

A NEW THING TASK FORCE
Great Things Happening in the NH Conference

South Church Listening Project

The South Church Listening Project came as the convergence of 3 major factors: The mean-spiritedness of the last election, a time in the church's life when they needed to discern where God was calling them, and Rev. Jed Rardin's experience with an Interfaith Dialog Group and learning from Helen Fitzgerald about the Compassionate Listening Project.

The Listening Project hopes to offer a model to seek the image of God in "the other," to be patient enough to let our differences become an opportunity to appreciate one another (instead of dividing us), and to give us the opportunity to hear our human stories so that hearts can be changed; to move from the head to the heart in our interactions.

With the able help of Counselor Helen Fitzgerald and Church Consultant Nancy Brown, 2 six hour training sessions were held to help people learn how to both listen and present ourselves without compromise. This is a multi-year project, now in its 2nd year. This year they will have "Second-Sunday Sessions" with questions to ponder and the opportunity to use the skills learned. They will look for further opportunity to employ the skills around questions that are looming. And they will have shorter training sessions for those who become interested.

Rev. Rardin sees this effort as a continuing and deepening of the Open and Affirming commitment the church has made. South Church's commitment to listening is not new but the Listening Project aims to give them the new tools needed to be a prophetic church which truly has room for all.

If you would like more information to see if this is something your church might do, please contact any of the South Church Listening Project Team (Rev. Jed Rardin revjared@gmail.com, Rev. Carlos Jahola-Straight revmsgcarlos@gmail.com, Ms. Nancy Brown wcbnpb@comcast.net, or Ms. Helen Fitzgerald helenjoyce@comcast.net).