

First Congregational Church  
1 Monument Circle  
Old Bennington, VT 05201

*February 2017*

*Vermont's Colonial Shrine: Welcoming all to share God's light,  
and proclaiming God's embracing love since 1806*



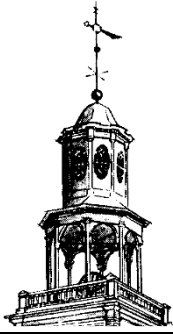
### **MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE COMMUNITY**

Thank you all who donated to the Mitten Tree this year. In a joint effort with our church and in the community, 37 blankets were donated and they went to the homeless shelter; 9 lap blankets were donated and went to Project Independence; numerous hats, mittens and scarves were donated and given to BROCC. The generous donations were very much appreciated by all who received them.

### **TREE AND WREATH REMOVAL**

We are grateful to all who helped with the removal of trees and wreaths at the church on January 8<sup>th</sup> and to the crew who removed the decorations at the Barn on January 17<sup>th</sup>.





# The Lantern

## Newsletter of the First Congregational Church (Old First Church)

February 2017

### FROM THE MINISTER

We don't know when Robert Brown was born exactly—it is presumed sometime in the 1550's in England. His lack a firm birthdate probably is not the reason we don't celebrate him and I'm not going to advocate that we should. When we gather this month for our annual church meeting where the congregation meets to decide basic matters of organization and program of our church here in Bennington we might, at least, want to recall for a moment his name. Brown is considered one of the founders of English congregationalism and his church fully separated from the English church having a short existence in Holland. Thus he is seen as an influence upon and inspiration to the Pilgrims.

He was no stranger to controversy and after some time as a “separatist” would return to a position within the established Church of England. Brown did show the way for a congregation to set out on its own and for people of faith to come together and manage their church affairs. Our form of church reminds us that a lived faith is not only personal and private but is both shared and tested by coming together with others. Interpretations differ but can be offered in the hope that our life if faith can be made real in the world. It is this respect for personal difference and the ideal of shared community that tests every gathering of faithful people. In these lines of toleration, mutual respect, loving service and public witness that we see the shape of God's word. Never perfectly realized, it is the joy and promise of our church as we gather together.

The Rev. Ken Clarke

### WARNING...

#### Old First Church Annual Meeting

The Church Council has called the Annual Meeting for Feb. 19, to be held in the sanctuary following worship and a brief (but “beefed up”) coffee hour. It will be a time to receive reports from advocates and boards as well as a report from the nominating committee electing people to various responsibilities within the life of the church. We will also approve the new budget. All members of the church are expected and encouraged to attend.

#### Tackle Hunger with us in 2017!



**PICK YOUR FAVORITE TEAM AND SUPPORT SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY** - We will once again be joining with other churches across the country this Super Bowl Sunday to collect money for those who are hungry and hurting. 100% of the money collected at our church will be donated to the Greater Bennington Interfaith Community Service's Kitchen Cupboard. Please support this important fundraiser in this effort to “love our neighbors” by dropping your donation in one of the soup pots located in the back of the church.

Every other month our church hosts the **FREE SUNDAY SUPPER** at 2nd Congo Church. Our church is due to host next on March 12<sup>th</sup>. We are looking for a few volunteers to prepare the meal and we will be listing perishable food items needed to complete the meal as it gets closer. If you would like to help stock our cupboard with spaghetti noodles, sauce, salad dressing or parmesan cheese, leave items in the basket in the Narthex or bring to the church office during the week.

1 Monument Circle, Old Bennington, Vermont 05201

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Kenneth A. Clarke, Minister

Katherine Traver, Moderator

## CONGRATULATIONS TO:

**K**atherine Anna Traver (daughter of Jon & Kiki Traver) and James Charles Smallbone were married on January 14, 2017 in Asheville NC with their families present.



Congratulations to Rick and Sean-Marie Oller on the birth of their grandson Waylon who was born on January 5 to Olivia & Eric Sandquist. Rick and Sean-Marie are thrilled at the new addition to the family!



