

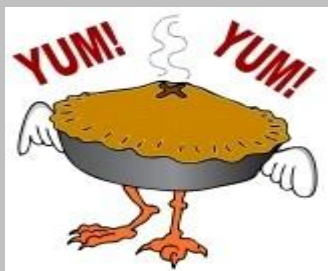
The Messenger

Richmond Congregational Church • September 2011

The Richmond Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, is an Open, Welcoming and Affirming Church.



1801 - 2010



Richmond Congregational Church Chicken Pie Supper Set for October 5th

The Church will celebrate its 64th Chicken Pie Supper on Wednesday, October 5, 2010. This is a popular annual church and community wide event.

For supper reservations, please call Irene LaRose at 434 - 2516 between the hours of 1 & 8PM. There are four seatings which are at 4:30, 5:30, 6:30 & 7:30 PM. Ticket prices are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 12 & under and free for preschoolers. Take-outs are also available on the hour.

If you have never attended this traditional harvest meal consisting of chicken & biscuits, mashed potatoes, winter squash, cole slaw, and apple or pumpkin pie, then you have been missing a real treat. Be sure to reserve early to ensure your family or large group gets to be seated at the desired sitting.



Change. It's not a 4-letter word, but it might as well be for all the fondness it triggers in us. I recognize that it's one thing if we're deciding that change would be good, maybe even fun – new furniture, new job, new vacation adventure, new hair style. Even that kind of change is more natural for some folks than others. Me? Once the furniture is located, I'm pretty content until someone else suggests a different arrangement. And when my hairdresser asks what I want done this month, I virtually always say, same thing as last month. Which hints, upfront, that I respond with less than an openhearted embrace when change is someone else's idea and foisted upon me.

I am fully aware that this congregation has been through a lot of change in the last 3 and a half years. First, the woman who had been your pastor for nearly 20 years heard a new call. Then you had an interim for two years. Then you had pulpit supply, then a bridge pastor and finally, your new pastor arrived. I'm sure I've instigated change at times and in ways I'm unaware of, but you've rolled with most of my punches and maybe, just maybe, things were about to calm down and we were beginning to look forward to settled when, wham, Christina up and resigned. Didn't see that one coming. I got a sneak peak at Gail Workman's newsletter article and learned she was packing her bags. Then about the time we were on the edge of hiring Meredith Schuft to fill the office position, Geoff Bennington walked in and said he was relocating to New York City. So much for being settled. That fantasy was over before we even got our feet up and had a chance to doze off.

I think part of the message here is that life in general doesn't give us a lot of opportunity to relax, settle in and put our feet up. And I think church life and discipleship in particular are much more about adventure, attentive listening and courageous following than placid and complacent existence. Yes, we can find resting places and moments in which to be nourished and renewed, but the ever unfolding drama that is God's movement in this world calls us to keep our sea legs flexed so we're ready for the next wave. In the midst of the ride, we make time to grieve and rest, to dream and listen, to decide and dare.

Undergirding all of the change, whether it's our choice or someone else's, is the concept of trust. Yes, the waves may rock and roll the boat, but God will keep it upright. Yes, we need to grieve the gifts and treasures that are taking their leave, finding ways to thank Christina, Geoff and Gail for all they have given us. At the same time, hopefully we will look with anticipation for new ideas and resources as they rise to the surface and come among us. The evening of Sept. 13 is one particular time in which we can come together to dream and listen to each other and to God, and together begin to set a path into the future.

God is still among us. God is still speaking and leading. God is still calling us to come and follow, to worship and work, pray and play, serve and sing in this time and place, and to God's glory. Let's embrace the change, and move forward into the fall together.

Peace,

Alice

Beauty in Brokenness

submitted by Tess Starecheski

"You know as I do that we all begin in weakness. We are all broken in some way.

The only answer to life is to love each other." - Jean Vanier

Jean Vanier is a Canadian Catholic philosopher, humanitarian and the founder of L'Arche, an international organization which creates communities where people with developmental disabilities and those who assist them share life together.

