

First Congregational Church
1 Monument Circle
Old Bennington, VT 05201

November 2019

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



GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY!

Don't miss your chance to win this beautiful rug handcrafted by Ann Herrick. Raffle tickets are \$5 each or 6 tickets for \$20 and can be purchased during coffee hour on Sunday mornings or at the church office during the week. The drawing will be held on Sunday, December 1st.

The **WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP** will meet on Thursday, November 21, 6:30 PM at Suzanne Kirkpatrick's house to discuss the book *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens. There will be no meeting in December. If you would like more information about the Women's Book Group, feel free to attend the next meeting or speak with Wendy Schmitt.

EMPTY BOWLS EVENT

November 17, 4:30 – 7:30 PM
Mt. Anthony Union Middle School



The Greater Bennington Interfaith Council invites the community to the 9th annual *Empty Bowls* supper at the Mount Anthony Union Middle School on Sunday, November 17 from 4:30 – 7:30. GBICS anticipates having 700 beautiful handmade ceramic bowls available to choose from and more soup than ever before!

100% of funds raised goes to purchasing food for the GBICS Kitchen Cupboard which serves the Bennington community



The Lantern

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church
(Old First Church)

November 2019

FROM THE MINISTER

Wild winds ushered in a new season for us, changing an ideal fall season to a November which is at once more challenging but also offering the comforts of home and hearth...let's hope you feel the second part—comfort of home and hearth—this Thanksgiving.

You will read of an upcoming vocal concert, this very weekend, at the church. I hope you can attend as it in part honors the life of Elsie Paris, a member of our congregation, but it also provides a kind of “evensong” where in troubling times we can gather as a community, reflect silently on our common intent for good to come, nourish our spirit, and give thanks for the things we have.

We hold several in the parish in our prayers as they deal with illness or come through difficult challenges. This past Sunday we learned our former organist, Charles Olegar, is in hospice care—keep him and Jane in your prayers as well.

Thanks to everyone who thoughtfully remembered my ten-year anniversary at the church. One great gift of such a ministry—which with the help of each and every one here—is that one can catch the longer rhythms of church life. Good times remembered and tempered by loss, friends made and friends who move on, the joy of births and marriage, the happy sharing of a meal, the meetings and the quiet contrasting beauty of the meetinghouse bathed in summer Sunday afternoon light. Music made and scripture read. A deep reflection or an offhand comment. It is a pleasure to see people marry, children born and baptized, others growing into strong adulthood, and hear the church bell tolling the years to come. You are in these things and so are those you love, perhaps thinking of them as you read this. We are bound by God's word, God's time, and our faith to a very special place...this miraculous cycle comes to us and people everywhere who seek in spirit and in truth and abide in God's love.

My thanks is to you and all who have shared God's word in this place—“surely the boundary lines have fallen to me in pleasant places”—let us give deep thanks this November.

- The Rev. Ken Clarke

OPEN CHURCH

We are happy to report we have had a fairly strong Open Church season, opening our doors to visitors from near and far and we couldn't have done it without our dedicated and welcoming docents. One look at the comments left by visitors of the church on Trip Advisor's website makes our volunteer hours so worth it. The Old First Church is listed as the #1 attraction on the “Things to Do in Bennington” page.

The church is a different kind of stop for people on vacation – truly a place where people experience something of the presence of God. And it's a joy to see that happen and to hear the “Ooohs” and “Aaahs” as they walk in the door.

Thirty-four guides volunteered this season and we thank them for their service. Along with help from the church office, Betsy Ehrenfreund coordinated those volunteer hours. We are grateful for the efforts of the following people:

Ann Bugbee, Paul Capriola, Stacy Carreau, Claudia & Steve Dalton, Jim Dilley, Patty Duffy, Betsy Ehrenfreund, Paul Goodrich, Lou & Marie Guariniello, Pat Guerrero, Bill Hartz, Ann Herrick, Marietta Hibbard, Sue Katz, Walt Klinger, Mary LaCasse, Brandy Lesser, Jeannette Lesser, Don Miller, Patrice Nolan, Dave & Marsha Pilachowski, Vicky Printz, Jane Radocchia, Muriel Rice, Wendy Schmitt, Don Swanda, Bob Tegart, Amy Tronsen, Kathy Wagenknecht, Roberta Webb and Pat White. (If we have inadvertently missed someone, please let us know.)