## 14<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL LENTEN DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET

Submissions for our *Meditations for Lent* booklet, by and for members and friends of Old First Church, are being accepted. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 1. The deadline for submissions is February 17<sup>th</sup> and email is the best way to get it to the church office. The devotionals are printed on a half-sheet of 8 ½ x 11” paper so please keep your selections brief.

## MONUMENTAL TAG SALE

**Save the date!!!** This year the Old First Monumental Tag Sale is returning Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup>. The warm winds of June seem like a distant dream today but the months will pass quickly. **NOW** is the time to clean out your attic and those over-stuffed closets and to set aside items for the sale. Ask your friends and neighbors to do the same.

We are in the process of forming this year's tag sale committee. If you are willing to help in the same capacity as last year or if there are folks out there who are looking to join a great bunch of people please contact Marsha (447-3868) or Nancy (in the church office 447-1223). We had a great time last year!

**THIS WILL BE OUR 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL TAG SALE, IF WE WANT TO BE THINKING OF SOMETHING BIG OR DIFFERENT TO DO WE SHOULD BE TALKING ABOUT IT NOW. OUR FIRST ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE ON MARCH 19<sup>TH</sup> BEFORE WORSHIP.**



**Knitting Group:** Come join our knitting group! Our first meeting will take place at the Barn on **Wednesday, February 8, 12:00 p.m.** Bring along knitting needles, yarn and a light lunch for yourself. Soup and cookies will be provided.



## Women's Book Group

The **WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP** will meet on February 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at Marie LaPorte's home to discuss *The Last Bookaneer* by Matthew Pearl. Newcomers are always welcome. For a listing of all the books being read this year go to the church website at [www.oldfirstchurchbenn.org](http://www.oldfirstchurchbenn.org) and click on the "Church Life" tab or contact Nancy in the church office and she can get you a paper copy. For more information, contact the church office or Wendy Schmitt.

# February 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1  <b>Choir practice 7-8:30 PM, Church</b>	2	3	4  Spencer family Barn use, afternoon
5  <b>Communion Sunday</b>  Souper Bowl Sunday special collection  11:00 AM worship The Rev. Ken Clarke Minister	6	7  Old Bennington Trustee mtg. 7 PM, Barn	8  <b>Old First Knitting Group 12 PM, Barn</b>  <b>Deacon's mtg. 4 PM, Barn</b>  <b>Trustee's mtg. 5:30 PM, Barn</b>  <b>Choir practice 7-8:30 PM, Church</b>	9	10	11
12  11:00 AM worship The Rev. Ken Clarke Minister	13  Old Bennington Planning mtg. 7 PM, Barn	14	15  <b>Choir practice 7-8:30 PM, Church</b>	16  <b>Women's Book Club, 6:30 PM, Marie LaPorte's home</b>	17	18  Phelps family Barn use, afternoon
19  <b>Old First Church's ANNUAL MEETING @ the church following worship</b>  11:00 AM worship The Rev. Ken Clarke Minister	20  Presidents' Day	21	22  <b>Choir practice 7-8:30 PM, Church</b>	23	24	25  Simmons family Barn use, evening
26  Lyons family Barn use, afternoon  11:00 AM worship The Rev. Ken Clarke Minister	27	28				

## DEACONS ON CALL:

Marietta Hibbard & Allison Stitche

## USHERS:

2/5: Marietta Hibbard, Allison Stitche  
Communion assistance by Claudia Dalton  
2/12: Bill Hartz & Sue Katz  
2/19: Bill & Harriette Hamilton  
2/26: Larry & Pat Ross

## READERS:

2/5: Anastasia Gauthier  
2/12: June King  
2/19: Marsha Pilachowski  
2/26: Bill Gordon

## COFFEE HOUR HOSTS:

2/5: Anastasia Gauthier & \_\_\_\_\_  
2/12: \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_  
2/19: Annual Meeting (coffee hour provided by  
many in the congregation)  
2/26: Marsha Pilachowski & \_\_\_\_\_

## FLOWERS:

2/5:  
2/12:  
2/19: Virginia & Judy Van Wormer  
2/26: