



## UUCB Recovery Team Report December 7, 2011

The Recovery Team met December 7 for our final meeting at the McLellan Center of Bowdoin College. We met jointly with the Building Task Force and with our architects.

Recovery of items to be saved from the church has started. For those who have not heard, stained glass windows are being removed and crated. We are saving the bell and weathervane, the sign over the door, the fence, the peace pole and wayside pulpit, the compost bin and rain barrels, and the Lexan window coverings. Many smaller items have already been taken and stored at Pennell.

Last Saturday we held a brief ceremony on the front steps to say goodbye to our building. Sylvia spoke briefly and movingly about our loss and our vow to come back. The full text is attached, but here are her ending thoughts:

*Today we gather to bless this house, to express our gratitude for its physical, emotional, and spiritual shelter, and to bid goodbye. We say goodbye knowing we follow the example of courage and determination of our forebears who built their jewel of a meeting house here on this corner after their own church had burned. We say goodbye knowing we follow in their footsteps, confident that we will rebuild a meeting house here worthy of the sacrifices they made.*

*We say goodbye, grieving for what has been lost and vowing to hold memories and dreams in our hearts until the day we return. We say goodbye, with gratitude that our lives have been touched here, our minds have been opened and filled here, and our hearts have been nurtured and filled here.*

*For those things and for so much more, we offer a deep bow of thanks and a vow to return again.*

The Building Task force is ready to move on and to bring to the congregation a “real building” to look at, based on the floor plan we have already approved. They will use the same e-mail that we have used for comments: [uucbrecovery@gmail.com](mailto:uucbrecovery@gmail.com).

You can access our weekly reports, our covenant and our charge on the Recovery Team web page on our UUCB web site. The link is: <http://www.uubrunswick.org/fire-recovery-team.aspx>. A page will be created for the Building Task Force as well.

Thank you all for your active involvement with the recovery process. As Sylvia hinted in her sermon last week on plumbing, wiring and Exodus, we have moved from our time of loss through our metaphoric “wandering in the desert” phase and are now ready to come out of the desert and make our new home.

**Leave-Taking Ceremony**  
**December 3, 2011**

Out of wood and brick, out of imagination and sacrifice, out of the ashes of their burned meeting house, our forebears built this church home. With the work of their hands, the commitment and courage of their hearts, and the creativity of their minds, our forebears crafted a sacred space where free religious thought prevailed and love guided the generations.

This house of worship has given us a center where hearts could meet: meeting one another over lifetimes and across the generations; meeting one another in warmth and joy and openness; meeting one another in times of joy and sorrow; meeting one another in times of success and failure; meeting one another in courage and love; meeting one another in thick times and thin; meeting one another in times of war and peace.

This house has been cradle to our growing and our loving. This building has been a center of trust and passion, of love and laughter, of misunderstanding leading to reconciliation and forgiveness, a place of soaring song and quiet contemplation. These walls have known the silence of the generations of hearts who have come here to search inward for the small sparks of hope that might otherwise have been snuffed out in the noise of the world. These rafters have heard the voices of children, preachers, and singers, and witnessed tears and smiles of all. On these floors have trod the footsteps of dancers and musicians, sextons and committee members, visitors and long-time parishioners, and young and old across seven or more generations.

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*~Rev. Sylvia Stocker~*