

Cross Currents

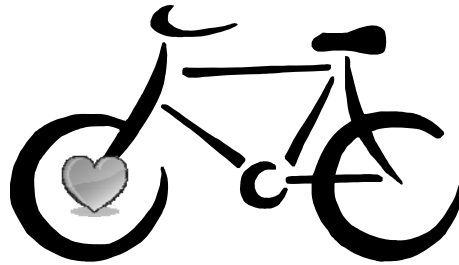
Newsletter of the Haydenville Congregational Church
September 2011 *Open Hearts & Open Minds & Open Doors*

FROM THE PASTOR

On August 7th I preached a sermon called “Reflections on Being the Worst” about my experience on a week-long bike touring trip through the Finger Lakes in July. The bike tour, called the “Bon Ton Roulet,” is an annual event (this was the 15th year) that follows a beautiful route up ridges, past lakes and waterfalls, through wine country, and past Amish farms. This is a stunning region—the vistas are lovely. One of the benefits of this tour is that it is hard to get lost. Not only do the organizers give each biker a map every morning explaining the route in detail but they also go out before dawn with a can of bright orange spray paint and paint the “Bon Ton Roulet” symbol with arrows directly on the pavement all along the route. So as you bike you can look down and see that you are on the correct road, you can see a right or left turn coming up, you can spot big arrows showing you where to go at every intersection. It is a great plus.

On the second to last morning of the bike tour tragedy struck the trip. A volunteer with the “Bon Ton Roulet” who was traveling with the tour and helping out, went out at 5:30 A.M. to mark the route and was hit by a car. Apparently, he marked an intersection, stood up and was crossing the street when a car made a turn, did not see him and hit him. He was thrown quite a distance and died there on the road. His name was Phil, he was 71 years old. He had volunteered for the “Bon Ton Roulet” before and loved traveling with this bike touring trip.

The “Bon Ton Roulet” attracts 650 bikers each year. When camped, we look like an enormous tent city. Word spread rapidly through camp that a volunteer named Phil had died marking the route. Everyone was deeply shaken. Many were in tears. Not everyone among the 650 bikers had met Phil, but even so he was one of us; he was doing work on our behalf, and he was struck and killed out of the blue. The sorrow, shock and loss reverberated throughout the camp.



That day we biked our 50-mile route like usual. When I pulled into camp mid-afternoon I went looking for and found the main trip organizer named Al. I could see that Al was very upset still. I told him how sorry I was about Phil’s death and I told him I was a pastor and I wanted him to know. It seemed to me that just as physicians jump up when someone has a heart attack on an airplane, pastors should make themselves known when there is a death on a bike trip.

Al told me that that evening at our regular 7 PM all-group meeting he was going to talk about Phil and the accident. He said he would be very relieved if I would say a few words, lead us in prayer, say some more words of comfort, allow for some silence, and close with a Benediction or closing blessing. I said I would do that.

That evening probably 600 of the 650 bikers gathered for the all-group meeting. Al said a very few words and then asked me to come forward to the mic. I talked about how just six days earlier we had been a disparate group of strangers brought together only by our love of biking. But now, six days into our trip we had biked together, camped together, eaten together, helped one another, and we had become a community. I said that now we were a community that was grieving together. I talked about Phil, his life of service and volunteerism. I talked about feeling our feelings and accepting our grief and loss. I talked about sending love and support on the wings of prayers to Phil’s family and friends. We shared a long period of silence. I closed with a prayer for Phil, and for us all.

I am telling you this story now because ANY ONE OF YOU could have done what I did. Every single Sunday on the back of our Church Bulletins are these words:

“Ministers: All of us
The Rev. Dr. Andrea Ayzavian, Pastor and Teacher”

We mean that sincerely. And we must live it. YOU ALL are ministers in this world. If YOU had been on the “Bon Ton Roulet” and there was a death on the trip, I expect that any one of

YOU would have found the trip organizers and said you were a person of faith, a Church leader, and you could help the community deal with their shock and grief. YOU could have done what I did. And well.

Physicians step forward when there is a medical emergency on a plane, on a highway, in a theatre. People of faith must step forward when there is a pastoral emergency in any setting. I want to remind you that each one of you is a “minister” with a calling. I would expect you to make your presence known if you were in a place where a word of comfort and a prayer were needed.

You are prepared. You are ready. If you are needed, do not hesitate.

I believe in you.

With love always,

NOTE FROM MATILDA

Children’s Church and Youth and Family Ministries

What if we thought of childhood spirituality as a basic ingredient of all ministry with children? This would mean starting from the premise that spirituality is a normal capacity of childhood, not something esoteric, or just the “icing.” It would mean paying attention to the spiritual qualities (and defects) in all that we do, and exploring the spiritual impetus for why we do things one way and not another. -From Children’s Spirituality: What It Is and Why It Matters by Rebecca Nye

Last November I was invited to do a presentation for the Franklin County UCC Association’s Annual Meeting on “Growing a Sunday School Program.” I was honored to talk with other clergy and lay leaders who work with children, and to have an opportunity to talk about our program in Haydenville. I firmly believe that “success” is not measured by numbers and feel that we are so very much a work in progress! However, there is a feeling that our children’s program offers something that draws and engages children and their families. As we begin the 2011-12 Children’s Church year, I wanted to share with you some of what I shared with them, as we reinvigorate for a new year of worship, play, and work with our church’s children:

Why “Children’s Church?”: We call it “Children’s Church,” and not “Sunday School” because we use a Montessori-based curriculum, “Godly Play,” which is based on

“wondering” rather than on a didactic approach. We believe children’s spirituality is intrinsic and they worship just as we do, so it is Church, not school. We believe that this method makes for a deeper engagement with the sacred stories of scripture, even if our children don’t memorize verses when they are young.

Our Radical Welcome: We welcome each child by name but it’s not just to be friendly! We do it because we believe that we teach the gospel to children by recognizing and honing their unique humanity. Jesus was a unique, embodied human person, and so is each child. Children should never leave Children’s Church without being called by name, recognized, and assured that *we see them*.

Outreach and Service: We have gone into the community inviting children and families to become involved in our program. We’ve found that they may need us and we need them too! We try to create opportunities for the children to be involved in service projects (“Blue Moon Sunday,” the intergenerational garden, helping with meals at a shelter) at an early age, since this is the heart of Christian discipleship.

Children’s Spirituality in Focus: As the quotation from Rebecca Nye’s book (above) suggests, children’s spirituality is something that comes naturally. Rather than doing activities for their own sake, we try to insure that what we do is theologically informed. We ask ourselves—how does this activity draw upon our children’s natural spiritual inclinations and how will it help them draw closer to the sacred?

Music and Food: We recognize music as an important part of children’s worship and enjoy singing together as a group. We have started to offer lunch, since no family wants their children to eat sugary treats at noon before trying to have a family afternoon!

It helps me to remind myself of these principles so that in the upcoming year we can find new ways to return to these basic principles. We *are* a “work in progress,” but we have been blessed with such an amazing group of teachers and children who show us God’s kingdom in our midst, over and over! This September, I am especially grateful for the support and hard work of Deacon Dawn Orluske, all our wonderful, dedicated teachers, the support of all the Deacons, and all the *new* teachers who will be teaching a rotation in the 2011-12 year. Thank you for joining us—there is work involved but it is Holy Work, and I truly believe that when we worship with the children we too meet God in powerful and surprising ways.

In gratitude and excitement for the upcoming year,
Pastor Matilda

Children's Church and Youth and Family Ministries, continued...

FALL 2011 YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

DATES TO REMEMBER

September 11th:

"Welcome Sunday:" Children's Church begins for the 2011-12 year. Registration before and after Children's Church.

September 18th:

Parent Orientation I, **11:45 a.m.**; registration before and after Children's Church.

September 25th:

Parent Orientation II, **8:30 a.m.**

Godly Play and CC Teacher Training and Orientation, Noon, Children's Church. All welcome.

October 2nd:

Godly Play and CC Teacher Training and Orientation, Noon, Children's Church. All welcome.

October 9th:

Godly Play and CC Teacher Training and Orientation, Noon, Children's Church. All welcome.

October 30th :

BLUE MOON SUNDAY (Service Project TBA)

November 13th:

Christmas Pageant preparation begins

December 11th:

Christmas Pageant

Please Note:

-You may register your child for Children's Church at any time, but all parents **must** attend one of the two parent orientations on September 18th or 25th (please note the two different times offered). *If you cannot attend please see Pastor Matilda (tildacan@comcast.net) or Dawn Or-luske (pafournier@earthlink.net) to arrange another time for orientation!*

-All new CC teachers are asked to attend two out of three of the Godly Play and CC teacher training and orientations. Returning teachers please attend one of the three.

-Check your weekly bulletin for curriculum and activity information and more Youth and Family Ministry offerings!

Questions? Contact Youth and Family Minister, Matilda Cantwell, (413) 374-2541, tildacan@comcast.net

THURSDAY NIGHT LIVE!

Start Reading: *In The Shadow of the Dam*

Thursday Night Live Program coming based on that book and history

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, MA.

Thursday Night Live on November 10, 2011 will feature a presentation by Fred Goodhue on the Mill River Flood using Elizabeth M. Sharpe's book *In the Shadow of the Dam* as a reference for the 6:30 PM event including the discussion period that will follow in the Church Dining Room. All are most welcome!

*Holy persons draw to themselves
all that is earthly.*

Hildegard of Bingen

FELLOWSHIP HOUR FOOD

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.



September 4: P, Q, R, S

September 11: T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z

September 18: A, B, C

September 25: D, E, F, G

*God passionately loves our true selves-
so we have to seek approval
of our false selves elsewhere.*

David Buttrick

The Mystery and the Passion

HOW THE EAGLE GOT HER WINGS

By Ann Vanderburgh

The Big Great Beyond spoke very loudly one day. It was a Monday in late May, and I had a math tutoring cancellation, so I was left with some extra time. I decided that I should use that time to go shopping for a present for Brittany, one of my ninth grade students who was about to graduate from the Bement School. She has faced some big challenges, and she is an enthusiastic risk-taker who both invites a huge range of highs and lows into her life and learns a lot from them. As I wandered around Northampton, I suddenly realized that I wanted to get her an eagle like the one I brought to my Clinical Pastoral Education graduation last April.

My own eagle is a little stuffed animal eagle that I had bought for myself a few years ago. At the time, I had put my eagle on my desk at work, and my eagle helped me through a very challenging time. It quietly sat in front of me, reminding me of the importance of looking at things from a larger perspective, and it helped to give me the courage to soar off into the unknown. When I graduated from my first unit of CPE last April, I brought my eagle to the ceremony and explained its role in my journey. At one point last spring I had brought my eagle in to show to Brittany and explained how it had helped me through difficult times.

As I was shopping for Brittany's present and suddenly found myself looking for an eagle, I couldn't remember where I had found mine, so I rambled aimlessly for a little while, and then I found one exactly like mine. When I picked the eagle up, one of its wings was loose, while the other one was attached to the body and so couldn't flap. I asked the salesperson if it had been damaged. And she said, "No, the wings are *supposed* to flap this way; they are only attached to the body to keep them safe in shipping." I was suddenly first dumbfounded, and then awestruck. All of the time that I've had *my* eagle, I had not known this – so then it dawned on me that the wings of my own eagle were still tied down. All this time, my eagle hasn't had the full use of its wings!! And just imagine, Brittany had to come along into my life in order to let me know that it's time for my eagle to really start flying! And look at the timing, almost exactly a year since I quit my job. Amazing. In the store, I was absolutely astonished and mind-boggled as I realized all this. What a message from Divine Spirit! I got the eagle for Brittany, brought it home and untied its other wing, and then thought about my own eagle and what I should do about its wings.

