

# CONNECTIONS

## What Does Our Church Mean to You and the Community?



This question and others will hopefully be answered during a series of Next Level meetings during the month of October. Each one of us recently received a mailing explaining the importance of these gatherings to define the identity of our Church and decide how to share it with the greater community.

“We would like your help. We are blessed with so many gifts---a wonderful facility, people who plug in to do God’ work in so many ways, a rich variety of ages and stages, ministries of music and community service....Yet for years we have done a great job of keeping what we have a secret...”

Lend your voice to how we can share the riches our Church has to offer with each other and the county we live in. There are three dates designated “for you to join your voice with others to share your thoughts about who we are.” :

Sunday October 11<sup>th</sup> ---11:00 to 12:30 in the Sanctuary

Thursday October 15<sup>th</sup> --- 6:30 to 8:00 pm in Fellowship Hall

Saturday October 17<sup>th</sup> --- 9:30 to 11:00 am in Fellowship Hall

We hope to see you at one of these meetings at least. The future of our Church for young and old is at stake.

Next Level Committee: Kathleen Cote, Sharon O’Daniel, Kitty Oxholm, Rich Strum, Paul Vachon



## Mark Your Calendar

October 4 – Communion Sunday, Deacon’s fund donation.

CROP WALK begins at 12:30 on Middlebury Green (see details page 2). Sunday School putting together Thank You bags.

October 11 – First of three Next Level meetings in Sanctuary after worship, 11:00 to 12:30 (see details page1).

October 15, Thursday – Second Next Level meeting, 6:30 to 8:00 in Fellowship Hall.

October 17, Saturday – Third Next Level meeting, 9:30 to 11:00 in Fellowship Hall.

Habitat for Humanity Build, Middlebury VT (see details page 4)

October 18 – Addison Association Meeting held at our Church, 12:30 to 3:00.

October 23, Friday – Table of Grace free meal, 5:30 pm.

October 25 – New Member Luncheon in Fellowship Hall after worship service.

November 1 – Neighbors in Need Offering

## STEP UP for Crop Walk



Sunday October 4<sup>th</sup> is the 38<sup>th</sup> annual Addison County walk to help end hunger here and abroad through Church World Service. As always, 25% of funds donated will stay in Addison County to benefit area food shelves (including our own!) and other hunger-fighting programs. Each year our Church is proudly at the top of the number of walkers and \$\$ donated. Gather on the Middlebury Green at 12:30 pm on Sunday for a group picture and join the 3-mile trek (a mile and ½ is fine, too). If you didn't write one already, a check to CWS/CROP will sponsor those in our Church community who will be walking.

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

## Button Bay Labor Day Service

I think we all have a beautiful place in our mind. I certainly have a wonderful memory of a beautiful



place that made me happy and connected to God and our Church family. That place is Button Bay State Park on Sunday, September 6, Labor Day weekend. We gathered to enjoy God's great outdoors, worshipping together with Button Bay as our backdrop. The warmth, the sun, the service and the fabulous potluck lunch made the day even more special. Besides much conversation, many people took part in playing bocce ball, swimming in the pool, hula hooping and playing other fun games. A big **thank you** goes to all who helped make this day Spirit-filled and memorable.



Kathleen Cote



## A COMMA, A DASH – A SEMI-COLON; OR A PERIOD.

I have never been accused of being a “grammaratition” or even a grammarian. Nor have I ever been accused of being one of the grammar police (you know who I am talking about). In my very skinny “proper English” book, grammar and punctuation go hand-in-hand. The whole subject is covered in a sentence or two; maybe one of them is a run-on sentence. One of the challenging questions is; when do I use a comma, when a semi-colon and when a dash. Each, in his own right, means to take a break – maybe a paws. I know – maybe ten of you right now are experiencing a spike in your blood pressure. You are grabbing the white-out in one hand and your red pen in the other and preparing to go to town on this letter. Take a deep breath and just – let it go. OK, one more deep breath – now let it go again. Now you are feeling much better. You are welcome.

