

16 Court Square **The September Visitor**
Greenfield, MA 01301

Sundays

Second to None Café: 9:00 a.m.

Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Child Care: 9:00 a.m.

Fellowship Hour: 11:00 a.m.

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PDF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Our Staff

Armand Proulx
Pastor

Jamie Godfrey
Director of Faith Formation

Leea Snape
Music Director/Organist

Judy Atkins
Administrative Assistant

Dennis Fisk
Church Sexton

Office Phone: (413) 774-4355

E-mail: sccucc@crocker.com

Web page:

www.crocker.com/~sccucc

Here We Are, Lord, Send Us!

The Bible tells us so: Without a vision the people perish. This is a tough statement. It strikes at the heart of our life together as a Christian community. This is how I read it at this particular time in our history: Unless we put evangelism and mission at the top of our agenda we won't make it into the future.

By "evangelism" I mean that we have good news (as in Gospel) to proclaim and by "mission" I mean that we need to shape some aspect of the good news into a program that we can then deliver to the larger community – a place within and beyond our pews and our walls. Meld good news into a mission and what we have is a vision! Rally around an exciting vision and we enter joyfully into God's future.

Believe me, Second Church has the talent and energy to make it happen. In fact, it is already taking shape. At our last annual meeting we decided "to bring to reality" the following proposal: "We intend to make our own faith formation, and that of our children, a priority in our lives."

A church group has since been meeting to discern how best to make this mission happen. What is emerging is a multi-faceted *Children's Mission*. One of the facets of the mission is an after-school program called *The Little People's Steeple*. Read on in this month's *Visitor* to see what the total program and its various components will look like.

The target population for this mission thrust is families-with-little-children within and beyond our membership, with special consideration to be given to single-parent households.

The statistics attending our mission field are daunting. Forty percent of the households in the 01301 zip code area are single-parent families. Moreover, the median income in this area is \$20,000, which is half the national average. In perhaps most of these single-parent homes those two sets of statistics meet to put the parents and the children under untold stress. How can their burden be made lighter?

Enter Second Church with the *Children's Mission!*

What I propose at this writing is to make of the launching of *the Children's Mission* the focus-mission of our church for this year leading up to the Annual Meeting 2007. Let us make it a point of total convergence of our energies. I see three powerful currents converging:

- 1) Let our personal and communal prayer be the launching pad and the flight pattern for this most worthy venture. Beseech heaven to let the children come (See: Matthew 18:1-5 and 19:13-15)
- 2) Let it be known (this is what evangelists do!) to one and all within your circle of friends and family that this wonderful thing is happening at Second Church. Send names and telephone numbers of prospective participants to the church office.
- 3) Let us see how we might participate in the workings of the actual program, giving of our time, talent and money. Look ahead in *The Visitor* for the ways and means to jump in and run with the program.

We stand on the threshold of something brand new and we say: Here we are, Lord, send us!

Armand Proulx, Pastor



The Healing Services will be starting up again in September: Tuesday September 12th, at 7 pm. Please make **2nd Tuesdays at Second Church** a regular part of your schedule for an opportunity for "soaking" prayer for yourself or someone else in need. The members of our church's healing ministry have been blessed by this experience of hands-on prayer and quiet reflection each month. We are convinced that this service is an important gift to our Church family and our community. For those times when you or someone you love is in crisis - for whatever reason - there is comfort and healing as we meet together and allow the Holy Spirit to minister to us.

Fr Thomas Keating to speak at Second Church – November 5, 2006 - 3:00 –5:00 p.m.

Fr Thomas Keating, one of a group of brothers, including our own Armand Proulx, who began the "Centering Prayer" movement, will be here with us at Second Church on November 5 from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. This gathering will be open to the interfaith community. We are grateful to be able to host this event and share in his visit.

An alumni of Deerfield Academy, he will be presented with the prestigious Heritage Award and will participate in the first large meeting of The New England Independent School Spiritual Council.

Fr Keating is a founder of Contemplative Outreach, an organization that promotes Centering Prayer all over the world. He has written several important books on the subject and the books will be available at our meeting with him.

