

Cross Currents

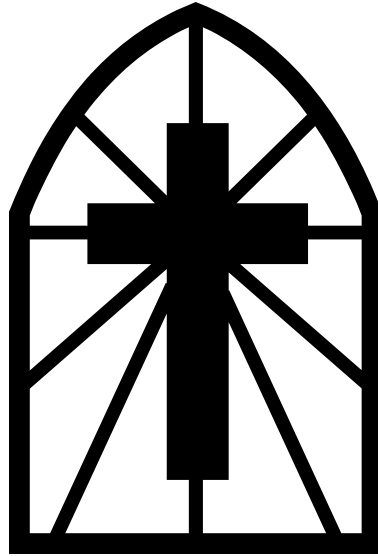
Newsletter of the Haydenville Congregational Church
February 2012 *Open Hearts & Open Minds & Open Doors*

FROM THE PASTOR

According to the **New York Times** ("The Joy of Quiet," Sunday, January 1, 2012) Americans are so inundated with noise, phones, texts, e-mail, TV, distractions, interruptions and "the constant stream of too much information," that wealthy adults are willing to pay \$2,285 a night to stay in a cliff-top room at the Post Ranch Inn in Big Sur partly for the privilege of NOT having a TV in their rooms. The **Times** article reports that the future of travel lies in "black-hole resorts" which charge expensive prices for their rooms precisely because you CANNOT get online. They are "black holes" for internet access.

Apparently, the myriad new ways to connect to the world through screens and the internet has made us more and more eager to unplug. There are now "internet rescue camps" in South Korea and China that work with kids addicted to screens. According to Nicholas Carr's book The Shallows, the average American spends at least 8 ½ hours a day in front of a screen—in part because the number of hours American adults spent online doubled between 2005 and 2009. And consider this number: the average American teenager sends or receives 75 text messages a day, though one girl in Sacramento managed to handle an average of 10,000 text messages every 24 hours for a month.

The **Times** article quotes Marshall McLuhan who, a half century ago, saw what was coming and warned, "When things come at you very fast, you lose touch with yourself." And Trappist monk Thomas Merton once said, "Man was made for the highest activity, which is, in fact, his rest."



I write about the glut of information and the relentless tugs on our time and attention because Lent begins this month. Ash Wednesday is February 22—that is the beginning of a 40-day period that Christians devote to contemplation, introspection, fasting, prayer, and acts of service and generosity. I want to invite us all to think about using part of Lent to observe an "internet Sabbath." Consider turning off your computer every day at dinner and

not starting it up again until after breakfast. Or, as a clergy colleague of mine does each week, take an "e-mail Sabbath" every weekend—e-mail off on Friday evening and not fired up again until Monday morning. Also consider "forgetting" your cell phone some days—that's a good way to introduce more quiet into your life.

People are craving stillness. We are not just in need of slowing down and doing less, we are in need of quiet. Our minds are too full, too jumpy, too busy 25/8 (as a young person pointed out to me). Slowing down and doing less is a worthy goal. But introducing more silence into our days is becoming a necessity

if we want to connect with God, think and pray deeply, and remember who we are.

This Lent maybe we can all invite more stillness into our lives. Maybe we can sit in silence. Maybe doing nothing, alone, will be medicine for our hearts and souls and nourishment for our spiritual selves. When I lived in North Carolina in the 1970s, I used to hear people say, "Sometimes I just sit and whistle, and sometimes I just sit." I think they are on to something.

May you have a blessed Lent.

With love always,

NOTE FROM MATILDA

Youth and Family Ministries

WHAT DO WE SAY TO CHILDREN ABOUT THE CROSS!?!?

Dear Friends,

As we approach Lent, I want to share some thoughts about a “dicey” question—*how do we talk to young children about the Cross?* I have always wondered this, and over my years as a Youth Minister I have grappled with and worked on developing, with colleagues and lay leaders, a theology that feels right. Children’s ability to deal with loss and sadness is greater than we think. What children need most, I think, is not to feel *alone* with their questions and fears. So whatever we are talking about with them, the fact that we are close, listening, and responsive matters much more than having “the answers.” Wondering *with* them, while not leaving them in the dark, is indeed a delicate balance! But it is a spiritual practice and a faithful challenge—it pushes us to think—what do I really feel about the cross?? *At the heart of this is the fact that it is a very sad thing from which great joy comes.* So that is what we are challenged to talk about...Here is one example of a way to talk to children about the cross; a little “story” that I tell every year sometime during Lent.

