

JANUARY 2012



the Lifeline

NORWICH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



The Christmas Season, 2011



NORWICH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Mary Brownlow Pastor
 Kathleen Sherlock-Green Choir Director
 Jane Chase Helms Organist Emerita
 Tacy Colaiacomo Organist

Danielle Taylor Sunday School Coord.
 Jenny Gelfan Office Manager
 Joni Latuch-Lyman Bookkeeper
 Dan Goulet Sexton

Mark your Calendars:

To celebrate the 2012 United Nations Interfaith Harmony Week
 January 29 at 4:30 pm

One Light, Many Candles

A Multi-faith Program in Word and Song Presented by
 Reverend Betty Stookey and Noel Paul Stookey

A program of readings and music reflecting the diversity and integrity of
 individual faith seeking a global spiritual community

The Stookeys write:

“For some of us, perhaps many of us, there is a spiritual hunger that is no longer being fed by our loving and comfortable places of worship. As it becomes more evident that all living creatures are connected to each other, living, breathing, sharing this wonderful world, we need a language with which to reach beyond our doctrinal, liturgical and often polarizing expressions of belief; a way to overcome our differences and see our commonality without fear of losing our spiritual integrity. If we can trust the Love that sustains and inspires us all, then that trust will enable us to reach out to each other, to find that spark of the Divine which lives in each of us, despite, or perhaps because of our belief systems.”

Adult Education

Bible Study continues from 9-10 am on Wednesdays.
 We meet in classroom #2 upstairs. Join us!



IF YOU WANT TO DONATE FLOWERS FOR WORSHIP...

please contact Tilda White at (802) 649-1654 for help, information, or to sign up. You may also sign up on the “Flowers” sheet posted at the back of the church.

2012 LEADERSHIP

CHURCH OFFICERS

Church Council Chair . . . Dick Broussard
 Church Council Vice-chair . . . Susan White
 Moderator Brooke Mohr
 Vice Moderator . . . John Severinghaus
 Clerk Joanne Egner
 Ass't Clerk Katy Gerke
 Treasurer Christopher Ashley
 Ass't Treasurer . . . James Hourdequin
 Collector Judy Pond
 Ass't Collector
 Auditor

BOARD OF DEACONS

Senior Deacons Willemien Miller
 Gary Brooks
 Paul Gerke, Sharon Corrigan
 Christopher Ashley
 Rita Severinghaus

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chair Tom Evans
 Carolyn Mertz, Doug James
 Stan Williams, Daniel Van Dorn
 Brooke Mohr

BOARD OF MISSION

Chairs Jenny Williams
 Mary Brown
 Deborah Berryman, Jeff Nielsen
 Doug Britton, Kathy Grant

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Chair Laura Beliveau
 Harry Higgs, Marty James
 Mary Sachsse, Ann Beams

COMMITTEES

Flowers

Tilda White, Ryan Adams
 Deborah Van Arman

Hospitality

Evelyn Gick, Anne Egner
 Joan Wanner, Susan McGrew
 Stephanie Smith

Investment

Mark Beliveau, Peter Mertz

Music

Anne Broussard
 Sarah Reeves

Nominating

Vicky Fish, Barbara Duncan
 Ann Waterfall

Stewardship

Gretchen Maynard, Priscilla Vincent

Woodworth Fund

Avery Post, Doug James, Judy Hobbs
 Mimi Simpson, Kenneth Cracknell

Other

At-Large Church Council . . . Bob Miller
 Head Usher: Marianne Spalding
 Historian: Susan White
 Delegates: Susan White
 Kenneth Cracknell
 Alt. Delegates



From the Minister

“The United Church of Christ ... looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures, and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own in reality of worship, in honesty of thought and expression, and in purity of heart before God.”

from the preamble of the Constitution of the United Church of Christ

When asked where I serve as pastor, I usually say: “The Norwich Congregational Church, which is part of the United Church of Christ.” So there are really two parts to my answer. The first names this local congregation, the second our covenantal affiliation with a larger body. When people start to ask about what the Congregational churches believe, I tell them that “Congregational” refers to polity rather than to a set of beliefs. Each local church is autonomous and takes responsibility for its own affairs, including its organization, worship and education. At the same time, we are in a cooperative and covenantal relationship with other UCC churches of our Association (The Windsor-Orange Association, which includes 24 churches), our Conference (The Vermont Conference) and the General Synod (a representative meeting at the national level.) Our relationship with the larger Church is voluntary, but we are urged to hold it in “the highest regard.”