This is a wonderful opportunity especially for those of us who have benefited from Armand's introduction of Centering Prayer to us at Second Church forever changing and deepening our spiritual lives and relationship with God.

Peace and Justice Ministry Notes

Judy Atkins, Suzanne Carlsen, Becca King and Alice Jurcik met to support the formation of a Peace and Justice ministry at SCC. We distinguished the difference between Mission and Peace & Justice work, mission being the collection of funds for charitable causes at home and around the world and P&J being working for systemic change in our institutions that affect peace and justice in the world.

We learned of the work being done in the Western Region, led by Peter Wells, Kate Stevens and others to create a network among our sister UCC churches, and to collaborate on common event planning as well as setting up a communication tree to invite each other to events at any one of our member churches.

There are preparations going on for a region-wide Gathering on Sept 30 which will feature a keynote speaker and workshops focused on the theme: "Moving from Charity to Change".

The following prayer came to us via Suzanne: It was written by Rev. John Thomas, UCC National President and General Minister, and gave us heartening inspiration for our work in the struggle for peace and justice in our world, in our community, in our church, and in our own individual lives...

Lord, have mercy. Kyrie eleison You did not make us, O God, to die in bomb craters or to huddle through the night in basement shelters. You made us to play under olive trees and cedars and to sleep soundly with animal toys and gentle lovers. Lord, have mercy.

You did not make us, O God, to hold hostages for barter or to rain deadly fury on innocent children and beautiful coast lands. You made us, O God, to welcome strangers and to cherish all creation. Christ, have mercy.

You did not make us, O God, to oppress in the name of security or to kill in the name of justice. You made us, O God, to find security in justice and to risk life in the name of peace. Lord, have mercy.

While leaders in Tel Aviv and Damascus, Tehran, Washington and southern Lebanon pander to ancient fears, claim the mantle of righteous victim, and pursue their little empires in the name of gods of their own devising, the people of Lebanon and northern Israel are made captive to fear, true victims whose only advocate is You. Save us from self-justifying histories and from moral equations that excuse our folly. Search our hearts for our own complicity. Spare us from pious prayers that neglect the prophet's angry cry. Let us speak a resounding "no" to this warring madness and thus unmake our ways of death, so that we may be made more and more into your image.

Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison. Kyrie eleison.

After a brief centering prayer focused on the question "How might we best be used for the highest purposes of creating Peace and Justice in our church and community?" we noted that we are all children of God, beloved equally, and are One in that reality. We expressed our collective desire to have dialogues within our church family that respect our diverse ways of thinking about peace and justice in the world and that strive to come to common ground upon which we can stand together.

We plan to get together once a month after Sunday worship. All are welcome.

Becca King

"There is a new culture of activism taking form in the world, one that calls on us to integrate the fullness of our spirits into the struggle for justice and political transformation. In this historic moment, we are finding more and more that we need to seek a deeper kind of liberation. How do we recognize the connections between liberation from external systems of oppression and freedom from internal experiences of suffering? How do we move towards action that grows more deliberately out of being? How do we honor spiritual traditions and practices in ways that strengthen our movements for social change?" From a Phila PA synagogue.

“Lofty” Notes from the Choir ---

It's fall again and the chancel choir is ready to return to the loft! Sunday, September 10th is the date. While Leea is on a short maternity leave, we will have guest organists. Bill McKimm will lead us in song on 9/10 and on 9/17, guest organist, Janice Roman will direct the choir. Anyone who would like to sing, please feel free to join us. Just come to the loft on Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m. for a pre-service rehearsal, or, if Thursday evening's are open for you, we have choir practice at 7:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room.

Wish List for “SPOOKTACULAR” Organ Concert & Story Telling

As the excitement builds for our Faith Fund concert on Sunday, October 29th, we have need of some items/assistance. Can you help? Here's what we need.....