I have a wonderful friend who is gentle and kind, insightful and funny. She is also deeply wounded from growing up with a cruelly abusive father. In fact, sometimes she feels so broken that she doubts that she is fit to be in relationship with others.

When she confided this to me, I wanted to tell her that it is her very "brokenness" which is her strength and her gift; it is her honest relationship with her own pain that allows her to be such a compassionate presence for the suffering of others.

As Leonard Cohen sings:

Ring the bells that still can ring. Forget your perfect offering.

There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in.

In our culture, when we think of beauty, we think of perfection: smooth young skin, flawlessly sculpted bodies, straight white teeth -- no pain, no worry, no sadness. And yet, one of the most beautiful women I've ever known was not even 5 feet tall with a soft round figure and, if her teeth were straight and white, it was because they were not her own. I never tired of looking at my grandmother, not because of her outer beauty, but because she always looked back at me with love shining in her kind blue eyes. Nana had had a very hard life, having to drop out of school to raise her seven brothers and sisters after her mother abandoned the family. She married young and stayed out of the clutches of bone crushing poverty only by relentless hard work, becoming the breadwinner after her husband fell prey to alcoholism and became unable to hold down a job. That tiny woman had such steadfast strength and devotion to her family that she became the foundation upon which everything else rested. We all knew that we could turn to her when trouble knocked us down and that her love would enfold us until we were strong enough to stand again. Nana's beauty came from her intimate knowledge of suffering and her seemingly endless capacity to stand with others as they passed through their own pain.

These women have taught me to appreciate the beauty in brokenness. The power of love has allowed them to move courageously through the storms of life and come out the other end, rich in wisdom and compassion. Softened yet strengthened by these hardships, their true beauty shines through the cracks.

A Bit of the Past

submitted by Ingrid Cichoski

As Summer draws to a close, our thoughts turn to Fall. As I think about Fall I, of course, think about the start of school, since that is a big part of my life. As I think about Fall in connection with the church, I think about chicken pie but I also remember September planning retreats at Atkinson House. I attended at least one of them. Irene and Earl Larose were also there and I'm sure others as well. Jerry Stone was the pastor at the time and the idea was to talk about and plan the upcoming church year. I can't remember how we got to go, but I think we just signed up if we were interested. It was a very enjoyable time spent in a beautiful place. Atkinson House was owned by the Vermont Conference and is located in Newbury, Vt. near the Connecticut River. The house is very comfortable and there was a live-in manager and cook who made our stay(s) easy and enjoyable. (The VAST class that John LaRue, Denise Bouchard and I were part of held our June class there each of the three years. What fun!) I would wish that if you have never had a chance to visit Atkinson House that you will avail yourself of the opportunity should it arise, or just take a drive during foliage season down the Connecticut Valley and stop in to say hi. The house was sold by the conference a number of years ago, but the buyer(s) planned to run a retreat center there.

Adult Study Opportunity - Two Churches Get Together!

submitted by Rev. Alice M.C.Ling

We will partner with the Williston Federated Church for a fall adult study opportunity, *Living the Questions #2*. This DVD and the resource materials are, quoting the “Living the Questions” website, “an open-minded alternative to studies that attempt to give participants all the answers and instead strives to create an environment where participants can interact with one another in exploring what's next for Christianity.”

All six sessions will meet on Sunday night from 5-6:30 pm. Please note the date and location of each session:

- September 25 - Williston
- October 2- Richmond
- October 9 - Williston
- October 16 - Richmond
- October 23 - Williston
- October 30 - Richmond

The video segments include conversations with leading voices of faith, stories illustrating aspects of an evolving faith and concrete spiritual practices and disciplines. Each session is a “stand-alone” session, so come for some or all. Topics to be presented include:

- Taking the Bible Seriously
- Lives of Jesus
- Evil, Suffering & A God of Love
- Practicing Resurrection
- Social Justice: Realizing God's Vision
- Prayer: Intimacy with God

You can visit the website www.livingthequestions.com for more information about the materials, or speak to Alice Ling. There is a sign-up sheet on the table at the back of the sanctuary. We can discuss car-pooling to Williston. What an exciting opportunity for our two churches.



