

Cross Currents

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

FROM THE PASTOR

Every single Sunday, week after week after week after week, I step into the pulpit at precisely 10:00 A.M. and offer the WELCOME that our Church has become famous for! And every week I close the Welcome with these words: "Friends, if you are new to us, it is important for you to know that the Haydenville Congregational Church is both known for and we are very proud of our warmth and hospitality. We mean it when we say..." AND THEN I STOP and you all say together, "**Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!**"

It is a sweet tradition and Sunday after Sunday as I stand on "the line" at the door at the close of worship people actually comment on the Welcome!! It is memorable and YOU ALL reciting that invitation at the end touches people.

I am writing now because I need to lean on your hospitality. We are not a wealthy Church and in fact we have some Church members and friends who struggle to find safe, secure, affordable housing. And so our Church is launching a new experimental program called "**Haydenville Hosts**" to help people who are looking for housing have a safe place to stay while they hunt. I'll explain the details...

"Haydenville Hosts" is a program whereby if you have an extra room with a bed and you would not mind housing someone for one month or less, please let me know. We would place someone in your extra

room for 1, 2, 3, maybe 4 weeks while she/he hunted for a safe, secure, affordable place to live. You would not be responsible for feeding the guest, simply housing her/him while she/he was searching for a home. "Haydenville Hosts" will give people who are looking for housing a little cushion while they hunt. The arrangement would not involve any exchange of money.



"Haydenville Hosts" could also include the use of your extra room FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY for someone who needs "respite care"—which is a night away from kids, pressures, worries. We might place someone with you for just one night as a kind of safe, free get-away for people who cannot afford to check into a hotel but need a quiet night to themselves. If you would like to offer the one-night-only "respite care" hospitality, please let me know.

I think the "Haydenville Hosts" program is very much in keeping with the spirit of hospitality in our Church. If being a part of this new initiative is appealing to you, I would love to hear from you. If it does not work for you, for whatever reason(s), please do not worry! We are trying this out on a "pilot" basis for a few months to see how it works and if it is something we would like to continue. No worries if you cannot be involved, that is fine. But if you are reading this and thinking that having a member of our Church family stay with you for a while is appealing and you like hosting guests, then let me know.

Bless you one and all! And love to you always,

NOTE FROM MATILDA

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRIES:

The Spirituality of November

In some ways November is a “quiet” time in Children’s Church. We are through with the bustle and activity of the fall start up; we have come through the Ten Commandments, Noah’s Ark and the Exodus. Children are settling in to their weekly routine, the relationship between teachers and the children is growing into a sense of familiarity and, we pray, trust. New teachers are each making their wonderful, unique and inspired impact on Children’s Church. The Liturgical Calendar marks that we are still in “ordinary time” until Advent begins at the end of the month, on November 27th.

November is stiller and quieter, yet it is a rich time. Our approach to children’s spiritual development includes the conviction that children are capable of big, reverential feelings and expressions. They experience gratitude, and they mourn losses and seek to celebrate those who they have loved and lost. They look with awe and wonder at “living saints”--those in our midst, and saints they know from our tradition who have given their lives to do God’s work. *Therefore November has two events important for children; “All Saints’ Day” and Thanksgiving.*

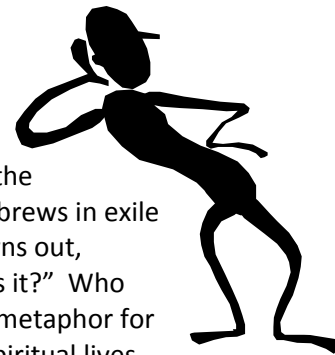
On All Saints’ Day we look back at all people--or animals--we have lost, and look at how they are still present to us. They are present just as Jesus is still present to us—especially in the bread and the cup we take each month in communion. On All Saints Day we ask the children: *Who do you miss? How are they present in your life now? We try to help them recognize presence--the ways that those they love the most are alive in their hearts. Yet the children are already drawn to do this naturally, and they do it better than most adults. It is our job to encourage them and provide stories and means of expression. Children, like adults, experience grief. But we want to celebrate with them that death and loss never have the final word—they suspect that this is true and long to have us validate and explore this with them.*