- Dancing “skeletons” – we need two teens or adults who would like to dance (this will be choreographed for you and we have the costumes)
- Black lights
- Help with lights (sanctuary dimming, spot light and black light operators)
- Devil costume for an adult and/or child
- Someone who wants to “pretend to be” a devil (big one or small one)
- Help with advertising/publicity
- Ushers (we'll need 4 – you can wear a costume, if you like)

There may be other needs as the planning goes along. Please join in the preparation fun. Contact Terri Holmes (773-0404) or Leigh Labrie (772-2308)

Please help us to publicize this event. Hang the poster in a prominent place! Tell your Friends!

“From The Library”

May we recommend to you a book on our shelves which we think you would find well worth your time to read. The title might mislead you but read on. The book is ANGELWALK a novel by Roger Elwood published in 1988. Following are just a few of many recommendations. "Angelwalk is a sustained work of the imagination. Roger Elwood is to be highly commended." Myrna Grant, Wheaton College Graduate School. "'An unquestionably excellent work, with powerful insights into modern thinking.'" The Baptist Sentinel. "Angelwalk is in the vein of John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and C. S. Lewis's Screwtape Letters. Roger Elwood has the same kind of insight to truth as Bunyan and Lewis and very few others." W. S. McBirnie, bestselling author of Search for the Twelve Apostles.

You will find this book located on the shelves with our other novels. It is marked with "F" denoting fiction and can be located by looking alphabetically along the fiction shelves where you will also find C. S. Lewis represented. There are other works in the library written by C. S. Lewis which are marked with "CL" meaning Christian Living. Roz Tufts, Librarian

MISSION OUTREACH REPORT

Dear friends,

What marvelous weather and air we've been having lately! It's great for activity and building enthusiasm for plans coming up. May we all have a plentiful share in the fall activities.

It was a terrible blow to read of the devastating reduction of funding of **NELCWIT** by the state, with the imminent and likely shut down of the safe shelter they run. But NELCWIT doesn't quit easily. They know how essential their work in the community is, and the community knows too. Ann Wiley, President of the Board of NELCWIT has written a wonderful piece in the MYTurn column of the editorial page of the Aug 22 Recorder urging every group in Western Mass to raise money for NELCWIT. (See below)* We will also have a basket at both exits after church on Aug 27, Sept 10, and 17, to receive your donation. Checks should be made out to NELCWIT. If you are unable to come to church, you may send your contribution to the church office. We shall present NELCWIT with the total offering on Sept 20. To jump start the process, the MO Committee is giving \$100 of its budget and committee members donations, the total so far being \$195. NELCWIT's goal is to raise enough local money to keep the shelter open through December, thus giving them time to apply for and get funding from other sources. May we help them succeed by being as generous as we are able.

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 which 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.

Support for the **SURVIVAL CENTER** will continue at Second Church. The Committee will put out the big red buckets at both entrances to the Sanctuary on the first Sunday of each month. We hope more and more people will join in bringing money and/or non-perishable food to put in the buckets. I find it a meaningful extension of the Communion Service.

OCWM—**OUR CHURCH'S WIDER MISSION** -- needs our support.

OCWM is essentially the United Church of Christ minus the local churches. 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 and we in turn must support the UCC through a respectable pledge to OCWM.

Alice Jurcik, Missions

*A NELCWIT MISSION

Please see the My Turn article from the editorial page of the Recorder by Anne Wiley. It is very empowering. She writes of several things we can do to help out.

- 1) Send donations immediately, any amount is worthy to NELCWIT, 479 Main St, PO Box 520, Greenfield, MA 01301
- 2) Hold a "Labor of Love" picnic and raise funds for NELCWIT over Labor Day when many of us gather with families and friends. She suggests we ask each person to make a check out to NELCWIT and bring it along with their food contribution.
- 3) Volunteer to help fundraise and develop membership base. Contact Anne Wiley at wiley@crocker.com
- 4) Commit your time to help with the hot line, the annual Bowl-A-Thon, answer phones in the office, write grants, organize documents, hold special annual events to raise funds and/or identify foundations that support prevention, direct services and trauma recovery. Contact sarah@nelcwit.org

NELCWIT is dedicated to stop the violence, hatred and bullying within our community by providing shelter, counseling, education and advocacy to women and children who have survived domestic violence or sexual abuse, and community education for area schools, professionals and other groups.

