

Cross Currents

Newsletter of the Haydenville Congregational Church
June 2011 *Open Hearts & Open Minds & Open Doors*

FROM THE PASTOR

I have visited many holy places in my almost 60 years. I have been to many of the sacred sites of the Holy Land in Israel, worshiped in the Washington National Cathedral, prayed in Chartres Cathedral in France, stood before the Acropolis in Athens and the grand basilica in Rome. I have visited many holy places in my time. But I have come to feel that one of the very holiest of holy places is our modest Sanctuary in the Haydenville Congregational Church.

Every week, when I am in and out of the Church for meetings and appointments, I always go into the Sanctuary, even for a moment, and I stand in front of the altar or I sit in my chair behind the pulpit. Even if it is for literally one minute. I just stand in the aisle or sit in my chair and I stare out at the pews. And when I pause and do that, I can almost HEAR you buzzing around, laughing, sneezing, greeting, chattering away like you do before worship each Sunday. And I can almost SEE you, waving to each other, getting up and going a few pews forward or back to give someone a hug, smiling when someone you love walks through the door.

Even when you are not in the pews, I can almost hear and see you. The Sanctuary feels holy to me because your spirits hover over the pews where you usually sit when you are not there. It is like the place is full, even when it is empty.

I will miss you during the month of July when our Church is closed. I will miss how you light up when you enter the Sanctuary and dart over to hug someone you have not seen for one week as if it has been ten years. I will miss how you laugh when I try to make a joke in the Welcome

and the joke is not that funny but you feel sorry for me and laugh anyway. I will miss how you cry during sermons that touch your heart, or maybe you are just tired and lonely and the sermon time is a good excuse to weep. I will miss how you have never met a cause or a charity you didn't like—no matter what we are raising money for or what we need helping hands to accomplish. You always take out your wallets, raise your hands, and volunteer your time.

During our time apart in July, I will miss you but I know I will hear and see you even when we are not together. I will hear your laughter and see your tears, I will hear your questions and see your expressions, I will hear your whispers and see your embraces.



Know that when we are apart, I will be carrying you with me. I will continue to pray for you. I will feel your closeness and I will be warmed and strengthened by your presence.

July will both drag along and whizz by. And I know I will be delighted to see your radiant faces in your pews on August 7th when we gather for worship again. There you will be—waving, hugging, talking too loudly, laughing, tearing up—being the wild and wonderful band of believers you are.

I have been in many holy places in my life, but our Church Sanctuary is just about the holiest I have ever known. For you are there...with all your hopes and prayers, questions and fears, dreams and sorrows. You are there. And the essence of you lingers when you leave.

I will carry the essence of you with me when we are apart. And I will pray for you. And I know you will be praying for me and for each other.

Blessings, my beloved brothers and sisters,

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

By Pat Bratton

Submitted by Ann Loomis

The purpose of life is different than the "meaning of life." Each one gives his own meaning to his life. What I am dealing with is the purpose of life. I am able to do this because I have the temerity to speak for God. I do not interpret Revelation, or explain the Gospels. I do not speak in tongues or seek a following in the name of God. I simply witness what I know to be God's purpose.

Life is not a gift; it is a pain. It is in fact a test. You will not be given enough time to finish it. You cannot get all the answers right. You cannot be excused to go to the bathroom. It starts the day that you are born and ends all too soon. You are given only one pencil with which to take this test. It is the same pencil given to each one a birth. It is the birthright of all and denied to most. The name of the pencil is Freewill. Some call her liberty, others call her freedom, but she is in fact Freewill. This is God's name for her and she is very seductive.

It gets worse. The test is all essay. Your entire life will be written with this pencil. It is so important that you be allowed to write anything that you want, that God will allow you to hurt, maim, and even kill others who are taking the test. It is more important to Him that you be allowed your freewill than it is to protect others with his power and might. He does this in hopes that you will choose to love and serve Him, but you are free to write anything that you choose.

Others, taking the test will protect themselves from you if you violate their rights to their life and freewill. They will collectively organize their individual rights to protect themselves or punish you if you violate their rights. But God will not intervene. More than anything else, he wants to see what you write without being forced to do good or to do evil. Only if you have been left free to choose, can your life be graded. If you have been forced to do good then you have written nothing of your own. If you have been forced to do evil, then likewise, you have written nothing of your own. You have in fact been denied your opportunity to take the test. Woe to the man that does this to you.

