

Newsletter – Winter 2019



A long-ago winter photo of West Fairlee Center

West Fairlee Center Congregational Church

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GREETINGS MEMBERS, NEIGHBORS, AND FRIENDS

West Fairlee Center Congregational Church offers a simple space for worship, ceremony, contemplation, meditation and private prayer. Although regular year-round church services have not been held for decades, the church continues to serve as the site for special Church services, weddings, baptisms, and funerals.

There were three weddings this year. A fourth wedding was scheduled for January 2019. Unfortunately, the heating system failed at the rehearsal. Thanks to Peggy Burden and Katherine Adams for their quick thinking, the Bradford Congregational Church was contacted and came to the rescue. Rev. Jeffrey Long-Middleton, the officiating minister, reported that the wedding took place at their Church as scheduled without any further hitches.

Congratulations and Best Wishes to all the Newlyweds!

The months of August and September were busy for the Church in 2018. It started with the Blessing of the Animals on August 12. Then came the Serenata Concert on August 19th.

On September 28th, there was a Talent Show of local youth featuring fiddle, cello, monologues and some dancing held at the Church. Members of the Community Club hosted a potluck dinner at the Clubhouse. It was a grand night for young families to come together for a new undertaking.

Events

Photos of various events can be viewed on the www.wfcenterchurch.org webpage. If anyone would like to add photos to the webpages, past and/or present, send an email to joann.sanborn@gmail.com.

Ice Cream Social and Blessing of the Animals – August 12

This year's Blessing of the Animals was led by Rev. Brigid Farrell with Serenata providing the music for the service. Churches usually hold this service around the first Sunday in October in remembrance of St. Francis of Assisi's love for all creatures. However, since the 1940s, the WFCCC's services have been held during the summer months. The Blessing of the Animals service is an enjoyable time bringing people and pets together continuing our summer tradition since 2002. Over the years, horses, dogs, cats, llamas, a parrot, ferrets, chickens, ducks and more have all been blessed. This year brought a special visitor. A red tail hawk flew in to watch the Blessings. As the song says, "All God's Critters Have a Place in the Choir".

Club's Ice Cream Social

The addition of the Community Club's Ice Cream social has made this service even sweeter. The Clubhouse members over its many years have hosted fun events and created cherished memories. These past three years the ice cream social has been a wonderful opportunity for neighbors and visitors to get together and have ice cream with homemade blueberry sauce, chocolate sauce or the valley's own maple syrup at the Clubhouse.

Summer Concerts – August 19

Through the summer concerts the goal has been to bring the community together to enjoy music, one another and this beautiful building as well as being a fund raiser.

This year's summer concert featured the musical group, Serenata, who also provided music for the Blessing of the Animals and the Service of Gratitude. The different combinations of various instruments provided a variety of sounds featuring light classical tunes, mellow folksongs, and light-hearted popular favorites.

Service of Gratitude – November 25

The annual service of prayer and music was envisioned and organized by Cleo Kearns. The theme this year was “Water is Life.” Practitioners of various religions ranging from Taoism and Islam to Christianity and Buddhism discussed their spiritual practices; shared their prayers of praise and thanks; and sang together.

Dr. Kearns led the service with Haudenosaunee Liturgy for call to order and final blessing. The Real Story was given by Chief Nate Pero and the Opening Statement and Prayer by Rabbi Mark Melamut. Music was provided by Serenata, Samantha Moffatt, Bill Waste, and the Green Mountain Dixies.

The presentations were divided into 3 series.

The Dharmic Traditions:

Taoism – Sensei Aaron Hoopes, Tibetan Buddhism – Samantha Moffatt, Zen Buddhism - Reverend Allyn Fields, Sikh – Sri Manohar Grewal

The Abrahamic Traditions:

Judaism – Rabbi Meir Cohen Goldstein, Christianity – Reverend Dane Breslin, Islam – Khalil Abdullah, Ba’hai – Anne Cook

The Earth-Based Traditions:

Gaia – Reverend Gregory Wilson, Wicca – Cat Spaulding, Celtic – Carolyn Hooper

A Wild Game and Potluck Supper was held at the Clubhouse following the service. Even though the weather brought early snowstorms and cold, many folks braved the elements to participate in this very special event.

Future Events

The Board of Directors is always open to thoughts about activities the Church should host, which are in keeping with its original purpose as a place of worship and a venue for events as part of the community. Many ideas have been suggested, but before the Board makes commitments, we would like to have input from the Community.

Since the local population increases significantly for the summer, planned events would probably be most successful in the summer or early fall. An example of a very successful event was a Children's Talent Show held in September. If there are ideas of other events utilizing the Church as a venue that could be scheduled, they would be most welcome by sending an email to the Clerk, Katherine Adams at kaldrichadams@gmail.com.

Maintenance

The maple tree next to the cemetery broke apart during a summer storm. Fortunately for the Church, it did not damage the side of the church. It was decided to have the tree completely taken down and Old City Tree Service was contacted. They completed the work in late October.

The Board of Directors has started to look at maintenance needs of the Church building and other projects. It will then put together a 5-year plan. The Board will investigate, evaluate, prioritize the following projects:

- a) Checking for roof leaks
- b) Heating system assessment
- c) Repair hand rail and painting front steps
- d) Painting steel roof
- e) Painting floor and pew benches
- f) Reupholstering or replacing pew cushions
- g) Refurbishing second floor area

In Memory

Lastly and most importantly, we pause to reflect on those that have recently passed; Barbara Slack, David Smith and Ginny Southworth. They touched so many people in so many ways over the years. To share memories and photos, email church.wfc@gmail.com and they will be posted on the “People” webpage.