The United Church of Christ, our denomination, maybe ten years ago, adopted the “comma” as a symbol, representing the theological position that “God is still speaking.” This is not a modern, left-wing concept. John Robinson, speaking on the Mayflower (around 1620) said: **“I am verily persuaded the Lord hath more truth yet to break forth out of His Holy Word.”** Those words come from a Pilgrim pastor.

So what persuaded our denominational leaders from this generation to adopt the “comma” as a symbol?

The genesis of that symbol comes from a direct quote from a lesser known, yet loved, theologian, Gracie Allen. Gracie Allen and George Burns were a wonderful comedic couple in radio and then on television in the 50s. If you have a bit of time watch the “Burns and Allen” show on YouTube. It will be a treat. Anyway, back to Gracie. She died before her husband George. As things were going south, health-wise, for her; she wrote a letter to George and within the letter she penned this sentence: **“Never put a period where God has put a comma.”**

The idea of taking a pause, knowing that we, with all of our gifts, do not have the final word. And that is great news. “God Is Still Speaking” through all grammatical structures and beyond.

Thank you and God Bless You All,  
Gary



*God is still speaking,*  
**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



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## Here's to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Fuel Aid Lunch!



With the sun shining, temps in the 80s, and the aroma of grilling hamburgers and hot dogs in the air, about 150 people enjoyed the Church's fundraiser for fuel aid on the City green September 12. Even though winter seemed a distant possibility, \$1298.00 was added to the fund to help local residents with fuel and electricity to keep the heat on during the coming year. Fall mums added a profit of \$216.00 to the fund (for a total of \$1514.00), thanks to the generous wholesale price of **Bill Scott**, Ferrisburgh grower, who also helped committee member **Teena Hayden** put together risers so everyone could see the bright colors from Main Street. (We heard some of the mums even decorated a Benton wedding.) Teena also spent the morning at the recycle center, handing out flyers about the lunch and explaining our cause.

A crew gathered around 9:30 and a whole lot of lugging was done by **Steve Rapoport** and **Chris Wyckoff** to load and unload tents, tables, and chairs for set-up on the green. Lions Club grill masters **Dick LaBerge** and **Gary Russell** once again volunteered to cook. Thank you all, and a special thank you to Vermont Livestock Slaughter House in Ferrisburgh for donating all the beef (**Suzanne Wyckoff** did the asking).

More THANK YOUS are due to so many! In addition to the 150 hamburgers and hot dogs that came off the grill, there were bowls of cut up veggies from Church member gardens, **Lynne Rapoport's** famous lemonade (made by her son, Dylan), apples from a local orchard, and a table of homemade cookies from volunteer bakers, served with the help of **Kathryn** and **Olivia Wyckoff** and **Dylan** and **Carlyn Rapoport**. Fuel Aid Committee members put together flyers, publicity in the Independent, Free Lunch signs for streetside, and more. Set-up volunteers made the green inviting with flowers on the tables and a special tent for donations and brochures. Many hands pitched in to leave the Green spotless.

None of the success would have been possible without the enthusiasm and organization of committee members **Tara Brooks**, **Teena Hayden**, **Carol Mapel**, **Jeanne Peters**, **Lynne Rapoport**, **Suzanne Wyckoff** and the Mission Committee.



THANK YOU ONE AND ALL!!!

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## Help Build a Habitat for Humanity House in Middlebury

When: Saturday, October 17 (all day or one of two shifts, first shift starts at 8:30 am).

Where: Rockford Lane, Middlebury

Who - anyone 18 or older (or 16 + with a parental waiver)

-- be part of something great and lasting!

-- fun, fresh air, exercise!

No experience needed.

We will show you how.

Tools provided.

