



The Old Meeting House

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www.oldmeetinghouse.org

June/July 2011 Newsletter

Letter from Elissa Johnk, Settled Pastor

Greetings!

I received my first calendar as a gift when I was seven. It was a Christmas gift, and I must admit to feeling a bit confused. Who gets a 2nd grader a calendar?! But there it was: small, checkbook size, each date far too tiny to actually write anything of substance. You can't plan very far ahead at seven, so mostly I would take it out in the evening and write things I did that day. May 24, Swimming with Susan. May 27, dance. I couldn't quite figure out what one was actually supposed to do with these things.

And then I discovered the joy of crossing-off days.

It was as if all the energy I had poured into counting down to one single day: June 9. The end of school. Suddenly each day became about getting to write that little "X" on the calendar that brought me one day closer: one day closer to sleeping in, to sprinklers, and lemonade stands. One day closer to pure, unadulterated joy.

Today my calendar is much larger; the squares are filled with meetings and to-do lists, and crossing off each day is far more complicated: did I get enough done? Is it really that close to that next big birthday? But I must say it also holds something of that same joy and expectation for me. This is because, marked in bright yellow highlighter, is one very special day: August 1 – Start at OMH.

Ever since our meeting in May, where you so graciously welcomed me into your community, this date has taken on increasing significance. When do I get to see these shining faces again?! When will we be together? The excitement of that day was contagious. And, I must admit, it started for me long before that Candidating Sunday. It started the very first time I met the Search Committee. Getting to know them, to hear their stories and what their visions and dreams are for this place and for the wider world, it became very clear to me that the Spirit of God is palpable at the Old Meeting House. This is a place, and a people, and a vision of God's hope for the world of which I am very eager to be a part.

In the very last few verses of the Gospel of Luke, Jesus returns to his disciples to give them final instructions. After years of teaching, healing, anticipation – after years of hope crushed and reborn – Jesus' final

Revised Common Lectionary Readings *(bold denotes focus scripture)*

July 3:

Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67

Psalm 45:10-17

Romans 7:15-25a

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

July 10:

Genesis 25:19-34

Psalm 119:105-112

Romans 8:1-11

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

July 17:

Genesis 28:10-19a

Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24

Romans 8:12-25

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

July 24:

Genesis 29:15-28

Psalm 105:1-11, 45b

Romans 8:26-39

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

July 31:

Genesis 32:22-31

Psalm 17:1-7, 15

Romans 9:1-5

Matthew 14:13-21

August 7:

Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28

Psalm 105: 1-6, 16-22, 45b

Romans 10:5-15

Matthew 14:22-33

August 14:

Genesis 45:1-15

Psalm 133

Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

Matthew 15:(10-20), 21-28

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instruction to his disciples was, “Stay here in the city.” Jesus’ final message? Wait.

Filled with the good news, the disciples are told that they must contain themselves until the time is right. This has always seemed counterintuitive to me. Now, however, I am beginning to get a glimmer of why that might have been. Between the ascension and the birth of the church, there was work to be done. Organizational work, yes – getting things in shape to launch a revolution takes time. But also personal work. There are goodbyes to be said. There is grieving to be done. Time is needed to help us reflect back on one chapter of our lives, so that we can be fully open to the possibilities of the next.

Also, I’m pretty sure that Jesus just plain knew that every once in a while we need a break. A time for sprinklers and lemonade stands, and pure, unadulterated relaxation before the “big day” (inasmuch as that is possible after the age of seven).

All the best manuals on church life relate that it can take a year or more for a minister and a congregation to come to know one another fully, to discern who they are, and can be, together. They encourage us to first take the time to love one another, to dream together.

walking with you in the joy and the pain of the everyday.

The “big day” for the disciples was, of course, Pentecost. But we also know that, even after this date, it took them some time to get going. There was disagreement and contention, and the church was (and continues to be) full of different understandings of what it means to follow Jesus. They were clumsy and awkward – and we will be, too. Full of enthusiasm for this new phase in our life, we will come to August 1st with ideas, projects we’d like to see started, or rejuvenated, or cut. And yet, even then – especially then – I imagine that Jesus will whisper to us, “wait.”

And so, as much as my days have become about finishing my time at Wellesley, packing my belongings into an absurd amount of boxes, and driving home to Iowa for July, they are also about counting down until we can begin this long process together. Until then, I know that you are held closely in God’s hands (and, of course, David’s).