Over the course of the past 10 years, all of us have felt deeply the impact of the terrorist acts of September 11. We believe that many have a story to tell about that day and the days that have followed. Our worship on Sept. 11 will include an invitation for people to share with the congregation their stories of how 9/11 has effected them. We are also hoping to put together a memory book, and invite people to write a story, reflection, prayer or poem about their experience or observations. Perhaps you're more inclined to create some art, which would also be more than welcome. Materials for the memory book can be turned into Nancy Remsen or Alice Ling, either before or after Sept. 11. Speak with one of the Deacons or Alice for more information.


There will be a Remembrance Ceremony for the Richmond community on Sept. 11 at 1 pm, in front of the Round Church. This is being coordinated by the Richmond Fire Department, and will include the participation of many from within our community. Other opportunities to observe this tenth anniversary include an Interfaith Service of Peace 8 pm at Ohavi Zedek Synagogue. 188 North Prospect Street, Burlington (go to <http://www.ohavizedek.org> for more information) and a Choral Celebration at the Shelburne Farms Breeding Barn in Shelburne at 4 pm on the 11th (call 985-3819for more information).



September 2011



Richmond Congregational Church

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Please let the church office know your birthdays and anniversaries!</p> <p>Call 434-2053 or e-mail church@rccucc.org</p>				1 Soul Friends 3:30 pm Peace Vigil 5:30 pm	2 Friday Food Affair at 5	3
4 Annual Pilgrimage Service Round Church 10:00 am Communion Today AA - 7:00 pm	5 	6 Narcotics Anonymous Meeting 6:00 pm Trustees & Deacons Meetings 7:00 pm	7 Adult Choir 7:00 pm	8 Peace Vigil 5:30 pm Soul Friends 7:00 pm Mission Trip Meeting 7:00 pm	9 Friday Food Affair at 5	10
11 Sunday School Kick-Off 9/11 10th Anniversary Round Church - 1:00 pm AA - 7:00 pm	12 CPS Committee 7:00 pm	13 Narcotics Anonymous Meeting 6:00 pm Leadership Retreat 6 - 8:30pm	14 Adult Choir 7:00 pm	15 Peace Vigil 5:30 pm Book Discussion Group - 7:00pm NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	16 Friday Food Affair at 5	17
18 Adult Choir Sings today!! Governance Vote after Worship Youth Group First Meeting 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm AA - 7:00 pm	19 CPS Committee 7:00 pm	20 Narcotics Anonymous Meeting 6:00 pm	21	22 Peace Vigil 5:30 pm Rummage Sale Planning Meeting 6:00 pm	23 Friday Food Affair at 5	24
25 Adult Study Group @ Williston 5:00 pm See page 3 for details AA - 7:00 pm	26 CPS Committee 7:00 pm	27 Narcotics Anonymous Meeting 6:00 pm Endowment/Memorial Planning Meeting 6:30 pm Knitting Group 7:00 pm	28 Adult Choir 7:00 pm	29 Peace Vigil 5:30 pm	30 Friday Food Affair at 5	

September Schedule for Readers, Ushers and Greeters

Date Readers Ushers Greeters

The September RUG Schedule was not available at the time of printing; if you think you are on the schedule and have questions please contact Julie or the church office. As always if you know you will be attending church on a specific Sunday, give Julie a call and sign up!!!
Julie can be reached via email at eschholzj@gmavt.net or via phone at 434-4255.



REMEMBER

Sunday Worship moves to 10 am beginning with the Annual Round Church Pilgrimage on September 4th

HOW TO REACH THE PASTOR

Alice takes Mondays off, but will be in and out of the office Tuesday - Friday. Specific office hours are:
Tuesday, 1 - 4:30 pm; Thursday and Friday, 9 to noon.

Feel free to be in touch to set up a different time to meet if something else works better for you.

Alice can be reached at the church 434-2053 or by email: alice@rccucc.org. In case of emergency, you can reach her on her personal cell phone: 802-735-5098.



Rummage Sale

The fall Rummage Sale will happen October 14 (9:30 -4) and October 15 (9:30 – noon).
Donations can be dropped off beginning Monday, Oct. 10.

A team has stepped forward to get the process moving, and will need many others to volunteer to play a part in making this sale a success. Contact the church office to volunteer or come to the next planning meeting: Thursday, September 22 at 6 pm.



Youth Group begins September 18 at 5 pm at the church where we will share a meal and make dessert together as we discuss the events of the year including volunteering, participating in the church life and hopefully a mission trip. Most Sundays we

will meet from 5-7 pm to have dinner together, discuss upcoming and past activities, play a game, and read a Bible passage. It is a fun filled group and we look forward to a wonderful year!

Confirmation class members and last year's group and high school church members are most welcome to join together September 18! Any questions call Louise at 434 5354.
See you soon! Louise, Jenn and Cindy!

Stock gifts

RCC now has an account with Charles Schwab through which we can accept stock donations. Please contact Randy Sargent, Treasurer (434-5078) for more information.

The Christian Education Committee is looking for a Carpet remnant or clean rug that is at least 6' x 9'. If you can help please notify Wendy de Forest 434-4412 or Doug Wysocky-Johnson 434-5070.

MISSION: 1

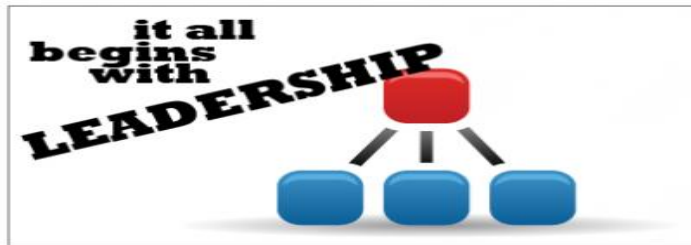
Between 11-1-11 and 11-11-11, the United Church of Christ will work as one united church on a shared mission for 11 powerful days to feed the hungry and confront food-related injustice.



- In 11 days, the United Church of Christ will collect more than **1 MILLION ITEMS OF HEALTHY FOOD** and other household items for local food banks and outreach services.
- In 11 days, the United Church of Christ will make an extra-special push to gather on-line contributions of more than **111,111 DOLLARS** for Neighbors in Need, offerings that will be shared for hunger action purposes with agencies of justice and compassion throughout the United States.
- In 11 days, the United Church of Christ will offer more than **11,111 LETTERS** to Congress, asking our government to reform U.S. foreign assistance in a way that more effectively benefits hungry and poor people worldwide, helping to provide a major final push to Bread for the World's 2011 "Offering of Letters".

For 11 days in November, our UCC motto and Jesus' prayer "that they may all be 1" will become a focused, concerted mission emphasis across the whole United Church of Christ to educate ourselves and one another about food-related policy issues through sermons, seminars and conversations; to advocate on behalf of hungry people at home and around the world; to raise money for hunger-action purposes; and to share bread - and tuna, and peanut butter, and vegetables, and cereal - with our neighbors in need.

Watch for ways in which RCC will participate in this effort, or be in touch with a member of the Mission Committee or Alice Ling with ideas.



