

The Courier

Charlotte Congregational Church, UCC • June 2015

Dear Friends,

We have a nutty woodpecker living near us; he's tapping on our mailbox, removing the paint. You can hear the racket from a long way off, that brain echoing pecking on metal. With all the bugs about, you'd think he'd find something tastier than paint. He's pecking up the wrong tree with fierce determination, spending energy to make himself sick. I'm a little embarrassed for him; you'd think he'd at least try to be subtle about his failings, like the rest of us.

We're all misguided woodpeckers from time to time; we knock on the wrong doors seeking sustenance and comfort. Whether it's a new car, fancy pen, dress, computer, bicycle or boat, new toys provide a kick. Some, when facing rough times, decide that moving is the answer. So they find a new house, struggle to sell the old one, sign a mortgage that makes their scalps shrink, hold an exhausting lawn sale and move—maybe just down the street. There is an attraction for some to behaviors that can be very risky. But the blush fades pretty quickly when we seek new things or actions to avoid our problems. If we're lucky, we're

left with credit card bills. If we are not, we may find that we have harmed those we love most in the world.

Only God can be our rock and shield. Only God will give us what feeds our soul. Sooner or later most of us will discover this through hard trials. The trick is that once we've found the deep well of God's love, we have to remember. Because when things are going swimmingly, we may forget. And then when discontent returns like the wafting scent of a dead mouse in the cellar, we may fly out the door to peck on a mailbox.

Jesus knows earthly things like mailboxes and can smell a rat a mile away. The Jesus I know would gently lift that silly woodpecker off the mailbox and perch him against a huge maple tree. He will do the same for us if we trust him and don't skittishly fly off the minute he approaches. Watch for him, he's all around, smelling the lilacs and waiting to help.

Spring blessings,

Rev. Susan Cooke Kittredge

JUMP (JOINT URBAN MINISTRY PROJECT) UPDATE

Since we've been filling food bags for JUMP this month, we thought it might be a good idea to review in the Courier what the organization does.

JUMP has been in existence for 25 years and is supported by 26 different faith communities. Each church collects bags of food, just as we do, and different churches provide toiletries, household clean-

ers, diapers etc. We provide the household cleaner. Clients can come once every three months to receive a bag of groceries, toiletries etc. as well as very modest vouchers for such things as gas, laundry, groceries or clothing resale shops.

Volunteering at JUMP has been one of the most powerful experiences of ministry and helping others

Continued on page 3

SUMMER BIBLE COURSE: WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

Join us for a 6-week journey into the Bible this summer as we explore the way the Bible came to be, analyze themes of the Old and New Testaments, cultural and archaeological studies, and discuss issues of Biblical authority in our lives.

The course will begin on Tuesday, June 23rd and offered each week on Tuesday mornings with Rev. Susan and Tuesday evenings with Rev. Will (time to be determined).

Please let our Pastors know if you are interested so we can purchase student books. The cost is \$10 for the book.



Charlotte Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

P.O. Box 12 • Charlotte, VT 05445

802-425-3176 • charlotteucc@gmavt.net

www.charlotteucc.org

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Embraced by the healing love of Jesus Christ and inspired

by his teachings, we commit ourselves to prayerful, compassionate, and courageous action in the world.



Rev. Will Burhans, Senior Pastor

Rev. Susan Cooke Kittredge, Associate Pastor

Julia Blocksma, Music Director

Kim Findlay, Communications/Administrative Support

Karen Speidel, Bookkeeper



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Continued from page 1

that I have ever experienced. I use the word ministry because ALL of the volunteers who work there are connected with a faith community of some sort. This is unique because we differ from other places that serve needy people in Chittenden County. Four of us from our church volunteer at JUMP, which is located in the First Congregational Church in Burlington.

Here is a snapshot of few of the clients who have come in for services while I have been working:

- An incredibly kind woman who came in via wheel chair one morning who has a brain tumor. She spoke with a definite slur and in talking to her, we learned she is caring for her grandchild whose mother is in jail.
- A lanky middle- aged man who had just gotten out of the hospital where he had been for 6 weeks recovering from MERSA (the terrible infection that is hard to treat and often deadly). I interviewed him and he was so proud of himself for quitting smoking and he desperately wanted a bicycle so he could get around and look for a job. We got him a voucher for a bicycle.
- One day a man came in very late and we had already seen as many clients as we could that

day. He was a little bit abrasive and was not prepared to be asked to come back another day. It turned out he was homeless and had walked to JUMP from Colchester that morning in order to get some food. Although we were full, we squeezed him in and got him some food.

- A few weeks ago, I helped take care of a number of Nepalese refugees who live in Burlington. Only one of them spoke English and she helped everyone fill out their forms. Almost all of them had lost relatives in the Nepal earthquakes. The families were multi-generational and all lived together in one apartment. I reflected on their circumstances later and thought about what it means to be an American. Their experience in Burlington is not unlike that of the refugees who came to America in the early 19th century. It made me proud to feel that I was connecting with them in some way and that JUMP is there to be of assistance.

Our church is a very important part of the whole ministry of JUMP and I am proud to be working there. If you'd like to know more about JUMP or might like to volunteer, please feel free to get in touch with me.

Frances Foster

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

KID'S COOK!

On **SATURDAY JUNE 27TH** we will gather at Charlie and Susan's house in Shelburne from 1 to 2:30 pm to cook for the Salvation Army dinner that evening. All kids aged 6 and up are enthusiastically invited to come. If you would like to help serve the dinner at 5 pm, please let Susan know: scookekitt@mac.com, 985-5617.

SENIOR YOUTH GROUP

SUNDAY JUNE 28TH AT 3 PM at Charlie and Susan's house: 331 Beach Road, Shelburne.

ON THE CALENDAR

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

We usually take a break but if there is a need to meet to handle some Women's Fellowship business, we will call around to notify you. Enjoy your summer!

CENTERING PRAYER

It's not too late to join our ongoing centering prayer group practice on Tuesday evenings from 7:15-8:15 pm and Sunday mornings from 9:15-9:45 am. Please see Rev. Will if you are interested and he (or someone else from the group) can share with you the particularities of this practice.

JUNE 2015 CALENDAR

monday 1

- DEACON'S MEETING, 5:30 PM

tuesday 2

- CENTERING PRAYER, 7:15 PM

thursday 4

- CHOIR PRACTICE, 7 PM

sunday 7

- NOAH'S ARK DRESS REHEARSAL, 8:30 AM
- CENTERING PRAYER, 9:15 AM
- WORSHIP, 10 AM
- COMMUNION
- NOAH'S ARK!, 10 AM

tuesday 9

- CENTERING PRAYER, 7:15 PM

thursday 11

- CHOIR PRACTICE, 7 PM

sunday 14

- CENTERING PRAYER, 9:15 AM
- WORSHIP, 10 AM

tuesday 16

- CENTERING PRAYER, 7:15 PM

sunday 21

- CENTERING PRAYER, 9:15 AM
- WORSHIP, 10 AM

tuesday 23

- CENTERING PRAYER, 7:15 PM

saturday 27

- KID'S COOK!, 1-2:30 PM
- WORSHIP, 10 AM

sunday 28

- CENTERING PRAYER, 9:15 AM
- WORSHIP, 10 AM
- SENIOR YOUTH GROUP, 3 PM

monday 29

- DEACON'S MEETING, 5:30 PM