There is good news. God grades on a curve. There is even better news. God knows that you are incapable of passing the test. He just wants you to try with all your body and soul. Spelling and punctuation count for nothing. Some will do better than others. Not all have the same opportunities. All do, however, have the same responsibilities. Take the test. Don't copy someone else's work, and most of all, never take anyone else's pencil.

You cannot earn a place with God. Your place with him has been bought and paid for. Don't try and understand why, just accept it as love beyond understanding. Getting older, marrying, raising a family, these things will all help to focus attention off of yourself and on to others that you love. This is good practice for moving on to loving everyone. What you write near the end of the test will count more than what you have written at the beginning. But most importantly, don't lose your pencil.

**Live your beliefs
and you can turn the world around.**

Henry David Thoreau, 19th century

DEDICATE A PEW HYMNAL TODAY!

Dear friends,

As our church has grown so has our need for pew hymnals! We would like to offer you the opportunity to help us make this purchase, and dedicate your gift to someone who is special to you.

If you would like to participate, please fill out the form below and return it to the church. The cost is \$18.00 per hymnal, and when you make your gift, a bookplate will be placed in the front cover of one of our new books.

Please choose the wording you would like:

This gift is given in **HONOR** of _____
From _____

OR

This gift is given in **MEMORY** of _____
From _____

If you would like to dedicate more than one hymnal, please use the back of the form for your requests.

This is a wonderful way to remember or honor someone special to you, and we appreciate your contributions to help defray the cost of this project.

Thank you for your generosity,

Diane Scott
Music Director

NEWS BY THE NUMBERS:

5 remarkable young people were confirmed in our Church on May 22: Will Hathaway, Ileana Fournier, Reilly McQueston, Gabe Gill and Jonathan Roberge!

Almost 80 people from our Church marched together in the Northampton Gay Pride March in May;

\$1200 collected in April for One Great Hour of Sharing;

\$1428 raised in the Annual Cookie Walk in April (good job Ladies Aid!!!);

\$300 raised on Gay Day in May for the students in the Gay/Straight Alliance in a school in Orange to travel to Boston Youth Pride and attend the Western Mass Pride Prom;

\$296.35 raised on Mother's Day in May for Blankets of Hope/Tools for Change to send to Church World Service;

3 newly reupholstered chairs in the Chancel thanks to Mike Hynek with Barclay Furniture Associates, Holyoke, Mass. who did a great job!

PRAISE GOD FOR THE BRIGHT SUNLIGHT

By Lee Satterfield

Praise God for the bright sunlight

Creations – birds galore in the garden
Butterfly bush which will be trimmed
Budding lilac, ages old
Song of red wing blackbird
Wooden swing set soon to be repaired
As you repair us all – Oh Holy One
Your light is in our hearts
Love abounds
Green Adirondack chairs – freshly painted
Oh that old wooden welcoming bench
A safe haven for us all
Stained tea cups
Em's photo – path to a resting bench
Ellie's wooden table of which there are
many that she shares with all of us –
what a skill
Yaweh you have given gifts to each of us –
all unique for the common good
We each have a purpose
HOW GREAT IT IS to find our passions in
this universe
Worldly time of unrest
Let's do our part
PEACE AND AMEN!

PRIDE 2011

By Bonnie Atkins

On May 6, 2011, the day before the Northampton Pride March, I posted on Facebook the fact that I would be marching with my wife and my son with my Church Family. I knew, as I put down the words, that I was proud, proud of my identity, proud of my family and my new son, but especially proud that my Church, the Haydenville Congregational Church, makes it a tradition each and every year to gather as a community and behave in a way that I believe Jesus would have wanted. Our Church is open and affirming not only in words but in deeds and gathers in a group to stand next to and surround a community that still remains, despite our best efforts, marginalized in a wider world. Beyond talking a talk, our Church Community pushes at the edges of what mere tolerance is and allows me to be as I am, married to my partner, a parent to my son, and a woman of faith. The purple balloons, our traditional "flowers in the vase" song, and our feet, strollers, and wheelchairs to the ground, on Saturday May 7, 2011, we were 75 strong. As we passed under the bridge and headed into the center of Northampton to the cheering and tearful crowds on either side of the street, I felt proud and when I prayed at the end of the day, it was for each and every member of my Church family.