And while Thanksgiving is a cultural, and not a liturgical holiday, we take this opportunity to look at the deep, important expression of gratitude in our lives. We also celebrate indigenous people and our hopes for people to work together so that gratitude and thanksgiving can be experienced by all. We ask the children: *“Since we believe in a God that is “Still Speaking” what would he/she say now to the Pilgrims, and the Indigenous people of this continent who gave so much of what was theirs?” “What are **you** thankful for, and how do you express **your** gratitude?”*

So November is a “quiet,” reverential month, yet with much to celebrate!

SURROUNDED BY MIRACLES

By Annie Turner



In Andrea’s sermon of September 18th, she spoke of the miracle of God feeding the Hebrews in exile with Manna in the desert. Turns out, “manna” translates to “what is it?” Who knew? But what a wonderful metaphor for anyone struggling with their spiritual lives and wondering about odd events and encounters which seem to be more than they are. “Surrounded by miracles,” Andrea quoted an old prayer, and somehow blind to them.

This reminded me of a wonderful quote from the English mystic of the early 20th-century, Evelyn Underhill, who wrote a book well worth reading called, *Practical Mysticism*. She wrote that Christians are like people attending a concert, sitting in the chairs but not hearing the music. Deaf to mystery and blind to miracles.

So, what are we to do about this? Underhill speaks to us about how we can become “aware for a moment of the difference between what seems reality to us and the height, the depth, and the breadth of that which is truly Real.” For her, anyone can become aware of this deeper reality by seeing more deeply, being more aware of what lies beneath the surface. “The material for a more intense life, a wider, sharper, consciousness...lies at our gates.” It is within your grasp, and within mine if we only “reexamine the furniture of our lives to take a more starry view of them.”

I know. It’s not as easy as picking up the channel changer, but it is possible to become aware of mystery and of miracles. It takes looking, it takes openness, and, I think, a bit of courage.

EXCERPTS FROM FRANCIS THOMPSON AND WILLIAM BLAKE

Know you what it is to be a child? ... It is to have a spirit yet streaming from the waters of baptism; it is to believe in love, to believe in loveliness, to believe in belief; it is to be so little that the elves can reach to whisper in your ear; it is to turn pumpkins into coaches, and mice into horses, lowness into loftiness, and nothing into everything, - for each child has a fairy god-mother in his/her own soul; it is to live in a nutshell and count yourself the king/queen of infinite space; it is:

To see the World in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour.

COMMUNITY KITCHEN AT THE HAYDENVILLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

By Sarah Icklan



I'm excited to be writing to all of you about a new project that is forming at the church. I am forming a community kitchen and cooking group, which will start in November and meet initially on a bi-weekly basis. The fundamental concept of a com-

munity kitchen is simple: people get together to cook meals with one another, which they can bring home and eat later. This community kitchen seeks to create a space in which people (families, friends, single people, parents, grandparents, children - all people) can come together and use their collective energies, ideas and resources to create healthy, home-cooked meals.

The reality is that many people do not have the time or resources to cook at home. They are everyday people with too many obligations and too little time. They are single parents working full time jobs, and the drive-thru helps them put food in their children's bellies. They are unemployed people who have lost their homes and must live in a motel where they don't have access to more than a microwave. They are people who cannot keep the gas on, or the lights on, or the electricity on because they are unable to pay their bills. They are single people who find it daunting to cook singular meals and to eat them alone every night. They are friends who are looking for more time spent together and who also share a love of cooking. Whatever the reasons are, cooking together with friends and family puts meals on the table that are healthier and less expensive than what one might get from take out or fast food, and it allows time together that builds undeniable connections between people.