If you would like to participate, please contact Alice Maurer (475-2580) or maurer@gmavt.net

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## Crowds Gathered to Hear Jenny Play Our Historic Organ

September 27<sup>th</sup> was a joyous date for our Church as **Jenny Bower** worked her magic on our historic tracker organ. (Aren't we lucky to be able to hear her **every** Sunday!) An estimated 175 people were treated to an hour's worth of Baroque music, showcasing the organ's range of sound and Jenny's ability to create those sounds. Thank you to **Paul Stanilonis** who had the foresight to make this concert happen, and to all the choir members who put on the reception afterward. The Sanctuary looked especially beautiful due to **Karin Hardy's** floral creations.

A special scholarship fund to help provide musical instruments to local school band members was created from the recital's proceeds of \$2,045.00. Anyone can still contribute with a deductible check made out to VCC. Just write Band Scholarship on the memo line. **Karl Krahn** is putting a CD together so we can listen again or for the first time for those who missed this outstanding recital.



In case you could not attend, **Joe Klopfenstein** recapped the organ's history on the program. Here is a summary:

Our beautiful pipe organ was made by the Hook and Hastings Company of Boston. The company operated from 1827 – 1935 and built over 2000 organs. According to the Organ Historical Society database, 44 Hook and Hastings organs were installed in Vermont of which 12 are still in use. The fate of some of the organs is unknown. Only 5 of these organs, including ours, are in their original state. Organs are given an opus number based on when they were built. Our organ is opus 944 and was installed in 1879.

Our organ uses its original "tracker" action, which refers to a direct link from the key to the valve that allows air to flow into the pipes. Many organs have been converted to electronic action. Originally our organ had a manual bellows that provided air to the organ. Now that job is done by an electric pump. Our organ has two manuals (sets of keys or keyboards), 16 stops (controls that allow different combinations of pipes and give the voice to the keys being played), 9 ranks (sets of pipes) and a pedalboard (played with the feet). Of course, all of this marvelous machinery is quiet without the talent of the musician sitting on the bench.

Thank you, Jenny!!

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## Is Your Closet Too Full?



If you have good clothing and household items that you do not need, Neat Repeats, a resale store on Bakery Lane in Middlebury, will take them on consignment and send proceeds to the Church for the Mission Fund. Just drop them off and ask them to put the items on the Vergennes Congregational Church account. They are an all volunteer non-profit group that distributes the money from their sales to worthy organizations throughout the County (including our own Food Shelf). You can claim a deduction on your taxes as well. A win-win for everyone!

## Neighbors in Need

**Note:** On November 1<sup>st</sup>, the Church will collect the **Neighbors in Need** offering.

What is Neighbors in Need? According to the United Church of Christ website: **Neighbors in Need (NIN)** is a special mission of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds help the Council for American Indian Ministry. Two-thirds of the offering is used to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and special service projects through grants.

Grants are awarded to churches and organizations doing compassionate work in their communities.

One such recipient is Man en Mano. Formally incorporated in 2005, **Mano en Mano | Hand in Hand** is the “go-to” agency in Downeast Maine for Latino/Latina immigrant and farmworker issues. As a 2010 Neighbors in Need grant recipient, Mano en Mano provides a wide variety of direct services in English and Spanish. The three general areas are:

- Education - From free English classes to college scholarships to one-on-one tutoring and after school support, Mano en Mano believes that education is a tool that can make dreams possible and realize social justice.
- Outreach & Community Events ensure that Mano en Mano can effectively reach and serve their constituency while building bridges between various and diverse communities.
- Affordable Housing provides farmworkers who want to settle in Milbridge, ME, with an opportunity to live somewhere that is safe, decent, and designed with their needs in mind.

Please donate to **Neighbors in Need** on November 1st using the special envelope in the bulletin. Make checks to VUCC/NIN. THANK YOU!

### Treasurer's Report

Jan - Aug 2015

Income:	
Pledges	74,775.00
Non-Pledge/Cash	6,286.00
Manse	7,590.00
Other	17,760.00
Total Income	106,411.00



Expenses:	
Mission	9,597.00
Ministry/Education/Worship	57,833.00
Administrative	11,556.00
Manse	5,800.00
Occupancy	25,635.00
Total Expenses	110,421.00

Income over expenses (4,010.00)

More Button  
Bay pictures!



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.