The following information comes from our treasurer and the “Daily Sheets” our guides fill out each day:

2019 Statistics: The church was open 130 days and was staffed by nineteen docents who are members of the church and fifteen non-members.

Total Visitors: 8149
Income: \$11,776
Expenses: \$646
Net Income: \$11,130 (works out to \$1.37 per visitor)

LUNCHEON AND OPEN CHURCH WRAP UP MEETING:

Everyone in the congregation is invited to the Barn on Sunday, November 17 for a wrap up meeting and to celebrate our docents.

1 Monument Circle, Old Bennington, Vermont 05201

www.oldfirstchurchbenn.org • office@oldfirst.comcastbiz.net • (802) 447-1223

Kenneth A. Clarke, Minister

Don Miller, Moderator

CONCERT AT OLD FIRST

"LOVE AND PRAYERS"

Performed by BENNINGTON, a vocal ensemble

Tom Bogdan, Michael Chinworth, Liam Dailey and Dane Whitman

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2019 at 4 PM
OLD FIRST CHURCH, BENNINGTON**

An eclectic program of music that was first performed in Grace Cathedral, San Francisco. The concert is offered in the spirit of longtime church member ELSIE PARIS, who adored her friends and music. Come, enjoy the sounds and the space. Relax and unwind, reminisce, wonder and bathe in the miracle of music.

The concert is free and open to all

Vocalist Tom Bogdan founded the male vocal ensemble *Bennington* five years ago, named for the Vermont college where the group was formed. It was a campus building with a very favorable acoustics that inspired him to do his first concert with former students, Michael Chinworth and Liam Dailey, as they explored a wide range of music, medieval prayers, doo-wop love songs and new compositions. These concerts were repeated with additional singers from Bennington College and the repertoire grew, always with a focus of spirit, hope, love and prayers. Jim Hodges invited the group to perform at the opening of his 2016 exhibition at Gladstone Gallery, and later at Hodges' New York performance space Queenslab. They were invited to sing last summer at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

JEWISH ROOTS CLASS RESCHEDULING:

To the participants of the Jewish Roots class,

I hope you have enjoyed the first two classes as much as I have! With the holidays fast approaching and the activities in the church increasing, it seems wise to postpone our remaining Jewish Roots classes until spring when there can be full participation. The next classes will be announced over the winter. With the great start in Hebrew, I suggest continuing on your own (in Chavurah - with your partner) at the pace of about one chapter a month, but go at your own pace: Key is the ability to understand and complete the prior chapters before moving on...building on what you know. Students can be in touch with me for help with Hebrew over the winter (those who do not have books can get copies from their classmates).

Wishing you a beautiful holiday season!

Shalom,
Jen

BIBLE STUDY SCHEDULE

It was decided to continue classes through the winter months, with breaks for the weeks of Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's. Classes will be held an hour earlier, at 3:00 pm. The schedule will be listed on the monthly calendars and printed in the weekly email and bulletins.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

We hope you will join us on November 10th for worship & Stewardship as we offer our intentions for faithful giving for 2020

Each year, the Church asks members and friends to consider prayerfully what they will give so the work of the church can continue throughout the year. We hope you consider your gifts for such work in 2020 among your highest priorities. Our annual Stewardship campaign was kicked off by Kristin Castellanos saying a few words during worship about why she gives to the church. In an effort to stimulate thought and reflection we will hear from others in the church during the "Moment for Stewardship".

Pledge cards can be placed in the birdhouse size wooden church in the narthex on Sundays through November 10th or brought to the church office during the week.