There is a myth that fast food is cheaper than preparing food at home, however, with the proper knowledge and a few basic materials, healthful meals are easy and accessible for practically all people. The community kitchen aims to pool the collective knowledge and materials of its members for the benefit of all participants. In the most basic form, the members of the kitchen will decide upon recipes that will be prepared, and create shopping lists. They will then meet at a collectively agreed upon time, divide the work up between the groups, and ideally produce 3-4 meals per session that can then be taken home and refrigerated or frozen and eaten later that week (or month). The group will decide upon parameters that suit all participants regarding the meals to be prepared and the specific

dietary requirements and preferences for each member. With that in mind, the kitchen intends to promote products that are organic (when possible), seasonal and thereby as local as possible while still fitting within the given budget. Specifics such as vegetarian, gluten free, dairy free, kosher, vegan diets, etc. will also be addressed and accommodated.

Participating in the group will not cost the members anything beyond food costs, and is open to all people, HCC members and beyond. The participants will be responsible for bringing their own containers with which to take food home. In the event that someone cannot afford to share food costs, other arrangements will be explored. The cost per portion will also be pre-determined and shopping will be done within the given budget. There will be no hidden costs; prices will be determined before people arrive to cook. You do not need to know anything about cooking to participate. This is a group for all people – experienced cooks, and people who don't know how to boil water alike. We will work together and learn from each other. Children are welcome, but please, no unaccompanied children under 13.

I intend to act as the primary contact person and organizer of this project, however this group cannot work without your participation, ideas and enthusiasm. This group will be shaped and run according to the needs of those participating, and I know that each and every one of you has something to offer. If you have recipes that you love, please bring them. If you have great ideas for getting children to eat spinach, I'd love to hear them!

There will be an organizational meeting held in early November to discuss initial recipe ideas and the general concept of how the kitchen will run. Please keep your eyes out for the announcement about this meeting. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me with any questions, ideas, concerns, or input you may have. I can be reached at skicklan@gmail.com or at 917-239-4445.

“Let us love the actual world
that never wishes to be annulled,
but love it in all its terror,
but dare to embrace it
with our spirit's arms –
and our hands encounter
the hands that hold it.”

Martin Buber

NEWS AND NOTES

* Richard Spencer, the clock whisperer, is the ONLY person who should be touching/winding the old venerable clock in the Dining Room. He understands it.

* We need a person in the congregation to step forward and volunteer to be our Church contact for the UCC COALITION FOR LGBT CONCERNS. This means you get the mail the UCC Coalition sends us, plus you help organize our marching in the Gay Pride March (as a Church) in May, and help plan "Gay Day." See Pastor Andrea if you want this (not time-consuming) role!!!

* If you do NOT have a place to go for Thanksgiving Dinner, please tell Pastor Andrea. And if you would like to welcome an extra person or two from the Church to your Thanksgiving Dinner, please tell Pastor Andrea ! We'll pair people who have no place to go with people who have an extra place or two at their table!

* Our theme for Advent this year is: "WE ARE FAMILY!!" Watch for more Announcements and remember: Advent begins on Sunday, November 27th.

* Our Church welcomed six beloved new members on October 9th and we are so happy they found us and we found them! Welcome to: Maureen Bourbeau, Darien Gardner, Katie Hull, Hannah Karpman-Hull, Mally O'Hare and Dee Watts!!

* If you would like to attend Exploring Membership Classes, please tell Pastor Andrea--she is putting together a list of interested persons and scheduling the next round of classes!

* OUR ENORMOUS THANKS to the Evelyn Harris Concert Committee who did tons and tons and beyond tons of work bringing that concert to our Church. They worked very very hard, and we are most grateful to: Gina Ayvazian, Paul Dunphy, Hannah Karpman-Hill and Jeff Luekens! Thank you so much!

* Help keep Webmaster Maggie Solis abreast of what is happening and needs to be on the website. Send announcements, dates, corrections, events, programs to Pastor Andrea who will pass along to Maggie.