So each local UCC church has its own character and its own style of worship. They can be “conservative” or “liberal.” They can approve or disapprove of resolutions made at General Synod or at Conference Annual Meetings. In the 2002

Annual Meeting, the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ declared itself to be an Open and Affirming Conference, and urged each local church to consider going through a process of discernment about adopting a resolution of its own. No church could be compelled to do this. This is because we believe that the power of the Holy Spirit resides in each covenantal group of Christians, with all the responsibility and autonomy this implies: in some ways a heavy burden; in some ways a delightful freedom. Our church spent time in discussion and discernment, and affirmed our version of an Open and Affirming Resolution (printed in the weekly bulletin) in 2005.

The preamble to the Constitution quoted above is a theological statement with the same kind of burden and freedom. When we claim as our own “the faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers,” it means that we have to learn about those creeds and insights. But the next sentence suggests that we do not necessarily recite those creeds: with each generation, we make this faith our own “in reality of worship, in honesty of thought and expres-

sion, and in purity of heart before God.” Though we are anchored in tradition, we are given a long line, a long tether with which to explore authentic, faithful worship, thinking, and action.

I think that this gives members of local churches some “work” to do: thoughtful consideration of how our Scriptures are to be read and interpreted, prayerful investment in meaningful worship, eager exploration of mission and service. We may do this individually, as we ponder the words of the Bible and of sermons. We may do this in small groups such as the Wednesday Bible study or the Women’s Retreat. Or we may attend the second hour classes that are frequently offered on Sundays. I find myself doing this work as I teach Confirmation classes and hear from the next generation, trying to make this faith their own.

If you are thinking of making any kind of New Year’s resolution that has to do with your life as a member of this local church, I urge you to consider the words of our UCC Constitution preamble. We have “creative and redemptive work in the world,” waiting to be done. I look forward to doing it with you.

Mary

Welcome our New Members!



Steve and Beth Bidstrup:

Steve and Beth Bidstrup recently relocated to Hanover, along with their boys Erik (13) and Devin (11), from Syracuse, New York. Steve took a position as Manager, Facilities Engineering at Olympus Biotech in West Lebanon, while Beth works from home as a consultant on EU chemical regulations for a small Irish firm. The relocation suits Steve's interests well, as he enjoys hiking, camping, biking and skiing. Beth also enjoys the outdoors with hiking, skiing and gardening but her true passion is running. Luckily the Upper Valley area offers plenty of opportunities to spend time in these activities, especially when they involve the boys. Both Steve and Beth have found the Upper Valley to be a very wholesome and friendly community and look forward to discovering more of its hidden treasures.



Ryan and Brittney Calsbeek:

Ryan is originally from Michigan, Brittney from Texas, and the two met in the biology department at UCLA. Ryan and Brittney Calsbeek are former members of Norwich Congregational and rejoin the church after a year in North Carolina. There, Brittney worked as a postdoctoral fellow at NC State, having completed her PhD the year prior at UVM. Ryan was on sabbatical from Dartmouth College and the timing couldn't have been better as Isabel was born on March 10, giving both Ryan and Brittney time to spend at home with the baby. The Calsbeek's have moved back to their home in Randolph VT but are anxious to move closer to Norwich.



Molly and Joe Caterini:

Molly and Joe Caterini met while attending Dartmouth College. After living in the NYC area for over 10 years we returned to the Upper Valley in 2007. We currently live in Hanover with our two children, Ella (7) and Henry (3).



Evelynn Ellis

Evelynn comes to us from the Park Forest U.M. Church in State College, PA. She is starting her fourth year as an administrator at Dartmouth College. Evelynn is originally from Alabama, but spent most of her adult life in Pennsylvania employed by the Pennsylvania State University. Evelynn is also a musician, classical clarinet, mezzo soprano and loves sports, many. When she is missing, look for her at the Skiway or the Dartmouth pool.



