



The Old Meeting House

1620 Center Road
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www.oldmeetinghouse.org

May 2011 Newsletter

Letter from David Connor, Associate Pastor

Dear OMH Friends,

As our church community prepares for a major transition this summer – from our deeply loved and compassionately dedicated “interim” pastor Rona to our enthusiastically chosen and highly anticipated “settled pastor” Elissa Johnk – I have been reflecting on the centuries-old sexist glass ceiling which prevented the ordination of women to the ministry and priesthood for so many centuries. In my last sermon, I mentioned how quickly the male apostles disappeared when Christ’s prediction of his arrest and death actually unfolded. In contrast, the female relatives, friends and disciples humbly and courageously walked the Way of the Cross, stood lamenting publicly at Christ’s suffering and death, wrapped his body and accompanied it to the tomb, stood vigil and came before dawn to anoint the dead body with oil and spices, thus becoming the first to announce the empty tomb and, later, the resurrection.

When I was ordained as a Catholic priest by Bishop Fulton Sheen (the TV priest) in 1964, I entered an all-male ministry and served with several exemplary and deeply committed fellow priests. However, I soon realized that the hardest workers, the most open-minded theologians and catechists, and the best educators and human rights advocates were nuns.

In my over-twenty-years as a member of the Old Meeting House community, I occasionally shared the pulpit with the amazing young Hamilton Coe Throckmorton, then serving the yoked OMH and the Old Brick Church. During Hamilton’s sabbatical leave, I joined the team of Deborah Bremer and Susan Cooke Kittredge and served as a part-time interim after Hamilton left. Beginning with the call by the OMH search team to Susan and me, I have been incredibly blessed and deeply privileged to share our church ministry with two totally dedicated, wise, loving and brilliant pastors, Susan and Rona.

The idea that any man/male could provide any more complete, Christ-like, thoroughly committed service of ministry to our church than these two exceptional women; or that some pope, bishop or other ecclesial

PREACHING SCHEDULE

May 22—Rona Kinsley
May 29—Rona Kinsley
June 5—Children’s Sunday
June 12—David Connor &
Rona Kinsley (Communion)
June 19—Rona Kinsley
June 26—David Connor

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

May 22:

Acts 7:55-60
Psalm 31:1-5,15-16
1 Peter 2:2-10
John 14:1-14

May 29:

Acts 17:22-31
Psalm 66:8-20
1 Peter 3:13-22
John 14:15-21

June 5:

Acts 1:6-14
Ps 68:1-10, 32-35
1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11
John 17:1-11

June 12:

Acts 2:1-21
Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
1 Corinthians 12:3b-13
John 20:19-23

June 19:

Genesis 1:1-2:4a
Psalm 8
2 Corinthians 13:11-13
Matthew 28:16-20

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

body could justify excluding generations of women who felt called to the ministry of the gospel from the ordained ministry and hierarchy is foolish, hypocritical and tragic.

Join me in rejoicing at the absence of gender prejudice in the United Church of Christ and at the Old Meeting House. Let's get ready to give

Rona – and Brent – a rousing and truly celebrational send-off while we anticipate the advent of one more gifted, caring and spirit-filled woman/servant/disciple/pastor –
Elissa Johnk.

Peace,
David

New Settled Pastor ~ Reverend Elissa Johnk

It is with great pleasure that I announce that our new settled pastor will be Elissa Johnk. On May 1 Elissa was unanimously voted by a quorum of the congregation to be our next settled pastor. She will begin serving the Old Meeting House Church at the beginning of August.

Elissa currently serves as the Pastoral Resident at the Wellesley Congregational Church UCC through a two year grant from the Lilly Foundation. This grant is awarded to new seminary graduates who show exceptional promise and allows the recipient to experience the full range of pastoral responsibilities. something that doesn't normally happen in the role of assistant or associate pastor.

At the Wellesley Church Elissa is mentored by Martin Copenhaver the former minister of the Burlington Vermont Congregational Church. Previously, Elissa served as a ministerial intern at the Old South Church in Boston, as a Chaplain Intern at the Beverly Hospital, and worked for Habitat for Humanity in Iowa City, Iowa. Elissa is a summa cum laude graduate of Wellesley College and earned a Masters of Divinity from Harvard Divinity School where she received a presidential scholarship, an Award for Excellence in Liturgical Reading of Scripture, and was a Billings Preaching Prize finalist. Elissa grew up in Iowa, but has family

in central Vermont and so is familiar with our area.