HYMN TITLES BY OCCUPATION

Submitted by Beth Howland

Dentist's Hymn

.....Crown Him with Many Crowns

Weatherman's Hymn

.....There Shall Be Showers of Blessings

Contractor's Hymn

...The Church's One Foundation

The Tailor's Hymn

...Holy, Holy, Holy

The Golfer's Hymn

....There a Green Hill Far Away

Optometrist's Hymn

.....Open My Eyes That I May See



TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE HAYDENVILLE CHURCH:

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome and allowing us to share in your service. I was moved by your service and the conviction of your beliefs in embracing, indeed honoring, the chorus and the GLBTQ members of your community. I wish that I could send a video of your service to myself when I was twelve and involved with a Baptist Church in Michigan where it was preached that homosexuals don't get into heaven, and women should only wear dresses to church. I've not been involved with a church since then, but I am overjoyed to know that a church and a congregation like yours exists, where differences are loved and celebrated. I look forward to seeing all of you at Nothampton Pride next weekend! Attached are a few pictures of our chorus and your lovely church.

Thank you again for your warmest of welcomes!

Bless,
Richard Vaden
("Seasons of Love" soloist)



The Pioneer Valley Gay Men's Chorus led the music during "Gay Day" service in May



Rev. Andrea at the Northampton PRIDE parade in May

<http://www.jawniffer.com>

Portrait and Event Photography

**I can believe anything,
provided it is incredible.**

Oscar Wilde, 19th century

LETTER FROM SUNG PARK, OUR GUEST ON "GAY DAY"

Dear Andrea,

Please excuse the delayed THANK YOU! for having me at your most fabulous church! I loved it there, what great energy and spirit there was in that blessed place. I was truly touched to my core and my soul was moved. Please let the congregation know I was deeply grateful to have been there to communion and fellowship with them. God works in great ways and I believe Haydenville is a wonderfully alive testament of God's grace. And of course, see you later!

Love you much!!!
Sung

NOTICE!

**CHURCH PICNIC
RELOCATED**

COME ONE, COME ALL!

**Sunday, June 26, 2011
immediately following
our worship service**

**Jill, Christine and Sayla's house
2 Laurel Road, Haydenville**

**Please bring a potluck picnic dish
to share**

**All meats, drinks and
paper goods provided**

**Lawn chairs, games,
balls, toys welcome!**

~~Volunteers needed to help~~

**Contact Jil Blake
and Christine Russell,
Picnic Coordinators**

Home: 413.687.8453

NOTICE!

**CHURCH PICNIC
RELOCATED**

MY EXPERIENCE OF CREATING AND PARTICIPATING IN THE MOTHER'S DAY "MARY" SERVICE

By Susan Farrell



I have not been a practicing Catholic for about 45 years. What I remember and loved up until then was singing Gregorian chant (yes, I'm the one who just had to have that playing for our service - peaceful isn't it?), Mass in Latin, nuns dressed so mysteriously and dramatically in their habits, and a great love of Mary. When I graduated from 8th grade from a Catholic junior high, I requested and received a Mary statue in the corner of our rock wall out in the backyard.

Everything else has fallen away (and not to my liking) but Mary's still with me - in a very quiet voice but in a very deep part of my heart. When I realized that the protestant churches don't seem to pay as much attention to Mary (my perception), I asked folks of kindred hearts if they wanted to do something about it. And how lucky I am to have found these fabulous 6 ladies!!

The entire experience gave me back my Mary. I know you must've seen me leaning over to Mary Sheehan during the service and saying something. It was that this service was such a special gift to us. A once-in-a-lifetime experience and how very grateful I am and we all are to be a part of this church, to be able to have created this and been received with such kind attention and love. I especially loved the rousing applause after "Let It Be"!

So thank you all. I didn't get to publicly acknowledge that my singing Ave Maria (for the very first time) held a special significance for me. I had a much-loved brother who was 9 years older than me, who died at the age of 49. He told me about a year before he died that he always wanted to hear me sing that. Just before I sang Sunday, I asked him and Mary to make sure that I didn't screw up this magnificent hymn and cry and I didn't. Of course now I am but that doesn't surprise you, does it? So Bless you all.

**God is at home;
it is we who have gone for a walk.**

Meister Eckhart, 14th century

FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD! COFFEE HOUR GOODIES!