Trish Polk

I was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio. My love for horses has been strong since I was 5 years old. I have owned one or more for over 50 years. Riding on trails, eventing in my younger years, fox hunting, and trail riding in my more adult years until three years ago when the last horse I owned died at age 29.

I have always owned a dog. Right now I have a six year old cairn terrier and take her for long walks every day several times each day. My goal is to find old friends who will let me exercise their horses, since I no longer live on a property where I can care for my own horse.

I volunteer at South Royalton School for 2nd graders, reading to Molly, and do Pet therapy with Molly at Woodstock Terrace.

George and Dawn Thomas

George, Dawn and Zoe Thomas recently relocated to the Upper Valley from Kansas City, Missouri. Dawn has worked in the graphic arts field for over 20 years, and enjoys gardening, music and reading. George is a resident neurologist at DHMC with a background in Alzheimer's disease research. Zoe is making many new friends and enjoys her new school. We are all looking forward to becoming more involved in our church and community as we make our new home.

Meet the Members of the

Confirmation Class



Erik Bidstrup

I just moved to Hanover from Syracuse, New York and I love the Upper Valley. I enjoy playing soccer, skiing and occasionally running. I hope to achieve Eagle Scout rank in a year or two. I like to read and play strategy board games with my family, and play computer games. I have been playing the cello for 4 years and recently performed Christmas Carols with a local cello group for the Hanover Christmas celebrations.



Marion Miller

I am in the Eighth Grade at Richmond Middle School in Hanover. I love animals and sports. I play basketball and soccer. I also like to do creative things like woodworking and sewing. I like to travel and see new places as well as try new things. Working in the nursery has been something that I've enjoyed doing. I think it is fun to volunteer in the Church and to do community service work like helping out at LISTEN dinners.



Garrett LaRock

I am 13 years old and live in Norwich, VT with my parents, two brothers, Addison (16) and Harris (11) and my dog, Sierra. I am very blessed to have several grandparents; two grandmothers, a grandfather and a great grandmother who I like to spend time with. I am in the 8th grade at Richmond Middle School and enjoy playing basketball, video games, airsoft, Magic Cards games, cross country running and reading.



Ella Williams

I am an 8th grader at the Richmond Middle School. I love to play Soccer, Hockey, and Run. I play Lightning soccer in the Spring and Fall, play hockey in the Fall/Winter on the girls U14 team, and run on Norwich Cross Country in the spring and fall. In the summer I love to waterski and wakeboard. Sports are basically my life, and I know almost all of my friends from sports.



Peter Huizenga

I was born in Seattle and moved to Norwich when I was one year old. I'm in 8th grade at the Richmond Middle School. I have two older brothers - Andrew and Noah - and a dog named Juno. My favorite foods are lobster, steak, candy and soda. The last book I read and recommend is *The Outcasts* by John Flanagan. My favorite sports to play are basketball, lacrosse, snowboarding and soccer. My dream vacation would be a trip around the world.

Adult Education:
“Abide With Me”

We’ve all ‘been there’. Wanting to help and comfort our grandfather, our mother, or perhaps ourselves in a time of a health crisis, or in life’s latest days. How does our faith help us in such times?

A four week class, held Sundays in the second hour, January 8, 15, 22, and February 12. Each class will begin with a brief reflection on the topic, followed by shared discussion and reflection.

January 8 – “God is My Source and My Ending”

What scripture passages and hymns speak to people in times of distress?
Facilitated by Mary Brownlow

January 15 – “Grief and Hope”

How communal Christian beliefs and liturgical practices can support us in difficult times.
Facilitated by Kenneth Cracknell and Susan White

January 22 – “Abide with Me”

Daily living with faith through stressful life circumstances
Facilitated by Avery Post

February 12 – “Though the Mountains Shake”

Spiritual underpinnings for supporting a loved one in acute medical settings
Facilitated by Vicky Fish

This topic will be revisited in April, when our guest will be Dr. Dennis McCullough, Norwich resident and a doctor who served the Kendal community for many years. Author of *My Mother, Your Mother: Embracing “Slow Medicine, the Compassionate Approach to Caring for Your Aging Loved Ones.*

A New Year Carol

Here we bring new water
from the well so clear,
For to worship God with,
this happy New Year.
Sing, levy dew, sing levy dew,
the water and the wine;
The seven bright gold wires
and the bugles that do shine.

