



The Old Meeting House

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January 2011 Newsletter

Letter from David Connor, Associate Pastor

Dear OMH Friends,

One of the greatest blessings we enjoy as members of the Old Meeting House is the special ministry which is available to us at all times which we call "Circle of Care." This group of our fellow OMH parishioners provides food, flowers, transportation, and home/hospital/nursing home visitation, bringing comfort, prayer, friendship and support to scores of the ill, injured, shut-in, handicapped and bereaved every day throughout the year. This special ministry, which so closely replicates Christ's words, challenges and personal example reaches out beyond our fellow church members to neighbors, extended family, relatives and newcomers while respecting recipients' privacy, personal wishes, and special requests. Frequently the ones who most need the support services and encouragement of the Circle are the partners, children or most involved family member(s) of the sick or injured person.

I was thinking about examples from Christ's life when he could have needed a Circle of Care, and I came up with the time that Jesus' closest friends Martha, Mary and Lazarus suddenly had to deal with Lazarus' terminal illness at their home in Bethany. First, the sisters treated Lazarus with bed rest and home remedies, probably with round-the-clock care. As his condition worsened they would have brought in a physician or healers as well as a rabbi to bless their brother and pray over his deteriorating condition. As his death seemed both possible and imminent, they sent a courier to summon Jesus to Bethany as soon as possible. With no news of Jesus' coming, the grieving and desperate sisters needed to arrange for a tomb, final blessings and funeral services. They needed to notify relatives, friends, and associates.

When Lazarus died, they had to clean his body, wrap it carefully in a clean shroud, apply special oils, organize a solemn funeral procession to the tomb and see to the ritual purification of themselves and their home. After Lazarus was entombed, Martha and Mary would procure extra food and accommodations for all the family and friends who would be coming for seven days of mourning along with professional mourners who presided with wailing, tears and eulogies during the week. Then, when Jesus and his disciples arrived, they bought more food. When Jesus insisted over their objections on visiting Lazarus' tomb long after his body would have begun

PREACHING SCHEDULE

January 23—Rona Kinsley
January 30—Rona Kinsley
February 6—David Connor
("Pastor Sunday—Rona will visit the Sunday School")
February 13—David Connor
February 20—Rona Kinsley

Revised Common Lectionary Readings

January 23:

Isaiah 9:1-4
Psalm 27:1, 4-9
I Corinthians 1:10-18
Matthew 4:12-23

January 30:

Micah 6:1-8
Psalm 15
I Corinthians 1:18-31
Matthew 5:1-12

February 6:

Isaiah 58:1-9a, (9b-12)
Psalm 112:1-9 (10)
1 Corinthians 2:1-12, (13-16)
Matthew 5:13-20

February 13:

Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Psalm 119:1-8
1 Corinthians 3:1-9
Matthew 5:21-37

February 20:

Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18
Psalm 119:33-40
1 Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23
Matthew 5:38-48

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Letter from David Connor, Associate Pastor *(Continued from Page 1)*

to decompose, and miraculously restored beloved Lazarus to life, the sisters had to prepare a celebrational feast in honor of the incredible miracle, again with the rabbi, cleanliness rituals, relatives and now the whole band of Jesus followers.

I re-imagined this episode to demonstrate how absolutely overwhelming it can be when a family is facing the terminal illness of a loved one. If Jesus was not able to get there in time to prevent Lazarus' death, it would have at least made the

sisters' plight more bearable if he could have sent in the Bethany Synagogue Circle of Care until he arrived. As our Circle of Care members prepare for a special Retreat on January 29th, I want to express the deepest gratitude of the entire Old Meeting House community for the love, generosity and dedication they demonstrate in the myriad ways they bring ours and Christ's love to all whom they serve.

Peace, *David*

An Invitation to Engage in Living the Questions

People know that at its core, Christianity has something good to offer the human race. At the same time, many have a sense that they are alone in being a "thinking" Christian and that "salvaging" Christianity is a hopeless task. Living the Questions, a DVD and web-based small group study, creates an environment where people have permission to ask the questions they've always wanted to ask, exploring beyond traditions and rote theologies to help us discover the significance of Christianity in the 21st Century and what a meaningful faith can look like in today's world.

The 30-minute videos for each session include conversation, sermon clips, lecture excerpts, and spiritual exercises for practical applications (including different forms of prayer and meditation, movement, walking the labyrinth, etc). Since the overall theme is that of faith as a journey, not a destination, the livingthequestions.com web site offers resources for continued exploration, including downloadable expanded study guides, extra video resources, and links.

Last winter, two groups covered the first set of seven sessions of Living the Questions, meeting after worship on Sunday, and late afternoon on Wednesday. We shared soup and bread, watched the video, and engaged in lively and meaningful

discussion. I will be offering the second set of seven sessions this winter, hopefully beginning the week of February 20th. All are welcome, and you don't have to have done the first set to participate. The second set includes the following themes: Restoring Relationships; The Prophetic Jesus; Evil, Suffering & A God of Love; The Myth of Redemptive Violence; Debunking the Rapture; Practicing Resurrection; and Reclaiming the World.

I would, once again, be happy to offer two sessions, one after church (beginning at 11 a.m. so that there is time for some Coffee Hour) and one late afternoon (last year we met at 5:15) on either Tuesday or Wednesday. Please let me know if you are interested and what day/time works best for you. You can email me at ronakinsley@wildblue.net, leave a message on the OMH voice mail, or call me at home, at 802-525-4652.

OMH ANNUAL MEETING
SUNDAY, JANUARY 23,
after Coffee Hour
(please bring something to share)

Report from the Christian Education Committee

It is a new year and a new focus for the Sunday School. In the coming months, the Sunday School will enter a unit loosely based on Greg Mortenson's work in Pakistan and Afghanistan. If you're not familiar with Mortenson's story, his book *Three Cups of Tea* (a New York Times best-seller) provides a fascinating look into his personal journey to mission work in this very needy part of the world.

With guidance from Pastor Rona and Pastor David and materials from Mortenson's Pennies for Peace project, OMH kids and youth will discover how Mortenson is changing lives one school at a

time. His work is especially touching the lives of young girls, whose education opportunities are limited in these predominantly Muslim countries.

We'll be discussing this unit in depth at our next teacher Potluck which will be held after church on Jan. 30th. If you are interested in learning more about the Sunday School or about this topic, please feel free to bring a dish and join the CEC and our devoted Sunday School teachers as we "dig in" to a compelling subject while digging in to some tasty food.

Wishing you all a joyous New Year.
— *The CEC*

Report from the Spiritual Life Committee

At our January meeting, the Spiritual Life committee started planning the pastoral evaluation we'll conduct in 2011. We have deferred an evaluation for several years while the pastor search was underway, but determined that it's appropriate to provide some feedback for Rona and David.

We expect to develop our questions and survey structure in the next two months, and to solicit the congregation's responses in April. The tabulation

and reporting of the results will happen in May. You can participate in the evaluation process in a variety of ways. We'll create a short-form survey that we hope everyone will complete, plus a longer survey that's optional. To give you a chance to provide feedback in the way you prefer, we plan on soliciting responses online, via phone, on printed forms, and through personal interviews. We hope everyone will participate in this constructive process.

Free Community Meals in Montpelier

MONDAYS—11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Unitarian Church, 130 Main Street
TUESDAYS—11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Bethany Church, 115 Main Street
WEDNESDAYS—11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Christ Church, 64 State Street
THURSDAYS—11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Trinity Church, 137 Main Street
FRIDAYS—11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m., St. Augustine Church, 18 Barre Street
(SECOND) SATURDAYS—11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Trinity Church, 137 Main Street
(LAST) SUNDAYS—4:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m., Bethany Church, 115 Main Street

Scarf Sale to Benefit El Salvador Project

There is plenty of winter left, and beginning on January 30, mohair scarves will be on sale at Coffee Hour. The scarves, woven and generously donated by Marcia Bellas (OMH Administrative Assistant), can be purchased for a "sliding" donation of \$30-\$50. All proceeds will be given to Bethany Church, Montpelier, to help support their education project in the poor rural village of San Antonio Grande, El Salvador. Bethany Church is committed to donating \$13,000 per year to provide tuition and transportation for high school students and nine young people who are attending university, the first from their village ever to do so. These funds must be raised each year by Bethany's San Antonio Grande Task Force, so please be as generous as you can in support of this project and enjoy some extra warmth both inside and out.

Meeting Schedule & Announcements

Circle of Care—Sunday, February 6, after church service (Blue Room)

Christian Education Committee—Monday, February 7, 5:45 pm

Spiritual Life Committee—Monday, February 7, 7:00 pm

Trustees —Monday, February, 7:00 pm

Executive Board—Tuesday, February 8, 7:00 pm

Missions Committee—Sunday, February 13, after church service

Coffee Hour—Sundays after church service

Centering Prayer—Tuesdays at 7:30 pm (Blue Room); *the group will not meet on February 8*

Parish House Café—Wednesdays at Noon

Choir Practice—Wednesdays at 7:00 pm

Youth Choir Practice—after church service on Sunday, January 23

Annual Meeting—Sunday, January 23, after coffee hour (*please bring something to share*)

OMH Retreat – Saturday, January 29, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Explore our “addiction to hurry” and discover new attitudes and strategies to help us slow down to a “savoring pace.” Sponsored by Circle of Care; all are welcome. Lunch will be provided and child-care available. Contact Laura Brown

(lauraraebrown@gmail.com) or Rona Kinsley (ronakinsley@wildblue.net) for more information.

CEC and Sunday School Teachers’ Potluck—Sunday, January 30, after church service

Newsletter Deadline—Tuesday, February 15 (email Word file to admin@oldmeetinghouse.org)

Stewardship Pledges for 2011—It’s not too late to return pledge cards to Cherie Staples
(mail to OMH or put in collection basket)

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