There will be a **Leadership Retreat on Tuesday, September 13**. This will begin at 6 pm with a potluck meal and adjourn no later than 8:30. It's important occasionally to step back from the day to day functioning of the congregation to reflect on where we are and how we can most faithfully and effectively move forward. By September, Alice will have been here as Pastor for 9 months, and at the beginning of a new program year, will share with us what she has heard and observed as she's entered into this ministry. We will look together at how that compares with the Search Committee's articulation of RCC's mission and needs, as well as our collective sense of our call and direction. It would be good and helpful if we can agree on ways and places we are going to invest our energy and focus our attention for the coming year. The more clear and articulate we are about what we are trying to accomplish, the more likely we are to succeed.

For this conversation to be as productive as possible, we need as broad a cross section of the congregation as possible: those who are serving on committees, those who have in the past, as well as the fresh voices of those who have yet to be involved will all add to the quality of the conversation. The more the better!

Please put Sept. 13 on your calendar, and join us for this conversation. For more information, speak with Jon Milazzo or Alice Ling.



DELAYED

UPDATE: Church Cookbook

submitted by Terri Schultz

The cookbook will not be published for December 2011. We need more recipes to make the book work.

We have decided to continue collecting recipes so more people can be involved and publish in summer of 2012. We will keep the recipes people have already contributed for publishing at that time.



News from the Christian Education Committee

Sunday School will begin on September 11 with a registration/orientation session in the downstairs fellowship hall for all children in grades pre-school through seventh grade. Regular classes will begin the following Sunday. This year there will be three classes with the age division as follows: pre-school - second grade, third grade - fifth grade and sixth & seventh grade. There will not be a sixth/seventh grade class on the first Sunday of the month, giving these older children the chance to experience a monthly worship service.

We will once again be using the "Season of the Spirit" curriculum.

Thank you in advance to this year's teachers: Anne Peterson, Doug Wysocky-Johnson, Ernie Buford, Janine Plumer, Wendy de Forest, Margo Mutilainen, Karen Clark, Chris Carfaro, Robin Rabideau, Melissa Wolaver, Eileen McCoy, Susanne Parent, Cindy Preston and Amy Gifford.

A teacher schedule for the upcoming year has been provided to all teachers and is available for parents or other interested persons in the church office or on the Sunday school door. A nursery schedule for the upcoming year has also been provided to all nursery volunteers and is available in the church office.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this year's Sunday School program you may speak with any member of the C.E. Committee: Ernie Buford; Wendy de Forest; Janine Plumer or Doug Wysocky-Johnson.

Fair Trade Products

submitted by JoEllen Swaine

Just a reminder: RCC continues to partner with Equal Exchange through the UCC Coffee Project, so when you need coffee, tea, cocoa, chocolate bars, etc., please consider ordering them at church from Equal Exchange. They guarantee their farmer partners a fair and stable price for their products as well as a long-term relationship. The small-scale farmers they work with are organized into co-ops that are owned and run by the farmers themselves, using sustainable farming practices and when we choose fair trade products, we are helping to keep small farming communities alive and their rural cultures strong. Also with your support, we are able to provide the coffee & tea that the Hospitality Committee serves at our coffee hours. So, please take a few minutes to check out the display in the parlor - there are a few items for sale, however there are many other items available on their product list and you will find that the prices are much lower than in the grocery stores.

Knitting/Crocheting Group

submitted by JoEllen Swaine

As summer slowly turns to fall, it's a good time to dust off those knitting needles and take up that project that was abandoned last spring. It's also a good time to learn a new skill or start a new project. So, whether you are an experienced knitter/crocheter, or if you forgot how or if you would like to learn, please join us at the church for our next get-together on Tuesday, September 27 at 7:00. Many of the members continue to knit prayer shawls (which are pretty easy), but feel free to bring along any project you'd like to work on. And, if you're a beginner and don't know where to start, feel free to contact me for ideas or directions. We hope you will be able to join us on the 27th for a fun and relaxing evening of fellowship and creativity. Please contact JoEllen Swaine 434-3533 or jeswaine@comcast.net with questions.

RICHMOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual
January through July 2011

	<u>Jan - Jul 11</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>\$ Over Budget</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>	
Ordinary Income/Expense					
Income					
4100 · Pledge & Contribution Income	\$ 64,930	\$ 54,900	\$ 10,030	118%	Ahead of budget.
4114 · 2011 Challenge (\$10,000)	6,737	0	6,737	100%	Not budgeted. Challenge met.
4210 · Building Use Income	9,268	8,055	1,213	115%	BCS only budgeted for 6 mos.
4300 · Sales & Suppers	3,429	3,750	-321	91%	Slightly behind.
4400 · Investment Income	3,000	4,355	-1,355	69%	Timing - Ware fund checks.
4800 · Other Budgeted Income	133	10	123	1,330%	On budget.
Total Income	87,497	71,070	16,427	123%	
<i>Without Challenge</i>	<i>80,760</i>	<i>71,070</i>	<i>9,690</i>	<i>114%</i>	
Expense					
5500 · Pastor's Compensation	52,994	52,226	768	101%	Benefits underbudgeted.
5550 · Pastor Expenses	979	1,475	-496	66%	Timing.
5550 · Pastor Transition expenses	0	4,300	-4,300	0%	Timing.
6000 · Church Property	23,075	22,856	219	101%	On budget.
6001 · Capital Projects	2,000	4,000	-2,000	50%	Timing - budgeted for later.
7000 · Life of Church	6,975	7,009	-34	100%	On budget.
7700 · Administration	3,347	2,900	447	115%	Office items for new pastor.
7750 · Secretary Compensation	8,585	8,588	-3	100%	On budget.
7762 · Vermont Conference Delegates	381	150	231	254%	More delegates than last year.
7770 · Stewardship Committee	155	0	155	100%	Follow up campaign.
7790 · Miscellaneous Expenses	240	56	184	429%	Slightly over budget.
8000 · Christian Outreach	5,609	5,568	41	101%	On budget.
8500 · Christian Concern Benevolences	600	600	0	100%	On budget.
Total Expense	104,940	109,728	-4,788	96%	<i>Annual budgeted loss</i>
Net Ordinary Income	\$ (17,443)	\$(38,658)	\$ 21,215	55%	\$ (45,000)

	<u>07/31/11</u>	<u>07/31/10</u>
YTD Contributions without challenge	\$ 64,930	\$ 52,972
Annual budget/total	105,100	101,667
	<u>61.8%</u>	<u>52.1%</u>
Capital Fund:		
Old Cornerstone Loan	\$ -	\$ 13,000
Member Loans	27,000	27,000
	\$ 27,000	\$ 40,000

General Fund Cash Balances:

07/31/11	\$39,472
07/31/10	\$45,459

Endowment Fund Balance:

07/31/11	\$17,922
07/31/10	\$12,901

Church Membership to Vote on Governance Proposal September 18

Please plan on staying after the Church service on September 18 to vote on whether to adopt the governance proposal.

Background

At the February 2009 annual meeting the membership adopted a resolution to form a study committee with a charge containing these elements:

- To recommend a more effective organizational structure for the church size that embodies the following
 - Fewer boards and committees
 - Broader, more encompassing responsibilities
 - Clear sense of committed leadership
 - A vision enabling both program maintenance and ministry

The governance committee (consisting of Catherine Burns, Jerry Carpenter, Jon Milazzo, Kirk Peterson & Dave Thomas along with Ex Officio Len Rowell) developed their proposal which was then shared with all the existing committees. Changes to the proposal were made as a result of inputs from these meetings. The proposal was then put on the shelf in December of 2009 awaiting a settled pastor. The January 2010 newsletter included a high level summary of the proposal. With Pastor Alice Ling, this past spring we conducted another cycle of reviews and changes.

The Proposal

With the support of Alice and the Cabinet, we are now ready for the membership to take action on the proposal on September 18.