*Jesus’ commitment to the poor, and the left out, to justice; his courage, and love, and the way he stood up against the forces of evil scared people. So they arrested him and crucified him on a cross! And yet, Christians **celebrate** the cross—why do you think this could be? For some Christians, the shape of the Cross is like a person—with arms outstretched to hug the world. For some the Cross is like a key—and a symbol of understanding and new life! The cross is an amazing thing—it reminds us that when we lose someone—some of you have lost a pet, a grandparent, or a dear friend--their spirit needs to have somewhere to do its work here on earth. And so we open our hearts—so it can make its home there... All the love and courage in them, their very spirit, comes into our heart and lives there forever... The Bible tells us that at the very end of his life, Jesus was scared and called out to God, and God was there. Jesus' last words when he was crucified were spoken to God, his parent, and parent to us all—**"Into your hands I commend my spirit."** He was taken up into an eternal embrace, from which a new day dawned. So we remember that no matter how scared, or how sad, or how alone we might feel, God is there--for us.*

I look forward to hearing what you all think and your ideas about this hard but most Holy subject. Next month we will look at this again, but with attention to what comes next—the Resurrection!

In Faith and Gratitude,

Pastor Matilda

SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Darien and I (Kit) recently went to a meeting called "Supporting Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence in Our Congregations." We learned that sexual violence could be an issue in our congregation.

It was a very moving evening. We want to let our fellow members know that our church is a safe place to discuss such issues. To follow up, things we should do as a Church include:

- Post flyers everywhere including in bathrooms to make known that there are safe and confidential community resources as well as church support;
- Stock the library with domestic violence information and books;
- Collect used cell phones that will go to Safe Passage for victims of abuse;
- Make sure that every newsletter lists the phone numbers of domestic violence and sexual assault service providers.

Phone numbers of local sexual assault and domestic abuse service providers:

Safe Passage in Northampton (888) 345-5282

Every Woman's Center in Amherst (413) 545-0800

YWCA Western MA in Springfield (800) 796-8711

Learning Center for Women in Transition in Greenfield (413) 772-0806

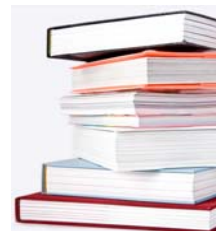
Women's Shelter/Companeros in Holyoke (877) 536-1628

FEBRUARY/MARCH BOOK GROUP EVENTS

By Paula Spencer

At our January meeting the group decided that one month didn't give us enough time to do justice to Brian McLaren's [A New Kind of Christianity](#). So we decided to hold an Open Forum on Saturday, Feb. 11, inviting anyone who is interested to come and discuss the book. All who would like to share in the discussion are warmly welcome at our 10 o'clock meeting in the Church Dining Room.

The following week, on Feb. 18th, we'll hold our regular meeting and the book will be [Holy Hunger: A Woman's Journey from Food Addiction to Spiritual Fulfillment](#). Written by Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, an Episcopal pastor, retreat leader and environmental activist, it is a memoir of her relationship with food. The author defines 'Holy Hunger' as "a limitless desire that nothing on earth can satisfy." Please speak with Paula Spencer if you want more information on either event.



THE "100 FAMILIES" PROJECT

By Opeyemi

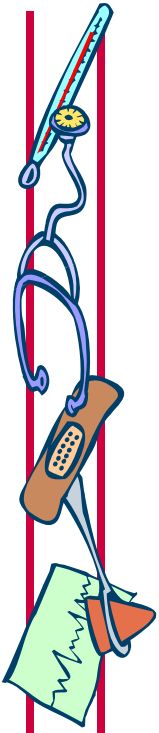
Imagine a new (and very old) healing relationship:
I am a retired family doctor and a mother of two. I am capable of easing your worries about a child with a fever.

