

CONNECTIONS

most of you know, for the past several months our Next Level team (**Sharon O'Daniel, Paul Vachon, Rich Strum, Kitty Oxholm, Carolyn Tatlock, Kathleen Cote and Gary**) has been meeting by conference call and in person with **Claire Bamburg**, a Center for Progressive Renewal coach/consultant through the Vermont Conference. As part of this forward thinking process, three gatherings of our Church community were held in October to share and discuss four questions in order to create a Vergennes Congregational Church "Identity Statement":

- 1) How are you connected to the Church?
- 2) What keeps you connected to the Church?
- 3) What do you hear others say about the Church?
- 4) If you had 2-3 minutes to explain (describe) the Church to someone, how would you describe us?

Twenty-four members attended the three gatherings, under the able leadership of Carolyn Tatlock, sharing many memories, reflections on the importance of the Church community to us and others in Addison County, and thoughts about the deep spiritual connection to Jesus we find in this building and beyond. The Next Level Team is now in the process of reviewing the 14 pages of recorded responses (check the walls of Fellowship Hall to read them) to find themes and develop an Identity Statement to be shared with the Church community. **Watch for it, and thank you all for your time and input.**



Mark Your Calendar

November 1 – Communion Sunday. Neighbors in Need Offering. Deacons Fund collection.

November 8 – Meditation led by **Chessy Kelley** from 11:00 to 11:30. Annual Giving Campaign begins.

November 15 – E-giving tutorial with Kathy Barrett. For a preview see CHECK IT OUT, page 4

November 20, Friday – Table of Grace free dinner, 5:30 p.m.

November 22 – Stewardship/Celebration Sunday. Annual luncheon after worship put on by **Diane Tracy** and **Shelly Shackett**. Don't miss the famous corn casserole! Last day to contribute food for the Graham Shelter's Thanksgiving dinner (Details, page 4).

November 26, Thursday – Thanksgiving.

November 29 – First Sunday in Advent. Annual search for the Sanctuary Christmas tree (tall!) after worship.

December 4, Friday – Decorating the Sanctuary for Advent in wreaths and garlands. **Join the fun!!**



CROP Walk Update

It was a beautiful day on October 4th, and 32 walkers (plus 5 dogs that Gary calls 4-legged member wanna-bes) from our Church turned out to join the CROP Walk in Middlebury. The Missions Committee is still awaiting the total contribution from VCC alone, but \$21,000 was raised county wide. All are welcome to join the fun next year and help feed hungry folks here and abroad through Church World Service.



Habitat for Humanity in Middlebury

On October 17th **Sue Curtis, Peggy Parks, Jim Collier, Chris Howe, John Lent and Alice Maurer** put their painting and building "skills" to good use at the current Habitat home site south of Middlebury. Sue, Chris and Alice painted the 3 bedrooms and the den ceilings and walls. Their arms had a great workout. Jim, John and Peggy were on the carpentry crew. John also spent time sanding sheetrock mud, and Jim spent hours cutting window trim to fit each frame. Connor Homes donated the shell and the land is in a beautiful setting. Helping a family on the road to home ownership gave the crew warm and fuzzy feelings despite the chilly temperature.



Westward Ho!



With sadness but our very best wishes, we send **Joe** and **Nancy Klopfenstein** off to a new life in Oregon. November is the last month for us to enjoy Joe's outstanding tenor voice in the choir, though we will have Nancy's vibrant alto for a little longer. She is staying through December to try to sell their house of 28 years, while Joe starts teaching and practicing his special brand of large animal veterinary science at Oregon State University's College of Veterinary Medicine in Corvallis.

Anyone who read about their move in The Addison Independent's September 3rd issue will realize their importance to all of us. Besides his work on 33 area farms, Joe has served as a Vergennes city councilman for the past 8 years and played the trumpet in dozens of VUHS musicals, the city band, and the Champlain Philharmonic. Nancy has been key to Porter's nursing and birthing programs and since 2007 Martha Redpath's Tapestry Midwifery in Vergennes. All of Addison County and beyond will surely miss their many talents---no less our Church community.

They first met at Purdue University, where Joe was in Vet school and Nancy was studying to be a veterinary technician. They dated right after college when working at the same practice. After some years working as a vet tech, a dental assistant and office manager of Joe's practice, Nancy decided to head to UVM in 1991 for a nursing degree. She added RN to her titles in 1996.

When they moved to Vergennes in 1986 after a couple of years in Newport, Vermont's farmyards, they soon settled into their present home on Main St. (incidentally, a former veterinary practice). Thanks to Roger and Claudia Ellis, they were invited to a service at VUCC and became members in 1987. Joe says they stayed because of the people and the mission focus.

Their sons, Andy and John, grew up in our church, were confirmed and also became members before they headed off to college and then Oregon. Andy is now 29 and has lived in Portland for 3 years. John, born in Porter Hospital, is two years younger and has called North Bend, Oregon, his home for 1.5 years. Soon distance won't be an issue for the family, but it will be for us! Joe and Nancy have both played major roles in the growth of our Church as officers and on committees.