I decided that rather than just snip the tie on my eagle wings myself, I should ask a friend to help me do it, as it was so incredibly symbolic. As it happened [courtesy of

Divine Spirit of course] I was meeting Toby and cmoore for lunch a day or two later, and Toby is, of course, one of the few people who knows the whole story of the eagle and had actually met the eagle. So I decided to take my eagle with me to lunch, and to ask Toby and cmoore to help me free up its wings. As I told them my eagle story, Toby of course started figuring out where I was headed with it before I got there, so he was really excited! Then we devised a little ceremony where cmoore held the eagle and Toby and I each snipped a wing tie. And so now my eagle has wings that fly!! Toby was very happy, as he said that he had noticed at CPE graduation that the eagle's wings were stuck to his body, and that that had bothered him.

So here I am, a year after quitting my job, and almost four years since I got my own eagle, discovering that my eagle can really fly! In order to make that discovery, Divine Spirit had to send me someone very special and give us a job to do together. Sometimes our work with someone is a lot bigger than it might appear at first. People are sent to us; we are sent to people. And sometimes, we are blessed to be in just the right place at the right time.

*The world is in perpetual motion,
and we must invent the things of tomorrow.
One must go before others,
be determined and exacting,
and let your intelligence direct your life.
Act with audacity.*

Madame Barbe-Nicole Clicquot Ponsardin
(1777-1866)

"WELLNESS PLAN" WORKSHOP

Pastor Andrea is prepared to offer a three or four hour morning workshop on creating an individualized "Wellness Plan," if there is interest among Church members and friends for such a gathering. A "Wellness Plan" is a detailed, written plan that outlines how a person might take care of themselves over the next twelve months. The plan takes into account our physical, emotional, medical and spiritual needs and each person will leave having created specific goals in each area. If there is sufficient interest, the workshop will be held in October or November and the plan can be implemented immediately or at the dawning of the New Year! To express interest in the "Wellness Plan" Workshop, please call Pastor Andrea's line on the Church phone (268.9344) or e-mail her: revandrea@comcast.net. This workshop is open to all Church members and friends.

ANNUAL BOOK SALE

Dear Friends,

It's time again to start collecting books for our annual book sale to benefit The Sunrise Foundation and our children's programs in Nicaragua.



*Need to clear out some bookshelves?
Belong to a book club?*

We'd love to have your books!

We'll be collecting books from August 1st through September 24th. But you might want to start putting some in a box soon, so you don't miss the deadline. The book sale is **Friday, Sept. 30th** and **Saturday, Oct. 1st**. Please mark your calendar and come!

Please pass this email along to your friends who may have books, and/or want to help with our booksale!

Contact me via email or at the phone number below, to arrange to drop off books:

W: 584-7787, x105 (OK to leave a message)

And thanks so much!! The children in Nicaragua appreciate your help.

Lisa Hall, RN

for The Sunrise Foundation

www.thesunrisefoundation.org

hogarluceros.blogspot.com



FOR THE MEN OF THE CHURCH



Pastor Andrea has a special Fall offering for the MEN of our Church! You are invited to a four-week book group with Andrea to read and discuss Brian McLaren's new book **NAKED SPIRITUALITY: A LIFE WITH GOD IN 12 SIMPLE WORDS**. This special book group for men will begin at the end of September and run weekly for four weeks as

we make our way through the book using the 12 prayer practices that McLaren suggests to reinvigorate one's prayer life. Andrea will schedule the meetings (days/evenings/Saturdays/whatever!) depending on who registers for this series and their availability. So if you are interested, call Andrea on the Church line (268.9344) or send her an e-mail expressing your interest and she'll see who all has signed up and when folks can meet.

MY GUARDIAN ANGEL

By Pastor Andrea

Most of you know that a highly organized, deeply loving, incredibly loyal, extremely smart person lives in South Hadley and assists me with my Church work. Her name is Vicha Hajdamowicz (as you know!!!!) and she makes my job do-able! She works for our Church from her home office. I am writing a short newsletter article about her to publicly acknowledge that Vicha's help is invaluable to me and to THANK HER for her incredible work. Vicha does about a million things for me each week--each task done meticulously with grace and care. My job is big and hard and I don't have enough hours in the day to complete everything I need to do. But WITHOUT VICHA I would be swamped every minute of every day and I would be hopelessly behind and pathetic. Vicha schedules things for me, calls people back, remembers things I forget, proof-reads materials, alerts me to things I need to know, types stuff, follow-ups on things after meetings for me, and the list goes on and on and on. If you think I am doing an okay job as Senior Pastor of the Haydenville Congregational Church, it is because my shadow, Vicha, is behind me keeping things together. Vicha, I know you are reading this...thank you from the bottom of my big Armenian heart for all that you do for me and our Church. We love you!