As a clinical social worker working in this community I have occasion to bear witness to much stress among families with children. If we are to be a church whose mission is to families and children, we could not do better than to mount a campaign of support for NELCWIT in a partnership that would send the message most clearly to the community.

Becca King

WHAT: SPECIAL PANCAKE BREAKFAST

(featuring wild blueberries picked in the hills of Heath)

WHEN: Sunday, September 17, 2006 8:00-9:30 a.m.

WHERE: Second Congregational Church Parish Hall

WHO: Everyone is invited to support this endeavor

WHY: To raise money for the Faith Fund

COOKS: Julie Kimball, Janet Seredejko, Joyce Blanker

WAITGIRLS: Courtney Kimball, Jennifer Seredejko, Alaina Blanker

SPONSORED BY THE WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Second Congregational Church

Story: "The Golden Thread"

The Women's Fellowship invites **ALL** members and friends of Second Church to a special pot-luck supper on Monday, October 2nd at 6:00 p.m. Following the supper, we will have an evening of stories presented by our own 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

The Roof

You will be hearing more and more about "the roof" as the next few weeks/months progress. Church members who know about roofing have been meeting with Margo Jones, architect, to explore the best plan of action for Second Church. The discussions have been lengthy and all encompassing. This information will be shared with church members as soon as all the information is available to us. Thank you for your patience.

The Property Management Committee

Hope Alert – Stewardship – "Loving God Back"

Stewardship Team

As you read this month's Visitor you can see that there is an emphasis on "work." September is an energizing month. Many new projects inspire us to do our 'work.' Perhaps this is because it is the harvesting season. How appropriate that now is the time to put together a Stewardship Team!

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TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

The UCC has developed a Stewardship Program with the theme "Loving God Back." There are mailings and bulletin inserts and pledge cards for us to use with this theme.

"Take care! Life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." Luke 12:15

We are guided and cared for by God.

Stewardship time gives us the opportunity to "Love God Back!" Please help us to form a "Loving God Back" Stewardship Team.

Our Mission to the Children

Let the children come to me for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.

At our Annual Meeting in January we voted as a congregation to commit ourselves to "our own faith formation and that of our children." In so doing, the responsibility for

Christian education moved beyond the exclusive domain of one person or committee to the very heart of our church's identity and mission.

Understanding the Outer and Inner Reality of Children's Lives

Out of this a group of members came together to go to the root of this challenge. We prayed and searched for insight and inspiration. We agreed that any program we undertake must respond to the reality of children's and parents' lives. At first, we focused on the *outer* reality of families, especially the growing numbers of single parent families and the sometimes crippled economic burdens on families with children.

But we gradually realized that we need to better understand the *inner* reality of children's lives as well. We have been helped in this by a wonderful book by Gretchen Pritchard called *Offering the Gospel to Children*. Pritchard has helped us to see how we tend to underestimate children. We often exaggerate the contented innocence of children and spend much energy on trying to protect them from the world. In fact, she contends that children are capable of experiencing all the depth and breadth of suffering, exaltation, and grief.

Pritchard also challenges the common assumption that children are not capable of understanding something that they have not directly experienced. The fact is that they routinely inhabit other worlds. None of my own children have ever fought a dragon or cast spells or run a grocery store or played major league ball. But don't tell that to them!

This has led us to an important "discovery" about the inner lives of children: *They experience the world and figure out their place in it primarily through imagination and story (and art). And by entering imaginatively into stories they create themselves. By becoming a princess or a butterfly or a ballplayer - or a shepherd or an angel - they learn how to be and act in the world. By experiencing the death of the mother, the struggle against the evil monster, the peril of the quest, the unexpected help of the stranger, the birth of the special child, the restoration to wholeness and happiness, children learn to see life as a meaningful, hope-filled, unfolding story instead of a relentless succession of disconnected events.*

A New (Old) Approach for Christian Education

One conclusion that we have drawn from this is that the greatest gift we can offer the children of our community is our own story as a people of faith. It is *THE* story - the story of God as told in the Bible, the great story of creation, sin, and redemption that gives us our identity and our purpose as a church.

Long ago the church figured out how best to convey this story - worship! Through the interplay of word, music, and ritual each Sunday we enter into the Great Story. And in the round and rhythms of the liturgical seasons - from Advent and Christmas to Epiphany to Lent to Easter and Pentecost - we enter time and again into the mystery of God's story as told in scripture.

Pritchard writes convincingly that children are not only able to enter into this story in all its fullness, but that they thirst for it. They long to be a part of the ritual and mystery and prayers and music. They cannot get enough of God's story because the lineaments of the story are inscribed in their hearts and souls. Our children are challenging us, not to

water down our worship in order to make it “relevant,” but to do it well to enhance the mystery and wonder - and to make room in it for them so that they too can enter in to the story and make it their own.

We need to pay attention to this is everything we do with children. Our task, simply put, is to tell the story as best we can - and then get out of the way. If we are to do this then we must first recover our own capacity for imagination, wonder, and story. This is what Jesus meant when he scolded the disciples, “whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”

Four Principles for Working (Playing!) with Children

So here are four principles that might guide our emerging Children’s Mission at Second Church:

To tell and retell God’s story as found in the Scriptures until it becomes our common personal story;

To participate in worship (and prayer) together;

To listen to and talk to each other about our experiences and our relationship with God;

To practice doing faithful acts of ministry together.

A Children’s Mission for Second Church

Drawing on these rich insights, we will propose to the Diaconate and the Church Council the creation of a new Children’s Mission comprised of several component programs and initiatives.

1. Sunday Morning Worship

Goal: to fully integrate children into the worship experience.

Reintroduce a story time for children during worship.

Creation of a special area for children in the sanctuary

2. After School Christian Education Program - for the nurturing of Christian identity

For children from Kindergarten through Grade 5.

Thursdays from 3:30 to 5:30 P.M. beginning September 28th.

An emphasis on storytelling, including art, music, cooking, games, drama and nature

Support program for parents

3. Holy Day Celebrations for Children

Each event will center on a dramatic reenactment of the drama of salvation using spaces throughout the church building, and will conclude with a family gathering and meal.

Season of Pentecost 2 - ***Children’s Celebration: Saturday, October 28 - “All Saints Saturday”***

Advent and Christmas - ***Children’s Celebration: Sunday, December 24 - “Christmas Pageant”***

Epiphany - ***Children’s Celebration: TBA - “Three Kings Saturday”***

Lent - ***Children’s Celebration: Saturday, March 31 - “Palm Saturday”***

Easter - ***Children’s Celebration: Saturday, April 7 - “The Great Vigil” (Easter Pageant)***

Pentecost 1 - ***Children's Celebration: Saturday, May 26 - "Pentecost Saturday"***

4. Summer Program in July

Ways to Become Involved

In the coming weeks we will be providing a list of ways that every member of our church can become involved with time, talent, and treasure. We would like to make the after school program self-sustaining through a combination of targeted donations, a modest fee, and eventually grant money.

Jamie Godfrey for the Children's Mission Action Team

P.S. Adult Ed Series - In addition, beginning in September, I will be facilitating a short series of adult ed sessions on Sunday morning during which we will explore more deeply the inner world of childhood and what it means for our Children's Mission. Along the way we will have a chance to share stories of our own childhood - and our own parenting of children as well.

P.P.S. Confirmation News

Confirmands, Parents, and Mentors: I will be in touch with you in the coming days to present a detailed outline of our program this fall, including a date for confirmation itself. The focus this fall will be on a series of exciting excursions to experience other expressions of faith and to do service projects together. I would also like to involve confirmands as support staff in our new after school program and in our "Holy Day Celebrations."

Blessings!
Jamie