We believe the proposal fulfils these needs:

- A Council to create central leadership
- A Council to focus on vision, continuous needs evaluation & lay leadership development
- An organization suitable for a small church that allows growth
- An improved structure for communication among groups
- A structure to improve efficiency of meetings
- An alignment of interests & skills to specific tasks
- An organizational structure which is easier to understand

Beginning August 28, a detailed packet of information will be available at the church and on the church website www.rccucc.org

If adopted, the nominating committee will then have a framework as they prepare to fill the 2012 slots. The transition can begin as early as this fall and will certainly continue throughout 2012. A more thorough discussion of the transition will take place at the 2012 annual meeting including by-law changes.

If you have any questions you would like addressed before September 18th, please forward them to any member of the committee, Pastor, or myself (Dave Thomas – dthomas@gmavt.net or 434 – 3654)

A summary overview of the proposal follows:

Proposed Organizational Changes at RCC

Reasons for Change:

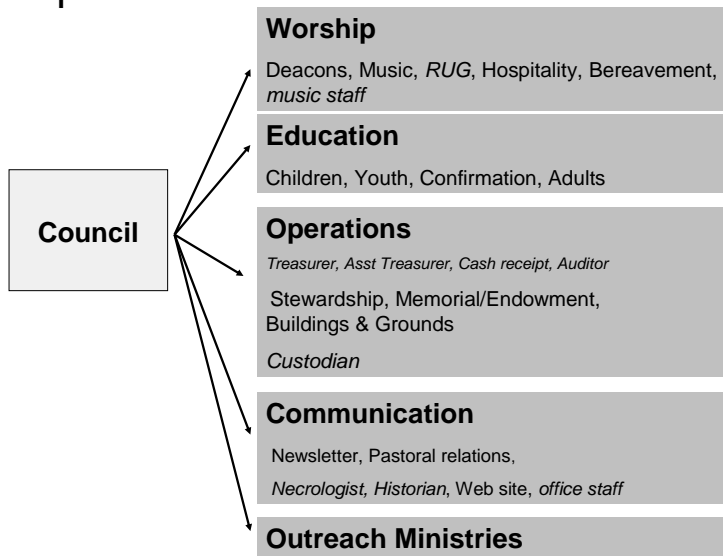
- Reduce workload of committee members
- Organize committees to be more effective
- Improve communications
- Focus leadership on strategic goals

Proposed Changes

- Committees to be organized into larger Groups for larger goals
 - Group meetings may be a few times/year to coordinate overall goals
 - Smaller teams within group meet to focus on specific tasks
- Cabinet is replaced by Council
 - Focus on longer term issues
 - Council members liaison with group leadership

continued on next page.....

Proposed Structure for Richmond CC



Responsibilities Summary

Council:

- Personnel review – adopt salary recommendations
- Evaluate, develop, & implement new outreach missions
- Prepare and run all church-wide meetings
- Provide vision and strategic direction leadership
- Develop & train lay spiritual leadership
- Liaison to operating groups & outreach ministries, helping solve issues only as required
- Liaisons ensure groups are in sync with church calendar
- Evaluate who we are, why are we here, & how can we do better
- Serve as board of directors
- Invite others to meetings as needed

Core Groups:

- Individual responsibilities remain the same
- Tasks grouped around common interests
- Goal over time for each group:
 - Improved communication
 - More effective outcomes
 - Meld into single entity requiring less people and fewer meetings
 - Fewer contact points for the Pastor

Implementation and Transition

- Church wide meeting to communicate & act on concept: September 18
- Transition/implementation team to be appointed by Oct 11, 2011
- Core Teams begin defining their internal organization – November 2011
- Nominations committee works with each core group to define needs and assist in recruitment – November to January
- By-Law changes to be developed & presented at Feb 13, 2012 annual meeting
- Final Transition:
 - How do we actually implement changes?
 - This is a framework, not a dictate
 - Training will be required
- Post Transition:
 - How do we adapt in the future?
 - Council will provide checks

Reflections on Annual Meeting June 2011 *submitted by Gail Workman*

The scripture for this year’s annual meeting came from Jeremiah 29, copied here for your convenience. Here Jeremiah speaks to the Israelites in captivity in Babylon and gives them God’s promise to return them to their homeland.

