



Groundcover



PERIODIC NEWSLETTER OF A NEW COMMON GROUND Vol. 1 Issue 3

PEOPLE OF THE BOOK: THREE POWERFUL FAITH TRADITIONS



In early December we explored the concept of “People of the Book.” Christians, Muslims and Jews are called this is because all three are monotheistic faiths, with shared prophetic histories in their Sacred Writings. We played a TRUE/FALSE game with each other that helped us understand the feast of Chanukah, a Miracle of Light. We learned that a little spinning top with four sides, called a dreidel, was used by persecuted people studying their sacred scripture in secret caves or in wooded areas. If soldiers came along, the people would pretend they were playing this common European “gambling game” and the letters on the four sides stood for take all, put in, half, or nothing. Over time, the Hebrew letters were understood to stand for the beginning of the words, “a great miracle happened here,” which was the miracle of the oil. Pure oil was needed to rededicate the Temple in Jerusalem after it had been desecrated by Greek occupiers, but there was only enough oil found to light the sacred lampstand for one day. Yet it lasted for eight days, long enough to press more pure olive oil for Temple Service. Who doesn’t love light in the darkest of times? Just look at ALL the lights of December!



MISSION STATEMENT

A New Common Ground is a farm-to-table dinner community where people make spiritual connections together. It is a regional interfaith community welcoming all traditions. Rooted in universal principles of faith and action, it provides an environment of trust and care. Its programs offer education and nurture for the human spirit and enlarge awareness of sustainable earth practices. As a center for soul-care and earth-care it promotes the constant hope of peace through justice and is a 21st century ministry of Emmanuel UCC.



Our periodic newsletter is called *Groundcover* in honor of sustainable spiritual and earth care practices. Our programs cover a lot of ground—in ethics, belief systems, issues of our days and tasks we are called to perform—within our abilities and resources, individually and as a group.

MAKERS' SESSIONS



At the end of the year we began work on a project that has a lot of potential to reflect our vision and enhance our space. Every sort of creativity is being employed: cutting & pasting; sewing & painting; computer graphics & stencil production; braiding & drilling & measuring. While making we find further common ground in things we share and value dearly.

First Peoples

In November we explored some of the prayers of Indigenous Americans, in honor of National Native American Heritage Month, a federal designation. Below is one of our favorites.



Great Spirit Prayer

O Great Spirit, Whose voice I hear in the winds, and whose breath gives life to all the world, hear me. I am small and weak. I need your strength and wisdom. Let me walk in beauty and make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset. Make my hands respect the things you have made and my ears sharp to hear your voice. Make me wise so that I may understand the things you have taught my people. ***Let me learn the lesson you have hidden in every leaf and rock.*** I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother, but to fight my greatest enemy—myself. Make me always ready to come to you with clean hands and straight eyes. So when life fades, as the fading sunset, my Spirit may come to you without shame.

(Translated by Lakota Sioux Chief Yellow Lark in 1887)

Wednesday Evening Gatherings

in Winter at 5:30 PM

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A: Just Free Will Offerings!