

First Congregational Church
1 Monument Circle
Old Bennington, VT 05201

February 2018

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



SCOTT SMEDINGHOFF MEMORIAL CONCERT

*To past & present members of the Bennington County Choral Society, Battenkill Chorale, Bennington Children's Chorus, Old First Church choir, Bennington and Williams College musicians, and all other singing friends & fans of the late great **Scott Smedinghoff**, organist, singer, mathematician, and wacky T-shirt collector extraordinaire:*

Matthew Marsit, director of the Dartmouth Wind Symphony, is preparing a May concert in memory of Scott. He has asked for help in putting together a choir made up of as many members as possible from the choirs Scott worked with over the years: Full Circle, the church choirs in Lyme and Thetford, Bennington and Williamstown, and of course his many musical friends from near and far.

- Concert is **Saturday, May 5, at 8PM**, at Spaulding Auditorium on the Dartmouth College campus
- Dress rehearsal is **Friday, May 4, 6-9PM**

Any interested singers should contact Jennifer directly at Jennifer.yocom@thet.net



The Lantern

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church (Old First Church)

February 2018

FROM THE MINISTER

Lent begins this month—interestingly enough on Valentine’s Day this year. There are many calendars to keep and some churches keep an active calendar of saint’s days, feast days and holy days throughout the year. We keep a less busy calendar—Sunday worship, monthly communion, important seasons such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and other special days as Thanksgiving or our usual observance of Martin Luther King’s birth, July 4th and of course...Bennington Battle Day. Our secular calendar is likewise crowded—vacations, birthdays, anniversaries, sad times of death and loss. There is a rhythm to each week of work days and weekends, more holidays.

The fact that we can go this far in reciting our shared calendars and seasons (not even mentioning the tag sale, or luncheons or special worship we hold) points us in the direction of lent---a time to pause in the busy calendar of life we keep to look at life itself. To ponder the true meaning and purpose of our days. Some take lent as a sacrifice; I suggest you think of it this year as a kind of recovery. Not something to give up but a time to regain.

Regain time for your heart and soul. Regain time for your faith and purpose. Regain lost perspective on life and love. Regain the power to forgive and begin anew. Create uncluttered time to nurture your own self. Seek the wisdom quiet brings. If you really seek to give up something may I suggest a few hours away from our media distractions? Away from the huge distractions the computer or phone constantly put in front of us? Time for God’s creation—which is not only this wide and still wonderous world out us but is in fact our very selves. You are that loved.

The Rev. Ken Clarke

WARNING...

OLD FIRST CHURCH’S ANNUAL MEETING

The Church Council has set the Annual Meeting date for **Sunday, February 11, 2018** to be held in the church 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 and present the following proposed By-Law change:

(new language in bold and underlined, current language to be changed in italic and crossed out)

ARTICLE VIII. BOARDS

B) TRUSTEES

1) The Board of Trustees shall consist of ~~six~~ **seven** active members, ~~five~~ **six** of whom will serve staggered terms, plus the treasurer. They shall be elected for a term of two years and serve until their successors are elected. A member of the Board (except the treasurer) shall not serve for more than six years or three consecutive terms, whichever is less. If a member serves for more than one half of a term, this constitutes a full term for the purpose of this rule. The Council may appoint an active member to complete an unexpired term.

1 Monument Circle, Old Bennington, Vermont 05201

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Kenneth A. Clarke, Minister

Don Miller, Moderator

15TH 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, February 14. The deadline for submissions is **February 5th** 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.

Women's Book Group



The **WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP** will meet on February 15 at 6:30 p.m. at Sandy Bechtel's home to discuss *The Last Thousand* by Jeffrey Stern.

Newcomers are always welcome. For more information or a listing of all the books being read this year contact Wendy Schmitt or the church office.

March's book is: *The Reader*, by Bernhard Schlink.

OPEN CHURCH DOCENT MEETING

We will be having a meeting on Saturday, February 17 10:00 a.m. in the Narthex of the Church. Open Church docents or anyone interested in becoming a docent is encouraged to attend. We will be discussing the setup of the new cabinets and developing the program for our upcoming season.

MONUMENTAL TAG SALE

Save the date!!! This year the Old First Monumental Tag Sale is returning Saturday, June 9th. 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.

Our first planning meeting will take place after worship on Sunday, March 11 in the Church Sanctuary. Bring your ideas and suggestions. Everyone is welcome! If you haven't been involved in the past we have a great time working on the tag sale and getting to know each other better. Please contact Marsha (447-3868) or Nancy (in the church office 447-1223) if you have any questions.

Tackle Hunger with us in 2018!



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.

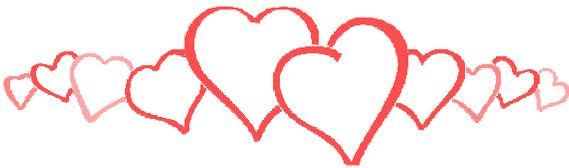
FREE SUNDAY SUPPER

Every other month our church hosts the **FREE SUNDAY SUPPER** at Second Congregational Church. Our church is due to host next on March 11th. 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, salad dressing or parmesan cheese, leave items in the Narthex or bring to the church office during the week.

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, 54 blankets were donated and they went to the homeless shelter and some to BROCC; 7 lap blankets were donated and went to Project Independence; numerous hats, mittens and scarves were donated and given to BROCC along with a match donation from a community donor. The generous donations were very much appreciated by all who received them.

February 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
						Satterthwaite/Davis family Barn use 12-4
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Communion Sunday 11:00 AM worship The Rev. Ken Clarke Minister		Old Bennington Trustee mtg. 7 PM, Barn				
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Old First Church's ANNUAL MEETING @ the church following worship Houran family Barn use 10-3 11:00 AM worship The Rev. Ken Clarke Minister	Old Bennington Planning mtg. 7 PM, Barn		Deacon's mtg. 4 PM, Barn Trustee's mtg. 5:30 PM, Barn	League of Women's Voters mtg. 7 PM Barn		Open Church Docent mtg. 10:00 AM, Church Narthex
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
11:00 AM worship The Rev. Ken Clarke Minister					Gauthier Barn use evening	Griffin family Barn use 1-5 PM
25	26	27	28			
Clark family Barn use 11-5 11:00 AM worship The Rev. Ken Clarke Minister						

DEACONS ON CALL:

Jeannette Lesser & Lynda Swanda

USHERS:

2/4: Jeannette Lesser & Lynda Swanda

2/11: Wendy & Tom Schmitt

2/18: Pat & Larry Ross

2/25: Lou & Marie Guariniello

READERS:

2/4: Anastasia Gauthier

2/11: Marsha Pilachowski

2/18: Claudia Dalton

2/25: Marie Guariniello

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS:

2/4: Anastasia Gauthier & Sue Katz

2/11: Sandy Bechtel, Stacy Carreau, Claudia

Dalton, Ann Herrick, John Hill, Jeannette

Lesser, Marianne Peters, Marsha Pilachowski,

Wendy Schmitt and Lynda Swanda

2/18:

2/25:

FLOWERS:

2/4: Wendy Schmitt

2/11:

2/18:

2/25: