

# ***The October Visitor***

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## **Sundays**

**Second to None Café: 9:00 a.m.**

**Worship: 10:00 a.m.**

**Church School: 9:00 a.m.**

**Child Care: 9:00 a.m.**

**Fellowship Hour: 11:00 a.m.**

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## **Our Staff**

Armand Proulx

*Pastor*

James Godfrey

*Director of Faith Formation*

Leea Snape

*Music Director/Organist*

Judy Atkins

*Administrative Assistant*

Dennis Fisk

*Church Sexton*

## **Lay Leadership**

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## **The View from Poet Seat**

The Valley is a symphony of colors in four movements: fall, winter, spring and summer - bright leaf colors, stark trees and white snow, spring buds and green coming back, and the full ripeness of summer leading to harvest time. You want to sing from the top of the ridge: *Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!*

In the heart of this multi-seasoned splendor, there stands a steeple - down and a little to the left as you see it from Poet Seat. It's our steeple rising from our church. Or rather, it's the people's steeple rising from the people's church, for we are the church on the common. Our church is God's gift to us and our gift to God's people. Imagine if for one moment there would be no steeple and no roof to see as we surveyed the valley from the top of the ridge. There would be a hole in the town's heart. The town needs our steeple and our roof and all that our church represents: God's Way of Life!

There's got to be a place on the town's common where people can come in out of the cold. The cold is that place in the world where folks get caught up in the frigid winds of frenzied consumerism - where more is better and where wants far outpace needs and where Christmas gets rolled over by the stampede for stuff. In the sanctuary these tired people can come to rest and hear Jesus say:

*Do not worry about what you are going to eat and what you are going to wear. Seek first his kingdom and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow.*

## ***Right side up in an upside down world***

The steeple speaks a word that turns the world upside down, or rather, speaks a word that helps people stand and walk right side up with the ultimate truth on how to

live God's way of life - a life of humble service and simple loving kindness. The power that prayer and worship generate under the roof is of an earth-moving kind, so that when we emerge after worship on Sunday or a healing service on a Tuesday evening, we can proclaim in all simplicity that God is alive on the common. That's what I see and hear from Poet Seat when my gaze rests upon the steeple and the roof in the distance - down there in the middle of things.

In that long view from the top, like autumn leaves, the variegated life of the church makes a beautifully coherent scene - like a water-colored landscape inside a beautiful frame. All the parts hold together quite nicely within the perspective of God's Way of Life.

God's colors come through everything we do: pancake breakfasts (especially the color blue!), stewardship offertory and pledge moments, faith fund and capital fund drives, hymns from red and black hymnals, mowing the lawn and raking leaves, vigils for peace and crop walks, warming the children and inviting them to play in God's playhouse after school and on Sundays, service auctions and bake sales and Halloween Spooktaculars, receptions and pot luck suppers, invitations and visitations, ushering and welcoming, community meals, committees, teams and task forces, music, expanding and expanded choirs, organ, bassoon, recorder, guitar and other joyful sounds – each facet of church life as vibrant and colorful as a fall maple tree in the valley, picture perfect within the frame of prayer, worship and healing.

It all makes you want to raise the roof and shake the steeple with a joyful noise!

All together now: *Praise God from whom all blessings flow!*

Armand Proulx, Pastor

## Stewardship Drive Kicks Off November 19<sup>th</sup> !

### All Members to be visited!

The Stewardship Committee has formed and we are excited about this year's campaign! For the first time in a number of years, we will conduct an "old-fashioned" every member canvass, beginning on Sunday, November 19. This year's theme is *Praising God, Loving God Back*.

It has been said that "visitation is the glue that keeps the church family together". And so, over the next few weeks we will be recruiting volunteers to visit church members, deliver pledge cards, and most importantly, to reconnect with all of our church family.

This approach will require more effort, but hopefully, it will be spread among many. The time is right: enthusiasm is high, new faces are among us Sunday mornings, and many wonderful things are happening here! It is far more important that visitors want to spread our enthusiasm than that they be experts on the budget!

So please, call any of us on the committee if you would like to be a visitor! There will be a brief orientation opportunity for visitors the Sunday before Stewardship Sunday.

Doug Clarke, Chair  
Alice Jurcik

Anne Connington     Judy Atkins  
Dottie Jenke

## What Really Went on at that Retreat???

by David Lemere



On September 15 and 16, a group of seven men and seven women from our church retreated to the Berkshire Hills to Warner Farm in Cummington for the purpose of prayer, meditation, study, and instruction under the direction of Linda Comstock.

Upon arrival, we were greeted with picture perfect, refreshing fall weather and a panoramic view of freshly mown, green meadows, splendid mountain ridges, sparkling brooks, billowing clouds against a bright blue sky, and the first splashes of autumn colors in the leaves swaying in the gentle breezes. So this is heaven on earth, I mused, a meeting place where seekers seek God and God seeks seekers.

But, enough of the flowery introduction, **what really went on at this retreat?** Well, we enjoyed great food, had lively discussions, sang powerful hymns, laughed, cried, listened long and hard, meditated, helped with chores, walked the nature trails, exercised our minds bodies and spirits, and celebrated communion together. If that's not nitty gritty enough for you, then I admit that some of us snored, some of us overslept, some of us didn't walk the labyrinth, and some of us pet the neighbor's dog.

However! **What really went on at this retreat** represented a very personal spiritual journey for each of the participants and could never be summarized adequately enough accept through a one-on-one conversation with one of them. If you would like to have such a conversation, the participants are easy to identify. They all seem to have a warm glow, gracious smile, and soft eyes.

Then again, **what really went on at this retreat** is not as important as what goes on after the retreat. In the words of Thomas Keating who will be honoring us with his presence, his great wisdom, and refreshing spirit as a guest speaker at our church on November 5<sup>th</sup>:

"A retreat is not a substitute for daily life. It should be a booster and an accelerator of the spiritual journey - you go a long way in a short time. But if it is not continued then by some daily process, its primary benefit and effect will be missed."

### ROOF REPORT

The roof research team met with architects, Margo Jones and Andy Bliss on Monday, September 25<sup>th</sup> to further discuss Second Church's anticipated roof project. We continue to explore grants and "green" to discern what is best for our building. Private bids are just about ready to be sent to the bidders/contractors. When they are returned, there will need to be an **ALL CHURCH MEETING** to hear the proposal, to ask questions, and to vote on how to proceed. This will be a **very important meeting** in the life of our church, and we trust that you will plan to be there. The date of the meeting is TBA.

## ***From the Music Room.....***

### ***Would you like to Help with the "Spooktacular?"***

**The excitement is mounting as we prepare for the Faith Fund All Saints/Halloween Concert.  
We have a few jobs that are still unfilled....**

1. *Helpers to fill grab bags (see Marilyn White or Joan Vander Vleit)*
2. *Decorators for the Parish Hall (see Joan V.)*
3. *Advertising Sponsors (you could purchase an ad in the program or donate a radio spot) (see Terri Holmes)*
4. *Donations toward the purchase of a new, more portable spot light.*
5. *Donations of halloween paper cups, plates and napkins (see Joan V.)*

*This fun-filled night will spook you with awesome organ music, the little ones will hear wonderful stories from costumed characters appropriate to the season, the skeleton dance will amuse you, and the Phantom....well, just wait and see!*



## **“SPOOKTACULAR”**

**When: Sunday, October 29 at 5:00 pm**  
**Where: Second Congregational Church**

### ***Early Bird Tickets:***

**\$8 for ages 12 and up, \$3 for kids 6-11**  
 World Eye Bookshop, 156 Main St., Gfld (772-2186)

### ***At the Door:***

**\$10 for ages 12 and up, \$5 for kids 6-11**

### ***FREE for Children 5 and under***

**\*Children 6 and under accompanied by an adult**

**Door prizes and Halloween refreshments after the concert, too!**

**This is a Faith fund event--10% of all proceeds will be donated to “Warm the Children” Fund**

## Library News

Most people would agree that the lead issue in the United States today is racism, over and above money, oil, global warming, the Geneva Convention. There is an important book in our library on the subject written by THANDEKA (whose name, meaning "one who is loved by God," was given her by Archbishop Desmond Tutu). The name of the book is **Learning to Be White.** Says John B. Cobb, Jr. "No reader of Thandeka's book will ever be able to think about race in quite the same way again.

There is both shock and relief. There may be anger and disbelief as well. But simplistic moral, psychological, and sociological explanations will no longer work. Just feeling guilty and trying to atone won't work either.... Perhaps with Thandeka's help we can move beyond efforts to attain racial justice to a true healing of our culture and our selves." The book is in the Oak(glass front) Book Case on the top left shelf in the Missions section. We give this a five star read recommendation \*\*\*\*\*.

Almost always, during the week it is quiet and peaceful in the Library. Take a moment to relax there for a quick, undisturbed read. We have put out a copy of the NY Times obit on Helene Deschamps Adams, daring French spy, rescuer in WWII who died at age 85 in late September. It is reported that she brazenly posed as a secretary at the Vichy headquarters, the French equivalent of the Gestapo, and was able to seal the records of hundreds of people, including Jews and Resistance members, who had been marked for death. She gained access to a huge filing cabinet. Every morning for several months she would pull cards, put them in her brassiere and flush the evidence down a toilet.

Also during a read time, include a glance at the UCC annual report located on top of the Oak Book Case. It is well done in a comic book format and you will become informed about what UCC members are about. From that base of understanding each of us can choose the area of church life we want to concentrate upon, moving from basic prayer and meditation to meet our neighbors near and far.

### ***Greenfield Public Library BOOK GROUP at Second Church***

The book group meets this month on Oct 2 at 10:30 a.m. - noon to discuss a 2006 book, FLAPPER by Joshua Zeitz. The book for November 6, same time and place, will be MAIN STREET by Sinclair Lewis. Expect a lively discussion! Come!

### ***MISSION OUTREACH REPORT for the October 2006 Visitor***

**Good news:** \$635 has been delivered to NELCWIT. \$635 is the total of 3 collections taken after church service on 8/26, 9/10 & 17 and actions taken by the Missions Outreach Committee. Thanks to all. Thanks and praise to God!!

The first Sunday, October 1, our support of the **SURVIVAL CENTER** will continue at Second Church. The Committee will put out the big red buckets at both entrances to the Sanctuary. We hope you will

join many people in bringing money and/or nonperishable food to put in the buckets for the Survival Center. The food contribution is a meaningful aspect of the Communion Service.

### **NEIGHBORS IN NEED, or NIN**

NIN is one of 4 special offerings of the UCC. We will have the offering **October 8**. Special envelopes will be provided. The use of the NIN offering is for justice issues. This year the focus will be in support of the Native American UCC ministry, assistance of people suffering still from the consequences of Hurricane Katrina, and advocacy for a more just health care system in this country.

Coming on **October 15** is the **CROP WALK**. This year it will take place in Ashfield, so walkers will be assured of a beautiful walk. Join us! As usual, 25% of the proceeds will go to organizations in Franklin County that combat hunger, and 75% to **CWS** programs around the world that combat hunger. Please save that date for the walking and be sure to sponsor those who walk. Help **CWS—Church World Service**—in their mighty work.

**OCWM—OUR CHURCH'S WIDER MISSION** -- needs our support. OCWM is essentially the United Church of Christ minus the local church. Second Church really keeps us busy and challenged, but we need the rest of the UCC and so does Second Church. When the stewardship campaign begins this fall, and you are considering your pledge, please remember Second Church needs the support of the UCC so we in turn must support the UCC through a respectable pledge to OCWM. Keep this in mind when you fill out your Stewardship pledge for 2007. Thanks. Alice Jurcik.

## **Father Thomas Keating from the International Centering Prayer movement will speak at Second Congregational Church November 5 at 3:00 p.m.**

Father Thomas Keating, currently residing at the Trappist Monastery in Snowmass, Colorado, and the inspiration behind the international Centering Prayer movement, will be speaking on Centering Prayer at the Second Congregational Church, 16 Court Square in Greenfield, Massachusetts on Sunday, November 5 from 3 pm to 5 pm. The talk is entitled "Centering Prayer: Deep Healing For the Soul." This is an interfaith event to which all are welcome.

