls of Christmas wrap and/or tape as well as volunteers willing to help wrap presents for disadvantaged families throughout Addison County. On any Sunday or any other day **throughout November** bring unused wrap in sheets or rolls to the round table in Fellowship Hall. For more information please contact **Ann Collier** (377-7551).
- **John Graham Shelter Thanksgiving:** Once again the Church community through the Missions Committee is providing the fixins for the Shelter's Thanksgiving meal, including uncooked potatoes, onions and squash, rolls, stuffing mix, cranberry sauce, and pies. All food donations should be at the Church by **November 16th** at the latest. **Thank you!**
- There is still time to add **Wonder** to your life. Our Church was invited by the Bixby Library to participate in a Community Reading of a book called WONDER - the Humanities Council's 2014 Vermont Reads Winner. Written through the eyes of a 10-year-old 5th grader, it's a story about kindness, acceptance, family, and community. WONDER is a fast and easy read that packs a lot of heart. Contact **Cherie Vachon** for a copy. On Sunday **November 16** a follow-up discussion will be held in Fellowship Hall.
- **Chessey Kelley** will **NOT be with us** for meditation in November. She will, however, be leading the Sunday School in yoga on **November 30**.
- **CROP Walk update:** Missions is still awaiting financial results, but the VCC had a great turnout – 40 walkers and 5 dogs. As always, there were also a couple of runners who took off from the Church! All are welcome to join the fun next year and help feed hungry folks here and abroad.
- The Church just acquired it's own **tent canopy**, thanks to Women's Fellowship and the

Colby Fund. Now we will be literally covered for next year's Vergennes Day and Fuel Aid fundraiser and any other outdoor event that comes up. It's a great place to hang the new Church banner too.

- Haven't you always wanted to sleep out by the Middlebury Falls in winter? Now you can have the adventure for a good cause. Join friends of the John Graham Shelter in raising awareness and funds for our homeless neighbors. Each person sleeping out asks friends and family to sponsor them. All funds raised go directly to helping homeless families and individuals move into their own home. The Vigil begins on the Middlebury Green on **December 6** at 4:00 pm. Sleepout to End Homelessness starts at 7:00 pm near the Marble Works. Call Paige, Elizabeth or Lencia at 877-2677 or email Elizabeth.shelter@gmail.com to learn more!



Crop Walk 2014

Your editors, **Alice Maurer** and **Jeanne Peters**, welcome all suggestions for the newsletter. Content is due by the 20th of each month and everyone has a chance to comment on their copy before publication. Thank you all for past and future help.