*If you want to know what a person values,
look at their checkbook.*

Gloria Steinem

BOOK GROUP PLANS FOR THE COMING YEAR

By Paula Spencer

Our church Book Group will meet on September 17 at 10:30 AM to plan our reading selections for the coming year. Already on the docket are the traditional Children's Book meeting in December (sharing favorite selections from kids' books) and a Poetry ReadOut + Potluck in June. During the year we'll be reading from a wide variety of titles-- nonfiction and fiction. Authors we may consider include: Margaret Gunther (Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction), Elizabeth Sharpe (In the Shadow of the Dam), Richard Rohr (Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life), Cynthia Bourgeault (Wisdom Jesus), and Rob Bell (Love Wins: Telling a New Story about Heaven and Hell). We meet once a month over coffee/ tea and a snack in the church dining room, sometimes in other locations, at 10 on Saturday morning. We are a diverse and lively group that warmly welcomes new members, male and female. Call or email with Paula Spencer if you have any questions (prspencer1@comcast.net).

JUSTICE LED

What is Justice Leaders Engaging and Developing?

By Doug Renick

The vision of Justice & Witness Ministries of the UCC is of a more just, peaceful and compassionate world that honors all of God's creation. Leaders are needed throughout our churches and communities to help share, pursue and achieve this vision. Justice Leaders Engaging and Developing (Justice LED) is a program that offer training, leadership skills and support to local churches and UCC members who seek tangible ways to move our world towards this vision. It is a program that includes interactive scripture study, engaging video resources, and guided reflection and dialogue for groups. Justice LED offers congregations an opportunity to engage in theological reflection on the justice dimensions of Christian faith and discipleship, and ultimately, to discern and act on justice issues that they have passion and energy for and in ways that make sense for them.

Doug Renick is part of the MA UCC Justice LED regional training team. The Haydenville Congregational Church (HCC) is invited to participate in a local offering of the Justice LED training this fall: 2:00-5:30 p.m., on three Sundays --October 2, October 23 and November 6--at the First Congregational Church in Hadley. HCC representatives will be supported in their efforts to strengthen and sustain justice advocacy as an essential part of the HCC mission and ministry. The Peace and Justice Steering Committee will take the lead in capitalizing on the resources offered by this training, but would be excited if there are others in the congregation who would like to commit to the training and its application at HCC. If you are such a person, please contact Doug Renick (413-587-0743, renick.rinehart@comcast.net).

Is Justice LED a curriculum for justice issues? No, Justice LED is not a "how-to" on justice around specific issues like peace, workers' rights, or immigration. Rather, Justice LED is a wholistic approach for congregations that want to strengthen, develop and sustain justice ministries as part of their congregational life and ministry. Trainers will equip local church leaders with skills in discernment, facilitation, dialogue, biblical and theological grounding for doing justice ministry, and sociological and cultural grounding as well as group process. An extensive Tool Kit will provide resources on specific issues and for deeper study but local churches will determine what particular issues are important to them.

Justice LED Training Opportunity in Western Massachusetts Thirty National Justice LED Trainers are working in pairs to coordinate trainings in each of our six UCC Regions. Eight New England regional trainers have been

certified, four of whom are from western Massachusetts. Lay leaders and pastors participate in Justice LED training as a small group (with others from local churches) to become LED facilitators in their congregations. This series will be led by national trainer Rev. Peter Wells, plus regional trainers David Entin of First Churches, Northampton, Douglas Renick of the Haydenville Congregational Church, Russ Vernon-Jones of First Congregational Church of Amherst and Donique McIntosh of the Haydenville Congregational Church.