Nancy: Sunday School co-superintendent, Mission Committee, Trustee multiple times.

Joe: Sunday School teacher, Deacon multiple times, Church historian.

Committees: Raising an ark for Heifer and the committee for a new addition for Nancy. Joe served on the Pastoral search committee for Gary, the restructuring task force, and the sabbatical committee.

Music: They have both been integral to our Church's music ministry for years. Nancy has been in the choir since they joined, and Joe has enthralled us all for decades with his trumpet solos. Hopefully, we will be treated to one more organ/trumpet duet before Oregon calls. How we will miss those special musical moments and the strength of their talented voices in the choir. Come visit anytime!



Check It Out

Have you checked out the Church website lately? There is a new button to make donating quick and easy from the comfort of your home. As a result of your suggestions, we worked with Vanco, a secure website, to allow you to create a profile, make payments to a variety of VCC funds on a schedule that you choose, view your giving record (for any Vanco transactions) and even use your credit/debit card to make the payments. The benefits to you are ease (no writing checks or remembering when you made each offering), as well as providing a secure system to carry out your giving wishes throughout the year. The benefits to the Church include ease of handling offerings---Kathy and Patti can access a report of who gave what and when and quickly add those \$\$ to the Sunday offerings. The Church also benefits by having more regular receipts of funds throughout the year, so if and when you are unable to attend, your giving wishes will continue.

What does it cost? We estimate a \$400.00 added expense to the Church budget for this service. There is a \$25.00 per month fee for the general service and a \$0.35 transaction fee as well. If you use your debit/credit card there will be an added % based on charges from the credit card companies. A pastoral note: please do not go into debt for the Church's sake. If you are accumulating points or miles that is great – but do not go into debt. If you choose, you can pay for the credit card fee yourself, and if it is convenient for you, we can save some of the fee by having all payments made on a Friday. (Note: Payments can only be made on banking days). The Treasurer will receive reports of who is giving on what day and to which funds. You also have the option of making payments on a weekly, monthly or annual basis. In addition, there will be a Special Collections section which is time sensitive for each special offering. For instance, the Neighbors in Need fund will be on the site until November 13th. Church e-mails will alert you to what special offerings are on the website.

I will be available to assist and/or answer any questions you may have. Gary and Betty have tested the site and made a payment. Everything went very smoothly. This is a site that will evolve over time, so if you have any suggestions, please let me know.

Thank you very much, and CHECK IT OUT! See the image of the webpage on page 5.

Kathy Barrett and a bit of **Gary**



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, and cranberry sauce. All food donations should be at the Church by **November 22nd** at the latest. The Shelter is always grateful for all we do. **Thank you!**

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

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Donations

If you've already created a profile, please "Log In" on the right, otherwise continue.

Operating Funds

This is the Annual Budget

-General Operating:

This is for the Church's annual operating budget

Special Collections

-Building:

-Foodshelf:

-Missions:

This Fund provides assistance for those in need

-Deacon's Fund:

-Neighbors in Need:

This has a limited time frame. Please make your contributions no later than November 13

Jesse Gatow Funds

These funds are to supplement the funds available to each of the 4 groups listed

-Trustees:

This portion of the Fund may be used at the discretion of the Trustees

-Capital:

This portion of the Fund may be used for Building Projects

-Deacons:

This portion of the Fund is used at the discretion of the Deacons

-Mission Committee:

This portion of the Fund is used at the discretion of the Mission Committee

Total:

Donation Frequency: (About recurring donations)

Donation Start Date: mm/dd/yy 

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Tape and Wrapping Paper Needed



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 (sheets too) and **tape** to spruce up presents for disadvantaged families throughout Addison County. Wrapping volunteers are also welcome. On any Sunday or any other day **throughout November** bring tape and unused wrap in sheets or rolls to the round table in Fellowship Hall. For more information please contact **Ann Collier** (377-7551).

Sunday School News



Sunday School began September 13th with an enthusiastic group of children and teachers. The lessons follow the message that adults are hearing in worship service, and we hope that coordination will stimulate some discussion at home. Mission Sunday is an activity that we began last year and plan to continue. On the first Sunday of each month the Sunday School meets as a large group and does something to help others in the community. On October 4th we thanked the people in the Crop Walk by preparing and distributing decorated "Thank You" bags. If you have any ideas that we might incorporate into our upcoming mission activities, please let me know.

There is plenty of room in each class for more children to attend, so please invite family members and friends to join us.

Donna Lalumiere, Christian Education Coordinator

Treasurer's Report

Jan - Oct 2015

Income:	
Pledges	87,416.00
Non-Pledge/Cash	8,020.00
Manse	9,680.00
Other	<u>20,248.00</u>
Total Income	125,364.00
Expenses:	
Mission	11,514.00
Ministry/Education/Worship	72,014.00
Administrative	14,280.00
Manse	5,935.00
Occupancy	<u>28,469.00</u>
Total Expenses	132,212.00
Income over expenses	(6,848.00)



More CROP Walk 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.