Dear Church Brothers and Sisters: Please do not forget to bring food of some kind for Coffee Hour when it is your week (listing goes by last name). Cut up veggies, crackers and cheese, nuts, fruit, coffee cake, mac and cheese (don't laugh, people have brought that, folks love it), mini-muffins, donut holes--everything is welcome! And please come early to help set up and stay after worship to help clean up! We do not want to leave "the Saints" in the kitchen doing 90% of the work! Thank you one and all!

June 5: T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z

June 12: A, B, C

June 19: D, E, F, G

June 26: No Coffee Hour, Church Picnic at Jil, Christine and Sayla's Home



BOOK GROUP'S THIRD ANNUAL POETRY READ OUT

By Paula Spencer

Our Church Book Group is planning once again to read and share poems--old, new, favorites. On Saturday, June 11 we'll be celebrating another wonderful year of reading together with a Potluck Lunch at Paula Spencer's home in Whately (weather permitting). Directions will be forthcoming. Gather a few poems you'd like to read to the group and we especially welcome the poets among us to share their own work. Please contact me for details : prspencer1@comcast.net.

**I know that I have life
only insofar as I have love.**

**I have no love
except it come from Thee.**

**Help me, please, to carry
this candle against the wind.**

*By Wendell Berry
Submitted by Paula Spencer*

JUNE 2011 CALENDAR

Wednesday, June 1:	5-6:30 PM	Session 5 of a DVD series called "Saving Jesus," HCC Dining Room
Saturday, June 4:	9:30-11AM	Session 6 of a DVD series called "Saving Jesus," HCC Dining Room
Sunday, June 5:	10 AM	Special Worship Service with Communion with Renewal of Vows for couples who would like to participate
Monday, June 6:	6 PM	Diaconate Meeting, Church Dining Room
Wednesday, June 8:	5-6:30 PM 7 PM	Session 7 of a DVD series called "Saving Jesus," HCC Dining Room Shepherds Meeting, Church Dining Room
Thursday, June 9:	6:30 PM	Thursday Night Live program: Jewish, Muslim, Christian Dialogue with special guests, HCC Dining Room
Saturday, June 11:	9:30-11AM 11 AM	Session 8 of a DVD series called "Saving Jesus," HCC Dining Room Book Group will meet following "Saving Jesus," series at Paula Spencer's house 117 Webber Road, Whatley. The 3rd Annual Poetry Readout and a potluck lunch. Contact Paula Spencer for questions, prspencer1@comcast.net
Sunday, June 12:	10 AM	Pentecost Sunday~~Worship Service with Baptism Ceremony
Wednesday, June 15:	5-6:30 PM	Session 9 of a DVD series called "Saving Jesus," HCC Dining Room
Thursday, June 16:	1 PM	Ladies Aid, Church Dining Room
Saturday, June 18:	9:30-11AM	Session 10 of a DVD series called "Saving Jesus," HCC Dining Room
Sunday, June 19:	10 AM	Father's Day Men's Lay-led Service. Blankets and Tools for Hope for Change special offering collected after Church
Tuesday, June 21:	6:30 PM	Trustees Meeting, Church Dining Room
Wednesday, June 22:	5-6:30 PM	Session 11 of a DVD series called "Saving Jesus," HCC Dining Room
Saturday, June 25:	9:30-11AM	Closing Session of a DVD series called "Saving Jesus," HCC Dining Room
Sunday, June 26:	10 AM	Final Worship Service before July Break. Also CHURCH PICNIC following our worship service at Jil, Christine and Sayla's home on 2 Laurel Road, Haydenville

JULY—CHURCH IS CLOSED



Haydenville Congregational Church

United Church of Christ
143 Main Street, PO Box 257
Haydenville, MA 01039

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL THOSE CELEBRATING IN JUNE!

June 1 Gloria Lampron
June 3 Esther Williams & Dale West
June 4 Carolyn Messenger
June 5 Lynn Fogg
June 8 Reilly McQuestion
June 10 Tatum Hathaway
June 11 Fred Goodhue
June 12 Anne Warner
June 14 Sarah Icklan
June 15 Ann Williams
June 16 Tara Lindros, Jesse Molina &
Miles Swanson-Ricksgrers
June 20 Alexander Solis
June 22 Paul Dunphy
June 26 Kathy Morin
June 27 Bob McQuestion
June 28 Melissa Adams, Kim Waddell &
Anna Swanson-Ricksgrers
June 29 Ellie Loomis & Marianne Sample
June 30 Jesse Sky Atkins-Barber