Sing reign of Fair Maid,
with gold upon her toe—
Open you the West Door,
and turn the Old Year go.

Sing reign of Fair Maid
with gold upon her chin—
Open you the East Door,
and let the New Year in.
Sing levy dew, sing levy dew,
the water and the wine;
The seven bright gold wires
and the bugles that do shine.

Anonymous
The Book of a Thousand Poems
(New York, N.Y.: Peter Bedrick Books, 1983)

Board of Mission Offering for January & February

Listen Heating Helpers Program

The Mission Board has chosen Listen’s Heating Helper Program as the non-profit agency and program to receive our monthly donations for January and February. Moving into the colder months, families are walking in on a daily basis seeking the assistance they need to provide heat in their homes. In 2010, 354 households received fuel assistance, a 56% increase. These numbers are certain to rise with the economic difficulty so many face. Our neighbors should not have to face choosing between warmth, food or medicine. Listen’s Heating Helper Program serves to protect these families and seniors who are vulnerable and in need.

Please consider supporting this local effort by submitting donations in the yellow mission envelope. Your generosity makes a tremendous difference to so many.

Church Council Minutes for November 30, 2011

Present: Dick Broussard (Chair), Tom Evans (Trustees), Stan Williams (Trustees), Gary Brooks (Deacons), Marty James (Christian Ed), Bob Miller (At large), Deb Berryman (Mission), Gretchen Maynard (Stewardship), Joanne Egner (Clerk), Rev. Mary Brownlow (Pastor)

Opening prayer led by Mary Brownlow.

The minutes of the October 26, 2011 Church Council meeting were approved. Unanimous (G. Brooks moved; S. Williams 2nd)

Stewardship Committee Report:

Gretchen reported that 88 pledges, totally \$213,125 had been received thus far. Pledges include 5 new family units. Last year the total number of pledges was 98 amounting to \$215,000. The goal for this year is \$222,000. Follow up letters were sent to 30 individuals who had previously pledged and 14 have still not responded. If those 14 maintain their previous pledge level, there will be an additional \$5,000 in pledges. The deadline for a response is December 1st. The Stewardship Committee will begin making phone calls next week.

The Council thanked the Stewardship Committee for their hard work and a job well done!

Pastor's Report:

Mary reported her activities in the last month included the Women's Retreat, a burial and service for Don Goss, the Interfaith Thanksgiving Eve service and the burial of a community member. Bob Downs also died on November 12th.

Mary met with the Nominating Committee and continues to meet with the Confirmation Class. She is hoping to have 9 new members join the Church and they are working on a date for that - possibly December 18th. December 11th will be the date of the Junior Choir Advent musical. Mary is planning to take a few days of vacation at the end of January.

Staffing:

Mary and Marty reported they have an excellent candidate for the Nursery Coordinator position and are close to making an offer. Mary also reported that Carol Jackson is resigning as Office Manager and would like to leave as soon as we find someone. The Trustees are working on finding her replacement and are consider-

ing combining the Office Manager and Bookkeeper positions in order to attract more candidates. If approval to hire someone is necessary before the next meeting, the Council agreed to vote via email.

Christian Ed:

Marty reported there will be no Sunday School or Nursery on Christmas Day or New Year's Day. There will also not be any Sunday School on December 11th for the Advent musical. Christian Ed has needed to staff Sunday School with two adults in case there is a situation where a child needs to leave. Mary will be giving Bibles away to children in the 4th grade soon. Adult education plans include a class led by Mary in January and one led by Ann Beams in February.

Mission:

Deb reported that the budget allocation to High Horses was adjusted in order to support the Clevie White and Nancy Ellison funds.