*No despair of ours can alter
the reality of things, or stain the joy
of the cosmic dance which is always there.
Indeed, we are in the midst of it,
and it is in the midst of us,
for it beats in our very blood,
whether we want it to or not.*

Thomas Merton
New Seeds of Contemplation



JEWISH, MUSLIM, CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

Haydenville Congregational Church
143 Main Street, Haydenville

Thursday, September 15, 2011 at 6:30 pm

Thursday Night Live Program
with special guests
Randall Furash-Stewart,
Kayla Gilman-Solomon,
Hannah Karpman, Tynan Power,
and Rev. Carol Rinehart

Everyone welcome
Please join us
Wheelchair accessible

JOIN US for a great round-table discussion
with our guests

SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

Sunday, September 4:	10:00 AM	Worship Service with Communion
Tuesday, September 6:	6:00 PM	Diaconate Meeting, Church Dining Room
Thursday, September 8:	5:30 PM	Trustees' Meeting
Sunday, September 11:	10:00 AM	Worship Service, Church Council following service. Children's Church Begins "Welcome Sunday"
Thursday, September 15:	1:00 PM 6:30 PM	Ladies Aid, Church Dining Room Thursday Night Live program: Jewish, Muslim, Christian Dialogue with special guests. HCC Dining Room
Saturday, September 17:	9:30–10:30 AM	Exploring Membership Class, Church Dining Room
Sunday, September 18:	10:00 AM 3:00 PM	Worship Service. 11:45 PM Parent Orientation, Children's Church. Matilda Cantwell Ecclesiastic Council, Sanctuary
Saturday, September 24:	9:30–10:30 AM	Exploring Membership Class, Church Dining Room
Sunday, September 25:	8:30 AM 10:00 AM 12:00 PM	Parent Orientation, Children's Church Worship Service~~BRING A FRIEND TO CHURCH SUNDAY! Godly Play Teacher Training (all welcome), Children's Church

THURSDAY NIGHT LIVE!

Thursday Night Live is a monthly program brought to you by Pastor Andrea and the Church Deacons that offers an interesting program, service, or presentation with discussion following every month from September through June. All Church members and friends are most welcome. Mark your calendars now, we have an exciting Fall planned!

Thursday Night Live Fall Programs

September 15: 6:30 PM **Jewish, Muslim, Christian Dialogue** with Special Guests Randall Furash-Stewart, Kayla Gilman-Solomon, Hannah Karpman, Tynan Power, and Rev. Carol Rinehart

October 13: 6:30 PM **Voices from Inside** Pastor Matilda will facilitate this evening as we listen to the experiences of a group that does writing workshops with women inmates.

November 10, 6:30 PM **In the Shadow of the Dam** 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.

December 15, 6:30 PM **Blue Christmas Service** The Church "Shepherds" group will lead a special, quiet and lovely

service (in the Church Dining Room) for anyone who finds Advent and Christmas difficult due to painful childhood memories, recent loss (of a loved one, a job, or a beloved animal), or an ongoing struggle with depression that intensifies at this time of the year.

SEPTEMBER 11TH

On September 11th, we will not only be launching Children's Church again for another Church year and celebrating "Welcome Sunday," but we will also (after the children leave for CC) be commemorating the 10th anniversary of 9/11. We will have readings, songs, candle lighting and a sermon that all focus on the anniversary--the pain, the lessons learned, and the lives lost that we lift up and remember.

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

Howard Thurman



Haydenville Congregational Church

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



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL OUR SEPTEMBER PEOPLE!

September 1 Judy Bowker
September 2 Ruth Loomis
September 9 Marcelle Walters
September 14 Kim Sager-Cutt &
Jessy McCarthy
September 17 Helen Symons
September 22 Anne Harrison &
Daniel Guiel
September 23 Ann Loomis
September 26 Kyla McMahan
September 28 Mary Sheehan
September 30 Tobias Davis

*My child, eat honey, for it is good,
and the drippings of the honeycomb
are sweet to your taste.
Know that wisdom is such to your soul;
if you find it, you will find a future,
and your hope will not be cut off.*

Proverbs 24:13-14