The Search Committee was both impressed by Elissa's credentials and, during the opportunities we had to meet her personally, taken by her presence. After a two plus year process and the review of hundreds of ministerial profiles, all members of the committee felt strongly that we had at last found the minister who could best lead our congregation to a future of spiritual growth.

David Connor will remain our Associate Pastor to support Elissa. We are all deeply thankful to the Search Committee (Lowell VanDerlip, Chair, Alice Angney, and Kim Swasey), and to Rona and David for their dedication to the congregation during the long search process. We are a stronger community because of their spiritual leadership. We will be celebrating Rona's time with us, so stay tuned for more details. —*Timothy Shea, Moderator, for the Executive Board*

**OMH Administrative Assistant,
Marcia Bellas, will take vacation
May 30-June 5 and June 16-22. If you need
assistance with an urgent matter during
these times, please contact Rona or David.**

Spiritual Life Committee Report

Our committee is working on the pastoral evaluation of Rona and David. A survey went out to the congregation during the first week in May. We're using an online survey tabulation tool, called Survey Monkey, to simplify the process, and we hope to have a large response. In addition, we provided paper surveys to those without internet access.

Late this month, the committee will collect the tabulation of check-box responses and summarize the open-ended question responses. In early June, we plan to have individual meetings with Rona and David to engage in a dialog about the results. Finally, we'll prepare a summary of the results for the Executive Board.

Announcements

Memorial Service for Jim Grundy—Saturday, May 21, at 3:00 p.m., followed by a reception at the Parish House

Memorial Service for Jane White Cooke—Sunday, May 29, at 1:00 p.m., followed by a reception at the Parish House

Thank you to everyone who helped with the Spring Work Bee. The weather cooperated, we accomplished everything on our list, and had a good time in the process!

Newsletter Deadline—The next deadline is June 28. Please email your submission as a Word document to admin@oldmeetinghouse.org

OMH Contact List—If you haven't already done so, please let Marcia Bellas know of any changes in your name, household membership, mailing address, telephone number or email address by the end of May for the new contact list (admin@oldmeetinghouse.org; 229-9593 x3).

Good Samaritan Haven—Help is still needed preparing meals for Good Samaritan Haven in September, November and December. OMH is committed to preparing meals for approximately 30 people on the first Sunday and following Saturday of each month. Funds are available to pay for food. Please contact Fran Mallery if you can help (272-2763; keepsakepearls@gmail.com). If you plan to use the Parish House kitchen to prepare a meal, please let OMH Administrative Assistant, Marcia Bellas, know so she doesn't schedule a rental at the same time.

Montpelier Community Gospel Choir Spring Concerts—May 21, 7:00 p.m., Barre Universalist Church, and May 22, 7:00 p.m., Bethany Church, Montpelier. A free-will basket will be passed.

Onion River Chorus—May 21, 8:00 p.m., St. Monica's Church, Barre, and Sunday, May 22, 7:30 p.m., Montpelier Unitarian Church. \$15 / \$10 for students and seniors / \$30 for family

Host Families Needed for China Exchange: Community Connections seeks community members willing to house ninth grade students from China from June 26 to July 9 (two students per family). Visiting students will spend evenings, weekends and mealtimes with host families. Ability to transport the students to and from Montpelier High School on weekdays is required. There is a small stipend to cover expenses. For more information about this opportunity, please contact Bill Merrylees at 223-3456 or visit <http://www.communityconnections.us>

Meetings Schedule and OMH Events

Christian Education Committee—Monday, June 6, 5:45 p.m.
Trustees—Monday, May 23, 6:30 p.m. (special meeting) & Monday, June 6, 7:00 p.m.
Spiritual Life Committee—Monday, June 6, 7:00 p.m.
Missions Committee—Sunday, June 12, 11:00 a.m.
Executive Board—Tuesday, June 7, 7:00 p.m.
OMHAM—Wednesday, June 8, 6:00 p.m.

Coffee Hour—Sundays after church service
Centering Prayer—Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. (*the group will not meet on June 7*)
Living the Questions—Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.
Choir Practice—Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.

Children's Sunday—June 5; children will perform a play titled "The Miracles of Christ," written by Marianne Perchlik and directed by Marcia Clark. It will feature a wonderful selection of Gospel music, including a tune from Patti Casey's new album, an original piece by Marianne Perchlik, and other great gospel songs. Bev Keck is helping teach the essentials of Gospel style music to the children.

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