A Letter to the Exiles

¹ This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

¹⁰ This is what the LORD says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back from captivity. ¹⁵ I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.” ¹⁶ For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

It was during the seminar on Faith Practices with Pam Lucas that this scripture changed the way I had been thinking about my life. First, we read the scripture. Then we read it again with the instruction to see what word stood out. My word was “seek”. Another chose the word “exile.” After a few minutes discussing the words we had chosen, Pam had us read the scripture a third time to see what it said to us. That’s when I realized that my thinking about Vermont and all of the wonderful things Vermont is to me has been upside down. I am originally from New Jersey, but Vermont has been my home for most of the last 29 years. I raised my children here, attended church, directed choirs, and made friends with some of the best people I have ever known. In sort, I’ve lived here. I had considered the 2½ years I spent in Virginia to be my exile years, but now I think differently. Now I realize that my time in Vermont has been my exile from New Jersey.

Last year I reconnected with a friend, Ron, from High School whom I had dated briefly just after graduation. After several months of online chat and phone calls, we started to see each other, not an easy task when you live nearly 400 miles apart. We have fallen in love and have decided we want to be together and eventually get married. To that end, I will be thinning out my possessions, selling my house and moving from this land of exile back to my home state of New Jersey.

This transition will not be easy, as testified by the tears streaming down my face as I write this. While I look forward to my future with Ron, I am leaving this place I love dearly, my friends, family and my church. My connections to God and the support of God’s people both at Mallett’s Bay and, for the last 6 years, here at RCC have been what have kept me strong and able to prosper here in Vermont. I will miss you all.



As I sit here, putting together my final Messenger, I find myself acting a bit like a child fighting between not wanting to do it and wanting it to just be over! The Messenger was always one of my favorite responsibilities, and now I am seeing, one of the many things that I am going to miss. My new job came to me unexpectedly, I wasn’t looking to make a move to full-time somewhere else, it just appeared. And a decision was before me, the answer: it’s time for change. When I came to RCC, I thought that it would be the perfect fit for my family. And it has been. What I never expected was what I have learned about myself, and the many other gifts I would receive. The most important a renewed faith. I have spent the past three years reading the weekly scripture and the sermons of Len, Lee and Alice. I have asked questions when I didn’t understand, and found some of the answers I didn’t know I was looking for. It is amazing what you find when you do not know you are looking for it. I have found in this church a sense of community, compassion, strength, and an ability to face changes and become stronger. I will take that ability with me as I face this major change in my life. I will miss RCC very much, and mostly all of you. Thank you!



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Don't forget, you can view The Messenger online at: <http://www.rccucc.org/Newsletter.pdf>



Summer Supper News 2011

Many thanks to all cooks, diners, helpers and supporters of the summer suppers.
We could not succeed without YOU!

This summer was NOT our most profitable and we ask the question WHY? Our goal is to maximize our efforts, bring new people together and make money for our operating budget. The reality is our numbers are down 27% from last year, this is significant! The advertising has been stepped up to include more publications and the Front Porch Forum. The 'church' has talked about a Facebook page and utilizing this newer technology would get the word out to additional numbers of people.

I am asking for your ideas and input-what can we do that would increase our participation?

Maybe we need new menus; I am completely open to change and looking forward to hearing from YOU! We also have a need for two new sign boards to advertise the suppers. These are the double sided sandwich boards that are put out at the four corners the day of the supper. We have two that are not very attractive, heavy and falling apart. We could purchase new sandwich boards or maybe one of you could volunteer to make us new sandwich boards?? I am asking for help with this task and we don't need them until next June. I am looking forward to hearing your thoughts.

Thank You - Cindy Preston 434-2789 or snipe@gmavt.net