* Would you like to be a Greeter some Sunday? Please contact Kim Waddell at (413) 727-8606. Like to be an Usher? Please contact Darien Gardner at (413) 586-9257. Like to Read Scripture? Please contact Annie Harrison (413) 253-7959. We welcome your leadership! Also if you need to schedule the use of the Church Dining Room/ Kitchen or Sanctuary, please contact Church Scheduler Kate Davidheiser (413) 268-7068.

* Ernie Stowell turned 90 on October 20th. Make sure you give our gal a special hug and kiss!!!!

* Our Kathy O'Connor, Sexton Extraordinaire at our Church, does countless hours behind the scenes making and keeping our Church clean, safe, beautiful, polished and ready for us to gather for meetings and for worship. Please thank her **WHENEVER YOU SEE HER**. You cannot know how hard she works and how much she does when you are not in the building!!!



THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT NUMBER

by Pastor Andrea

This year, my dear church brothers and sisters, our Church has set a Stewardship Goal HIGHER than any year in the past....and the country is in a prolonged recession, and we have many parishioners on a fixed income, and work is hard to find these days, and yet we have never been bold enough to set the bar so high!!

OUR STEWARDSHIP GOAL IS: \$126,543

Please pray on that number! I am being serious! And discern what part of that number is yours to contribute. Please make as generous a pledge to our Church for 2012 as you can. We are facing some increased expenses and hope that people will pledge generously!

Our Stewardship Campaign theme is: COUNT YOURSELF BLESSED. It is based on the Scripture reading: *Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap, for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.* Luke 6:38

Thank you my dear ones, thank you so much!

"WELLNESS PLAN" WORKSHOP

By Pastor Andrea



I am offering a four-hour morning workshop on creating an individualized "Wellness Plan" on November 19th from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Church. All Church members and friends are invited to attend. A "Wellness Plan" is a de-

tailed, written plan that outlines how a person can take care of themselves over a twelve month period. The plan takes into account our physical, emotional, medical and spiritual needs and each workshop participant will leave having created specific goals in each of those areas. The Wellness Plan created at the workshop can be implemented immediately or at the dawning of the New Year! Pre-registration IS REQUIRED for this workshop. To register, for the "Wellness Plan" Workshop, please call my private line on the Church phone (268.9344) or send me an e-mail message: revandrea@comcast.net.

FELLOWSHIP HOUR FOOD! YUM-YUM!

The following is the line-up for folks to bring goodies for Coffee Hour. The calendar goes by last name. Thank you for contributing to our famous Coffee Hour after Church each Sunday. When it is your week to bring food, you also help set up and clean up.

November 6: A, B, C

November 13: D, E, F, G

November 20: H, I, J, K

November 27: L, M, N, O



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

November 8 Ruth Beebe
November 9 Sayla Russell-Blake
November 10 Danielle Poudrier
November 11 H. Alan Kellogg
November 13 Tara Castaldo
November 17 Mary Lee Satterfield
November 18 George Henry
November 20 Joanne Morgan
November 22 Nancy Demaras
November 23 Leah Kellogg
November 25 Jacquelin Cloonan
November 26 Lynda Smith



GREAT NEWS!

By Paula Spencer

Prior to Fred Goodhue's **Thursday Night Live** talk on the Mill River Disaster on November 10, we've rescheduled a tour of the actual site of the dam. It will be on Sunday, Nov. 6, and we'll carpool from the Church parking lot following the service. Ralmon Black from the Williamsburg Historical Society will lead us and offer commentary on the events of May 16, 1874.

There will be a Sign Up Sheet in the Church Dining Room for people to sign up for this special walk. The walk will take place unless it's VERY rainy/ windy so prepare to bring boots and umbrellas if necessary. This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with an important piece of local history and to experience the setting Fred will be telling us about on November 10.

8 FOR 8!

Dear Church Family,

I write this to you in mid-October although you will not read it in the newsletter until early November. But I am writing to say that at this point, in October, I am delighted to report that my 8 FOR 8 invitation--published in the October newsletter--has had quite an impact and we have 5 people who have already responded! I wrote to you on page 1 of last month's newsletter to say that I pledge 8% of my take-home pay to the Church as my annual pledge and I am looking for SEVEN others to join me in giving at that level. Well we are up to FIVE folks and I am so pleased!!! It really is a great response. As I write this, I know that I have not even announced my 8 FOR 8 campaign during Church yet. The people who stepped forward are simply responding to last month's newsletter article. So hooray for us!! And I will ask again what I asked in that newsletter article: do you know what your percentage is? Have you calculated what % of your take-home pay you contribute to the Church? It is a number worth knowing! Anyway, thank you for the heart-warming response already to the 8 FOR 8 campaign and do let me know if you want to join on!!!!

With love and a heart filled with gratitude,
Pastor Andrea

"If you want to go quickly, go alone.
If you want to far, go together."

African Proverb

ABOUT OUR CHURCH LIBRARY

By Paula Spencer



There's a church library?! Yes indeed! You'll find it in the corner of the dining room near the entrance to the sanctuary. The collection has 500+ items, mostly books, with some CDs, DVDs and videos. Most of the titles are nonfiction, shelved by author, and there's a small group of quality fiction and poetry. New acquisitions are on a special shelf and many titles of interest are on display. There's a Browsing Basket for kids and a comfy sofa where you can settle in.

The library was started in 2007 with donated books. Since then the collection has grown and evolved to include theological, inspirational and secular books on a wide range of subjects. The old subject headings (Conduct of Life, Christianity, etc.) are no longer used as they were more confusing than helpful.

The library budget is small so I try to buy used copies of books online, find bargains in various places and resell withdrawn books when I can. If you are moved to make a contribution toward library purchases, that would be most appreciated.

Here are some new titles in the library this fall: Rob Bell, [Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, And the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived](#) ; Quinn G. Caldwell and Curtis J. Preston, eds., [The Unofficial Handbook of the United Church of Christ](#); Benjamin Cohen, [My Jesus Year: A Rabbi's Son Wanders the Bible Belt in Search of His Own Faith](#); Gregory Levey, [How to Make Peace in the Middle East in Six Months or Less Without Leaving Your Apartment](#); Brian McLaren, [A New Kind of Christianity: 10 Questions That Are Transforming the Faith](#).

This fall we'll be starting to feature Reader Reviews. If you like a book you've read and would recommend it to others, post a brief review on the form provided. It will help guide other readers' choices .

Checking out a book is super easy. Just find the book you want to borrow in the Big Blue Binder, where they're organized by title. Sign your name and the date, then note the return date when it comes back. So come take a look and Check It Out!!

IN THE SHADOW OF THE DAM

Thursday Night Live Program based on that book and history

November 10, 2011 at 6:30 PM Church Dining Room

Ambitious, self-interested industrialists, unqualified engineers, and incompetent contractors combined to create the conditions for one of the most catastrophic man-made disasters in late 19th century America. When snow melt and spring rains came in May, 1874 the poorly constructed Williamsburg Dam gave way and unleashed 600 million gallons of water on the villages below, killing 139 people, and erasing the major portion of industries lining the Mill River in Williamsburg, Haydenville and Leeds. Our November Thursday Night Live program will feature a presentation by **Fred Goodhue** on the Mill River Flood using Elizabeth M. Sharpe's [In the Shadow of the Dam](#) as a reference. All welcome!

GRASSHILL CHRISTMAS GALLERY 18TH ANNUAL CRAFT FAIR

November 26th 9am-3pm
Haydenville Congregational Church

Local crafters offer their high quality,
original treasures in a relaxed and
beautiful setting

free parking, handicap accessible,
no admission fee
awesome baked goods and an incredible
homemade lunch!