Centering Prayer is a form of meditation for all. Adults, and yes, even children, can learn how to apply this simple method to enhance their daily lives. The world we live in is hectic and fear-filled. Come learn how to create a peace-filled place in your hearts. The two-hour event from 3 pm to 5 pm on Sunday, November 5th, which will include a talk by Father Keating as well as a 10-minute meditation "practice" session, will end with a question and answer period followed by a book signing. There will be a reception in the parish hall to which all are welcome. A bookstore will also be available for those wishing to purchase books. For more information, please contact Jeanne Douillard at (413) 774-0125.

The inspiration for Centering Prayer, which was developed by Father Keating and two other Trappist monks, sprang from an interest in eastern meditation practices as well as the history of the Christian contemplative tradition. In the mid 1970's, when Father Thomas Keating, then abbot of the Trappist Monastery in Spencer, Massachusetts, began exploring the history of Christian meditation, the Reverend Armand Proulx, current pastor of Second Congregational Church in Greenfield, Massachusetts was a Catholic priest in the LaSalette Community and serving as chairperson of the Spiritual Life Committee of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men in the United States. Both men, along with a few others, became involved in presenting Centering Prayer to the larger community outside the monastery walls.

Concerning the name of the movement, Father Basil Pennington writes the following in the introduction to Centering Prayer in Daily Life and Ministry, edited by Gustave Reininger.

Centering prayer – the name has certainly caught on. I can remember well when it first began to be used. It was at the first prayershop we did outside the monastic retreat house. There was a team working with me. In the course of this initial prayershop I quoted (Thomas Merton) frequently, using such quotations as “The best way to come to God is to go to your own center and pass through to the center into the center of God.” Father Armand Proulx...began to call our ‘Prayer of the Cloud’ Centering prayer. Our traditional little method came home from the prayershop with a new name.

In 1984 Father Keating founded Contemplative Outreach, an organization that promotes Centering Prayer to people all over the world. He has written dozens of books on the subject and travels widely, promoting and teaching Centering Prayer. He has regularly appeared on panels with the Dalai Lama and other religious leaders.

Father Keating, a graduate of Deerfield Academy and Yale and Fordham Universities, has been engaged in dialogue with people of all faiths for many years. He is a member of the International Committee for Peace Council, which fosters dialogue and cooperation among the world religions, and a member of the Snowmass Interreligious Conference, a group of teachers from the world religions who meet yearly to share the experience of the spiritual journey in their respective traditions. The event at the Second Congregational Church on November 5 crosses all religious lines. It is for anyone interested in finding a way to quiet themselves in a busy, hectic world.

### **New Discussion Series for 2007** **"Coming Home: The Story of the Prodigal Son/Daughter."**

Save the dates: Starting on January 7, 2007, Armand Proulx and Cindy Pomeroy will offer a six-week course entitled "Coming Home: The Story of the Prodigal Son/Daughter." The class will be limited to 30 people and will be held on Sunday evenings from 7:00-8:30. We will soon order the wonderful books by Henri Nouwen at World Eye so that you can read ahead. Give them a few weeks to get the order in. Call the church office if you want to be a member of this class.

### **October 2 Monday 6:00 Potluck Supper and Story: "The Golden Thread"**

The Women's Fellowship invites **ALL** members and friends of Second Church to a special potluck supper on Monday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00 p.m. Following the supper, we will have an evening of stories presented by Cindy Pomeroy, who has been telling stories for many years. She believes that we truly connect with each other through our stories. Her stories will take us from New Jersey to Montana to Switzerland and back home to Massachusetts. Cindy will involve all of us in a time of sharing life experiences that are common to all of us. We may even sing together, if the "tenor" is right.

Come and be part of this fun evening in our life together here at Second Church. As always, it would be very helpful to know that you are coming so that we know how many chairs to set up and how much coffee to make. Call Marilyn White or sign up in the parish hall. Thanks!