FREE SUNDAY SUPPER

Thank you to Bill Hartz, Amber & Noah Langford and Larry & Pat Ross for signing up to host the Free Sunday Supper at Second Congregational Church on November 10th.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

In anticipation for the Church's Annual Meeting in February our nominating committee (Larry Ross, chair, Marsha Pilachowski, deacon rep. and Sue Katz, trustee rep.) invite all members of Old First Church to consider serving on one or more boards/advocacy positions. You can find details about each of these positions in your church by-laws or a condensed version insert the in the Sunday bulletin. Please note that not all positions are currently vacant, however if you would like to be considered for any of these positions please sign up on a Sunday morning insert and indicate your preference.

CELEBRATING OUR PASTOR'S ANNIVERSARY



We are truly blessed to have Ken as our pastor for the past ten years. On Sunday, October 3rd we celebrated this milestone anniversary during worship and coffee hour with a special cake and words from several members of the church.

❄️ LOOKING AHEAD TO DECEMBER ❄️



CHRISTMAS AT THE OLD FIRST CHURCH

12/8: Hanging of the Greens
 12/15: Poinsettias arrive
 12/15: Candlelight Service, 7:00 PM
 12/24: Christmas Eve Service, 5:00 PM

Give the Gift of Warmth...

The annual Mitten Tree and Blanket Drive will once again happen at Old First and your help is greatly appreciated.

Donations of hats, mittens, gloves and scarves can be placed on the Mitten Tree which will be set up in the Narthex of the Church, new or gently used blankets (please make sure they are clean) can be placed under the tree. We are NOT allowed to give electric blankets.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
 <h1 style="color: #C85130;">November 2019</h1> 						1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Sherwin family Barn use, 10 AM – 4 PM Communion Sunday 11:00 AM worship The Rev. Ken Clarke Minister		Bible Study 4 PM at the Barn Old Benn. Trustee mtg., 7 PM, Barn		MPCC Social Hall use 1-2 PM Mommy & Me Yoga 6-7 PM @ the Barn	MPCC Social Hall use 1:30-2:30 PM	Concert at the Old First Church 4:00 PM featuring vocal ensemble BENNINGTON	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
11:00 AM worship The Rev. Ken Clarke Minister	Old Benn. Planning Committee mtg. 7:30 PM, Barn	Deacon's Meeting 4 PM at the Barn Trustee Meeting 5 PM at the Barn		Mommy & Me Yoga 6-7 PM @ the Barn		Kilbride family Barn use, 12 – 4 PM	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
Luncheon/Docent Meeting after worship 11:00 AM worship	UVM Master Gardeners Meeting, 6-8 PM at the Barn	Bible Study 3 PM at the Barn Council Meeting 5 PM at the Barn		Women's Book Group, 6:30 PM, Suzanne's home Mommy & Me Yoga 6-7 PM @ the Barn			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
11:00 AM worship The Rev. Ken Clarke Minister			MPCC Social Hall use 10-11 AM	Shepard family Barn use All day Thanksgiving			

DEACONS ON CALL:

Pat Guerrero and Wendy Schmitt

USHERS:

11/3: Pat Guerrero, Jeannette Lesser & Wendy Schmitt
 11/10: Stacy Carreau & Paul Goodrich
 11/17: Larry & Pat Ross
 11/24: Bill Hartz & Sue Katz

READERS:

11/3: Anastasia Gauthier
 11/10: Marsha Pilachowski
 11/17: Claudia Dalton
 11/24: David Varker

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS:

11/3: Stacy Carreau, Donna Jones & Lynda Swanda
 11/10: Marsha Pilachowski & Lynda Swanda
 11/17: Lunch at the Barn/Docent Meeting
 11/24:

FLOWERS:

11/3: Anastasia & Fischer Gauthier
 11/10: Susan Paris Borden
 11/17:
 11/24: Darlene Munson IMO Thomas Kamp