Friends, you really should come.
Get your Christmas shopping done
without the hassle of the mall.

A wide variety of beautiful things,
from picture quilts, jewelry, local maple
products, paintings and photography,
ornaments, hats, scarves, holiday decor,
cards.....and so much more!

Any questions, call Trish @ (413) 268-7254



NEW PLAN FOR COFFEE HOUR STARTS IN DECEMBER

Thanks to our dedicated and brilliant Jo Cannon, we have discovered that the way we have been dividing up the alphabet to bring things for Coffee Hour (and to help with set up and clean up) is not quite fair. Some weeks there are a couple of dozen names, and some weeks there are many fewer people. So Jo has re-made the bring-things-to-coffee-hour list and we'll be using this new arrangement starting in December 2011.

Here's the new line-up:

A - C and W - Z

D - F

G - K

L - M

N - R

S - V

Now each clump has about 22 names except for N - R. So we solved that by having the following people join the N - R group permanently: Jackie Cloonan, Jo Cannon, Sue Carbin, Matilda Cantwell and Andrea Ayvazian. That makes the groups pretty much even! Thank you Jo for your work on this!! Amazing and helpful!

And everyone remember: YOUR NEW CLUMP STARTS IN DECEMBER! Remember to bring those goodies on the right weeks (it will be in the Bulletin and we'll send out a broadcast e-mail) AND help set up and clean up!



ADULT'S BEDTIME PRAYER

O God, I offer the prayers of my heart.
May I be held in your hands as I sleep.
May I be blessed by your love. May I arise with joy in the morning.
For those I name aloud [names],
May they be held in your hands and blessed by your love.
May they arise with joy in the morning.
For those whose names I do not know but whose sufferings I know to be real to you,
Help me, that they might become real to me.
May they be held in your hands and blessed by your love.
May they arise with joy in the morning.
Amen.

From "Beginner's Grace: Bringing Prayer to Life"
by Kate Braestrup
Submitted by Dana Gillette

"Faith burns a storm lantern:
with it we get to work creating refuge and
finding those hurt and alone."

Rev. Naomi King

NEWS FROM BOOK GROUP

By Paula Spencer

At our October meeting we had a great discussion of Elizabeth Sharpe's book In the Shadow of the Dam. It was a smaller group than usual as that sunny October Saturday was very hard to resist!



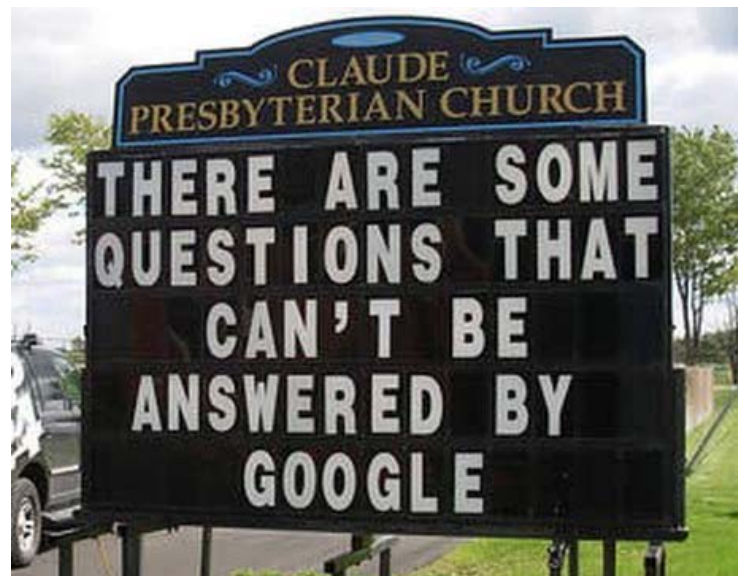
There was much interest in the subject of the flood and its aftermath, especially the very local aspects -- events that took place right outside our church's doors, and in its basement. Nancy Demarais and Ruth Beebe were able to provide first-hand accounts of life in Williamsburg and Haydenville when they were growing up and living here. We decided to ask Fred Goodhue if he would be willing to plan a walking tour of sites relating to the flood as part of his November Thursday Night Live program. Plans are underway so please let me know if you'd like to be part of it.

In November, we are reading Expecting Adam: A True Story of Birth, Rebirth, and Everyday Magic by Martha Beck. There are many copies in the library system. The author has written another book called Leaving the Saints: How I Lost the Mormons and Found My Faith. Our meeting is on Saturday, November 12, at 10 AM (back to our original time slot). Everyone is invited and welcome at our meetings!

**"A dream is the bearer of a new possibility,
the enlarged horizon,
the great hope."**

Howard Thurman

CHURCH SIGNS FOR A CHUCKLE...



NOVEMBER 2011 CALENDAR

Tuesday, November 1:	5:30 PM	Trustees Meeting, Church Dining Room
Sunday, November 6:	10 AM	Worship Service with Communion
Monday November 7:	6 PM	Diaconate Meeting, Church Dining Room
Wednesday, November 9:	7:15 PM	Shepherd's Meeting, Church Dining Room
Thursday, November 10:	6:30 PM	Thursday Night Live program: <u>In the Shadow of the Dam</u> Historian and Church Member, Fred Goodhue will offer a program on the Mill River Flood of 1874 that swept through Williamsburg, Haydenville and Leeds. Elizabeth Sharpe's book of the same name will be his starting point. HCC Dining Room
Sunday, November 13:	10 AM	Worship Service Stewardship Sunday. Church Council Meeting
Monday, November 14:	5:30 PM	Peace and Justice Steering Committee Meeting, Church Dining Room
Tuesday, November 15:	5:30- 7:30 PM	Soup, Salad and Social Change event, Church Dining Room
Wednesday, November 16:	5:30-7 PM	A2A Open Forum on Disability Issues and the Church
Thursday, November 17:	1 PM	Ladies Aid, Church Dining Room
Saturday, November 19:	9 – 1 PM	Wellness Workshop with Andrea, Church Dining Room
Sunday, November 20:	10 AM	Worship Service Discussion after church about why Peace and Justice Steering Committee is inviting people to join the Peace Vigil in downtown Northampton on the 4th Saturday of the month
Thursday, November 24:		Thanksgiving Day
Saturday, November 26:	9 AM - 3 PM	Grasshill Gallery 18 th Annual Christmas Craft Fair, Church Dining Room
	11 AM - Noon	Haydenville Congregational Church members join the Peace Vigil at King and Main Streets in Northampton
Sunday, November 27:	10 AM	Worship Service. Advent #1 Lighting the Advent Wreath



Haydenville Congregational Church

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



Photographed by Paula Spencer

I send you forth to the land which has been promised.
That it has been promised is all I know.
I do not know the shape of the land,
the route which you must go,
the dangers certain to befall along the way.

My small experience leads me to suggest
you should expect your share of desert places
where oases vanish upon close inspection
and water springs from most unlikely rocks.

Also, you should beware the golden calf
or any beast pretending to be God.
The likely candidates will have immense appeal,
and an unpleasant aftertaste.

One great advantage of the Promised Land
is that it will wait for you; if on your way
someone waylaid by thieves or sudden beauty
should detain you, there is time.

You will know that you have reached the land
by the sudden fear you feel at the edge of grace
and the strong pull of familiar Egypt on your soul
and the knowledge there is no turning back.

Farewell, beloved. Put on the whole
armour of God, but leave your heart exposed.
Since life, like death, demands
a certain vulnerability.
And learn a song or two to sing in a strange land.

Be wise as serpents, innocent as doves,
accepting the worst from folk, expecting the best.
You are less what you've learned than
what you've learned to love.
Love is your journey's name and your final rest.

- David Bartlett