Trustees:

Tom reported that the 2012 budget is almost complete. The Trustees have been waiting for final numbers on the revenue side and will meet next week. Programmable thermostats have been installed using money received from an environmental rebate. The trustees are currently getting estimates for improvements to the sound system and new microphones. Dick requested that we considering adding another speaker for the parlor.

Deacons:

Gary reported that the informal cottage meetings for new people or those unable to attend previously are under way. He and Chipper Ashley hosted a breakfast before Church and it was very well received and attended.

Upcoming Event:

Sarah Reeves is planning a multi-faith celebration at the end of January. It will take place on a Sunday afternoon. The program will be led by Betty and Paul Stookey and a meal will likely follow.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, January 4th, 2012 at 7:00 PM

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Joanne Egner, Clerk

Called to Care wants and needs more people!

We are a group that visits those in our church community who are not able to come to church regularly. We want to keep them in the fold! In pairs, we enjoy our monthly visits, sharing news of the church and conversing about our lives, our hopes, and our concerns. These visits benefit all parties and help all of us to step outside our own lives and into those of others.

Several of the people we've visited have moved away or died, so we'd like to find more who would appreciate keeping in touch with the church in a personal way. If you would appreciate such visits, or know someone who might, please be in touch with Mary Brownlow (649-1433) or Judy Pond (649-1420).

We would very much like to expand our group of visiting "Carers." We meet briefly after church about once a month; our next meeting will be Sunday, January 15. If you might like to join us, please attend that meeting and/or contact Mary or Judy.

*Judy Pond
Coordinator, Called to Care*

Sunday School Report

Sunday School enjoyed a very successful fall with a huge surge in the number of kids attending each week. We had over 30 kids participate in varying degrees throughout the fall making the new classroom lively, loud, and lived in! Our new curriculum "Godly Play" was very well received by all of the students as well as the volunteer staff. We will continue to use this program through the spring.

The new classroom spaces upstairs are working very well for the larger numbers of students, and the bright, sunlit rooms are a joy to teach in. Nursery is also going well and the growing number of infants and toddlers coming to church has lead the Christian Education Board to begin a search for a permanent nursery staff person.

With the growing number of students, the need for volunteers on Sunday mornings to help staff the classrooms is also growing. Please consider spending a Sunday upstairs with us, as we tell stories, explore the Bible, and engage in fun activities. Help is also needed in creating the Godly Play story boxes that are the key to our curriculum.

Many thanks to the confirmation class for their weekly help with the preschoolers, as well as to the many volunteers who have worked in the nursery and in the Sunday School classroom this past fall.

*Danielle Taylor
Sunday School Coordinator*

**NORWICH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

15 Church Street • PO Box 236
Norwich, VT 05055-0236

Tel: (802) 649-1433 • Fax (802) 649-2805

Email:nccucc2@myfairpoint.net

Website:..... www.norwichcongregational.org

Pastor: Rev. Mary Brownlow

**AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING
CONGREGATION WORSHIPING ON
SUNDAYS AT 10 AM**

LIFELINE

Coordinator / Editor / Photographer:

.....Linda Himadi

Designer:..... Douglas Lufkin

Send articles to:nccucc2@myfairpoint.net

Deadline for next issue: January 15, 2012

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

If the church does not have your e-mail address, and you would like to be kept abreast of announcements and events at church – by this no cost/no waste option – please send an email to the church office at nccucc2@myfairpoint.net.

Non-profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Norwich, VT
Permit No. 1

**Warning of the 2011 Annual Meeting of the
Norwich Congregational Church, UCC**

Notice is hereby given of the 2011 Annual Meeting of the Norwich Congregational Meeting to be held after worship on Sunday, February 5, 2012, to transact the following business:

- to hold opening Prayer;
- to elect a Moderator and Assistant Moderator;
- to approve the Minutes of the 2010 Annual Meeting;*
- to discuss and adopt a budget for 2012;
- to hear and act on the reports of the officers and committees; to elect officers, boards, and committees for 2012
- to conduct whatever other business may properly be brought before the meeting.

The meeting will be preceded by a potluck lunch; please bring food to share. In case of inclement weather, the Annual Meeting will be held at 7:30pm, Tuesday, February 7, 2012.