

# Connecting Hope

December 2017

## Member Churches

### Barre Evangelical Free Church

17 South Main Street, Barre, VT 05641  
802 476-5344 / [www.befcv.org](http://www.befcv.org)  
Services Sunday 8:00 and 10:45 am

### Christ Community Alliance Church

43 Berlin Street, Barre, VT 05641  
802 476-3221 / [www.christcommunity.org](http://www.christcommunity.org)  
Services Sunday 10:30 am, Thurs. 6:30 pm  
Meets in Orange, VT

### Crossroads Christian Church

115 Fasset Rd, E. Montpelier, VT 05651  
802 476-4843 / [www.crossroadschurchvt.org](http://www.crossroadschurchvt.org)  
Services Sunday 9:30 am

### East Barre Congregational Church

2 Church Street, East Barre, VT 05649  
(802) 476-6454 / [www.eastbarrechurch.org](http://www.eastbarrechurch.org)  
Services Sunday 10:30 am, Wednesday 5:30

### Enough Ministries

84 Summer Street, Barre, VT 05641  
Facebook: [@enoughministriesbarre](https://www.facebook.com/enoughministriesbarre)  
Services Sunday 10:00 am

### Faith Community Church

30 Jones Brothers Way, Barre, VT 05641  
(802) 476-8288 / [www.fccbarre.com](http://www.fccbarre.com)  
Services Sunday 10:00 am

### First Baptist Church

24 Washington Street, Barre, VT 05641  
(802) 479-2872 / [www.fbcbarre.com](http://www.fbcbarre.com)  
Services Sunday 10:00 am

### New Life Assembly

304 Hill Street, Barre, VT 05641  
(802) 479-9867 / [www.newlifeassemblyvt.org](http://www.newlifeassemblyvt.org)  
Services Sunday 10:00 am, Wednesday 6:30

### Washington Baptist Church

2973 VT Rte 110, Washington, VT 05675  
802 883-5509 / [www.washingtonbaptistchurch.net](http://www.washingtonbaptistchurch.net)  
Services Sunday 10:00 am, Wednesday 5:30

## 2017 Annual Event and Winter Warm-up

Since 2012, Connecting Hope has hosted the Annual Event each fall to provide families and individuals with opportunity to receive great resources, free groceries, free winter clothing and a winter vehicle check-up. This year, more than 80 volunteers helped out as over 160 households came from Barre, East Barre, Graniteville, Washington, Orange, Berlin, and Williamstown to attend the Annual Event. Representatives from community resources and ministries offered information relating to education, housing, child care, addiction recovery, family counseling, and spiritual guidance. Aldrich Library and The Light Radio Network joined the Annual Event for the first time this year. The Winter Warm-up was hosted by Barre Evangelical Free Church offering winter outerwear and warm clothing to the attendees. Coats were collected by Community National Bank and Kinney Drugs and many more were given by individuals. Over 200 bags of groceries were sent home with attendees. The bags were filled with dry goods such as cereal, canned fruits and vegetables, peanut butter, and pasta. Additionally, fresh produce like carrots, onions, beets, potatoes, cabbage and squash were available. Groceries were donated by Enough Ministries, individuals and Connecting Hope. Fresh squash and other produce was contributed by a local farmer and Hannaford Supermarket.



Those who drove to the Event were given opportunity to have their vehicles checked for winter preparedness. The vehicle maintenance volunteers topped off fluids and checked tires and brakes. They informed guests of issues that needed to be addressed as well. Connecting Hope is very grateful to all the volunteers and organizations that put in well over 1000 hours to make the Annual Event a success again this year. Each year, Connecting Hope looks for more organizations to join us in providing resources for families and individuals from the Barre Area.

*Want to be part of 2018 Annual Event and Winter Warm-Up? Send us an email. [connectinghopevt@gmail.com](mailto:connectinghopevt@gmail.com)*

# *What it means to be a Member Church of Connecting Hope*

By Rosaire Bisson

Christ Community Alliance Church

Prior to Connecting Hope, we at Christ Community Alliance Church, were, to a great extent, unaware of many of the immediate needs of our community. We mostly functioned alone, feeling overwhelmed by the needs. We attempted to address them. We were not clear what real benefit the recipient was receiving. Often, the unintended consequence was greater dependency, as the issues grew more intractable. Viewing these unresolved conditions, we struggled against fatigue and callous attitude.

While we experienced these issues, our brothers and sisters in other bodies felt much the same. One thing that I heard was how some would go from one body to another with the same complaints. In many ways, God's Church in Central Vermont was isolated from one another and often not aware or able to address these needs, the most profound being the lack of a relationship with Jesus Christ.

A key incident that forced us to rethink how we served our community occurred in 2011. While we were handing out food, I saw a few take much while many neighbors had little. One thing stood out, a man in an expensive truck loaded up his truck and took off. As we debriefed from this effort, we arrived at several conclusions that there is a need for: one a more equitable distribution of the food; two, clothes; and three, a way to utilize community services to assist our friends. It was clear that no single local body could do this alone, thus, Connecting Hope was born.

We are now addressing these needs year-round through the Hopeline and Relational Ministry. We seek to move a person through their perceived need to progressively deeper levels, to their most profound need, a relationship with Jesus Christ. Because of Connecting Hope, the member churches are now working closer together, more effectively serving others in their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. The fact that we are working together brings us closer to each other and our Lord. Indeed, this is an answer to our Savior's prayer, "that they be one."

## ***A Settled Heart***



Pastor Gordon Wells  
New Life Assembly

At this time of year with Thanksgiving behind us and Christmas near, I find myself contemplating Paul's statement in Philippians 4:11b – 13.

*11b for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*

*12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.*

*13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.*

Paul would not be able to say that unless he had found what he had previously stated in verses 4-7 to be true.

*4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*

*5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.*

*6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

*7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

That is the basis of Paul's ability to have a positive attitude no matter his circumstances. He had experienced this first hand and had found God's peace to be beyond his greatest expectations. God's peace settles the heart in whatever life dishes out – "good or not so good". And really that comes down to perspective which is influenced by knowing God in this intimate way and having genuine, quality fellowship with Him.

So as you approach this time of year or for that matter life in general, I pray you will find the same reality Paul did.



## From the Director...

Merry Christmas from my family to yours. I am delighted to join Connecting Hope as Executive Director. My husband Brian and I are originally from Missouri, but we are not strangers to Vermont. From 2000 – 2005, my family lived in northern Vermont serving with a church plant in Newport and, later, ministry River of Life Camp near Irasburg. In late 2005, the Lord led us back to Missouri to be with our families. For 12 years, we served near Kansas City, Springfield and Joplin. During this time, Brian and I yearned to return to Vermont. It was a long wait, but in late 2016, the Lord opened the door for us to make our way east again. We sold our home in May 2017, packed a U-Haul and made the three-day trip. We worked at Rumney Bible Conference in New Hampshire for five months trusting the Lord to provide a permanent ministry at the end of the camp and retreat season. Little did we know that during this time, the Lord was connecting us with people who would be walking with us in ministry just a few months later. One of those dear people introduced me to Connecting Hope and the need for an Executive Director. Over the next few days, I researched Connecting Hope and knew I wanted to be part of the ministry. I was ecstatic when I was offered the position. My desire is to be a friend, mentor, and servant in Christ to Connecting Hope's clients, volunteers, mission teams, member churches, and participating organizations. I have been working with Connecting Hope for nearly three months and I have enjoyed every aspect including the Annual Event, Wild Game Dinner, meeting our volunteers, visiting with our member churches and assisting people through the Hopeline. I am looking forward to the new year ahead and the many opportunities it holds to share the love of our Savior through Connecting Hope.



*Have a very Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year!*  
Susan South, Executive Director

## 2017 Wild Game Dinner



Dan Witt

The first annual Wild Game Dinner hosted by Connecting Hope was held at the American Legion in Barre on December 9th. Over 125 men and women attended the event.

Dan Witt was the guest speaker. Dan and his brother Mark were featured in the December 2011/January 2012 issue of *Field and Stream*. They have traveled speaking throughout much of the United States and Canada. When Dan was 14 years old, his father was tragically killed in a hunting accident. In the years following, the brothers struggled with forgiveness and grief. In time, they were able to forgive the man who accidentally shot their father and to find personal healing. Dan and Mark are now able to share their personal journey at engagements such as Wild Game dinners, men's conferences, prisons, school and church gatherings.

As they tell the story of their relationship with their father, his death and the years following, the brothers share their faith and invite others to find faith and healing in Jesus Christ. For more about Dan and Mark, go to [www.followingourfather.com](http://www.followingourfather.com).

At the Connecting Hope Wild Game Dinner, there were 22 professions of faith (plus 3 at the men's breakfast); 11 people recommitted their life to Christ; and 6 more want information about receiving Christ!

Special thanks goes out our volunteers who made the Wild Game Dinner a feast for the body and soul. Dan Molind of Enough Ministries coordinated the event. Cathy Molind worked many hours to prepare a mouthwatering menu. Teriyaki glazed venison meatballs, deep fried wild turkey, duck, venison stew, venison spaghetti and meatballs, and venison chili were served to the delight to the event guests. Other volunteers assisted with decorations and food service. Thanks to all who have lifted the event in prayer as well.





# The Joys of Volunteering

By Barb McMahon

Barre Evangelical Free Church

Holiday time is here again, and our thoughts turn to helping our neighbors and giving of ourselves by participating in community service. There is no better time to get involved and experience the joys of serving others. We, here at Connecting Hope, offer many diverse opportunities throughout the year for people seeking to volunteer and serve others. It requires little if any training, introduces us to kind, friendly folks, and provides us a great sense of accomplishment at the end of the project.

This November, we held our Connecting Hope Annual Event and Winter Warm Up free winter clothing give-a-way. We needed volunteers to help set up tables and chairs, carry in the donated and purchased food items, put nutritious food packages together, collect the warm winter clothing, sort the clothing items, hang the items by size and organize the types of donations (coats, gloves, mittens, hats, boots, jackets and blankets}. For those unable to carry boxes or walk up and down stairs, there was an opportunity to provide food for the volunteers and to cook the hot dog luncheon freely provided to the community.

The best part of volunteering is the warm feeling you get meeting new people, seeing folks receive the services



## Making Christmas Merry

This year, Connecting Hope has had the pleasure of coordinating gifts for families in need. Thirteen families have been assisted with Christmas shopping by the contributions of generous sponsors. As families call the Hopeline, Connecting Hope takes their information, their needs and their wants for Christmas. The families being assisted this year have many different stories. One mom is recently single and struggling to make ends meet. In another family, a loved one passed away just three months ago. A single dad is trying to secure care for his children so that he can obtain work. A mom and her three children had been homeless, living in a tent, for six months and finally have secured housing. A young woman is recently out of prison and working hard to stay clean and find a job. A dear mom has severe health issues and requires major heart surgery. She fears she will not be able to care for her very young children. Others are trying to pay bills and not face eviction.

Christmas gifts are a very special way to minister to families in need. Connecting Hope uses this ministry to embrace families that may feel hopeless and lost in the struggle of making ends meet. As a parent, I know the helpless feeling as Christmas approaches while I have nothing to place under the tree for my children. I know the despair of seeing the disappointment on my children's faces. That's why this ministry is particularly special to me as director of Connecting Hope. I pray that the gifts that are given bring hope and joy to each home this Christmas. And, that with these gifts, each family is drawn closer to God and His great love for them. Thank you to all our donors. May you be richly blessed with an overflowing measure of the love that you have shared this year.



### Connecting Hope

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