I would say “I can’t wait.” But, of course, I can, and I must. That doesn’t mean, however, that I can’t mark my calendar with big, black Xs. 31 of them, to be exact.

With eagerness, *Elissa*

Parting Words from Rona

Dear Wonderful OMH Community,

Brent and I would like to thank you for the amazing celebration of our ministry together, on June 17th. You are such a talented group with those talents well-represented in the congregation’s young people! The music, the poems, the stories, the gift of the tree (not to mention the crew who came on Sunday and

planted the tree!) all touched us deeply. Alice Angney took photos and Allen Ploof taped the program, so we will be able to revisit and be rewarmed by it for years to come.

I pray that God will continue to bless you in every way as you enter into the next chapter of your life as a Beloved Community.

— *Rona*

Pastoral Coverage During July

Dear Old Meeting House Friends,

Thank you all for the tremendous support and outpouring of love and appreciation you showered on Rona and Brent over the past several weeks. It was a time, once again, when I experienced the honor and blessing of being part of this community, witnessing and participating in the heartfelt ties we share.

During July, I will provide pastoral coverage for our OMH congregation so that Rona can enjoy some time for vacation, relaxation, and working through her transition plans.

Please let me know of any special requests, needs, or services that you would like from me this month. I will be preaching, counseling, visiting and conducting regular and special liturgical services until Elissa arrives at the beginning of August.

I am available 24/7 at 223-5426 and 229-9593 (the church number) extension 2, or by email: davidwconnor@yahoo.com

God bless you all; enjoy your summer!

— *David*

Thank you from the Christian Education Committee

The Christian Education Committee would like to thank the following volunteers from our congregation who have been so integral to the success of our 2010-2011 Sunday School year (with apologies for misspellings or, heaven forbid, omissions):

Nursery (ages 0-3) - Julia Gilbert, with help from Liz Gilbert

Pre-K & K (ages 3-5) - Priscilla and Andre Gilbert, Katie Gustafson, Heidi and Jim Tringe, Stacy Brown, Cristin O'Donnell and Adri Luhr.

Primary (grades 1-2-3) - Shawn Stephens and Merrick Grutchfield

Elementary (grades 3-4-5) - Maureen Carr and Tim Noonan

Middle School (grades 5-6-7) - Catherine West and Marianne Perchlik

Confirmation Class - Brian Vachon and Sarah Brock

Children's Choir - Marianne Perchlik

Performances (Pageant/Miracles) - so many, many hands but especially Michelle Harper,

Marcia Clark, Marianne Perchlik, Bev Keck, and Catherine West.

Substitute Teachers - Carolyn Scoppettone and Jed Davis
Pastor Sunday leadership - Reverends Rona and David

Administrative support - Marcia Bellas

For our children's sake, it truly takes a village.

As we appreciate our teachers for this past year, we now begin planning for the upcoming school year. We know already that some of our veteran teachers would like to take a break, which allows for an infusion of new teachers. It really is much better when we have the number of interested volunteers we had this year, so that each class is a team-teaching situation. Please contact any member of the CEC and let us know how you can share your gifts with our youth.

Thank you!

Meetings Schedule and Announcements

OMHAM—Wednesday, July 6, 6:00 p.m.

Executive Board—Tuesday, July 12, 7:00 p.m.

Christian Education Committee—Monday, August 8, 5:45 p.m.

Spiritual Life Committee—Monday, August 8, 7:00 p.m.

Missions Committee—Sunday, September 18, 11:00 a.m.

Trustees—To Be Announced

Coffee Hour—The coffee hour crew is taking a break in July, though coffee may be offered informally after the church service. Regular coffee hour will resume in August.

Choir Practice—Sundays at 8:30 a.m. (Wednesday evening practices are discontinued until fall).

Newsletter Deadline—The next deadline is Tuesday, August 16.

Please email your submission as a Word document to admin@oldmeetinghouse.org

OMH Directory—The new pictorial directory is at the Parish House.

OMH Contact List—New (green) contact lists are available in the Narthex and at the Parish House.

Congratulations to Nancy Bruce and the Bruce-Grundy Family on the arrival of Ava and Esme, born on June 2. The girls were baptized at OMH on June 26.

Summit School Folk Music Camp for Kids—Week of July 13, 9:00-3:00; ages 8-13; visit www.summit-school.org; contact Katie Trautz, Director, at music@summit-school.org or (802) 917-

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