I can go with you to a scary medical encounter as an advocate, help organize your family to take 24/7 shifts with a relative in the hospital, sit down with your family to discuss a new cancer diagnosis.

I can come and stay in your home if you are ill, and need support with cooking and cleaning.

I can walk you through medical tests and studies, helping you prepare, help you understand what the tests are FOR and what the results mean, discuss conventional options and alternative treatments.

I can help you create healing space and environments that go beyond the current definition of "health" into REAL WELLNESS.



The Cuban medical system (see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jjk1vdj3koY>) assigns each family doctor 120 families. I am offering the above services as a subscription, in a pilot project for 100 Families. This is designed to supplement not replace your PCP (I do not prescribe, nor diagnose, nor admit people to hospitals). An individual subscription is \$20/month; \$30/month for a family. Enrollment is open, and will continue until I reach my 100 family goal. In three months, I will report out to everyone (and take feedback on) how this relationship is going. My intention is to create a steady income for myself, and to model for other healers a way out of the managed care system.

(You can find Opeyemi here: [\(413\) 336-1291](tel:4133361291); P.O. Box 264, Hadley, MA. 01035; www.ceremonyheals.com)

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

February 1	Anna Beth Avakian
February 2	Dawn Orluske
February 8	Valerie Hooper-Lindros
February 9	Judy Haigler
February 10	Abigail Pollard
February 12	Elizabeth Brewer & Parker Durrant-West
February 14	Cate Wilson
February 15	Matilda Cantwell

HELPFUL TIP FROM NANCY DEMARAIS



If you have ever thought about reading the Bible in chronological order, www.youversion.com is a website to check out. There are many translations of the Bible available and the readings can be started at any time. There are also reading plans for youth, devotionals, problems being faced, study Bible—many things one may be interested in. I highly recommend taking a minute to look at it. I'm doing the daily chronological readings for a year and I'm trying several different translations-would love to have you join me.

COFFEE HOUR GOODIES AND JOBS



We all SHARE in the success of our quite wonderful Coffee Hour. When it is your turn to bring goodies for Coffee Hour, also please remember to come early to help set up and stay later to help clean up. We worry that a very few Church "Saints" are in the kitchen doing triple duty most Sundays! Thank you for helping. Plus remember

ANYTHING yummy is welcome at Coffee Hour--your contribution does not have to be homemade nor does it have to be sweet--nuts, peanut butter in celery, cheese, and hummus with veggies are all welcome along with coffee cake and donut holes! Thank you one and all. The line-up for February is below:

Feb. 5: D, E, F
Feb. 12: G, H, I, J, K
Feb. 19: L, M
Feb. 26: N, O, P, Q, R



February 16	Sarah Molano
February 23	Barbara Estes
February 24	June May
February 25	Keiva Pilot
February 26	Diane Scott



AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR CONGREGATION

From Jeff Olmsted, Choir Director

Dear friends,



It is my pleasure to direct the expanding choir at Haydenville—thanks to choir members and all who have expressed appreciation and excitement about the great music we will be making! You may wonder why I

am not with you every Sunday. Here's the deal: my wife Julie is a pastor, and we have been a "two-church" family a lot over the course of our 25 years of marriage. She works in one church, I work in another. When we moved back to my hometown (Northampton) in the fall of 2010, we agreed: we're NOT GOING TO DO THAT anymore! In fact, I promised I WOULD NOT look for or take a job in another church.

So, I joined the Hatfield Congregational Church where Julie is the pastor. I joined the choir and got to know our new church family. It is very pleasant being the pastor's hubby, but I was not able to make the musical contribution which I have "trained" for twenty years to make, and which God calls me to make. So when I heard about the opportunity at Haydenville, which I had visited a couple of times, I was interested despite my promise.

I had a conversation with Andrea, who was quick to understand my quandary, and we came up with the current arrangement, which is this: I consider it my job to make sure you have great music every week, even though I am present only every other week. It is so crazy, it just might work!

REFLECTIONS ON "A COURSE IN MIRACLES"

By KaraBeth Joseph



I am studying "A Course in Miracles" ([Foundation for Inner Peace](#)), and I wanted to share some "Principles of Miracles" with all of you.

#4 All miracles mean life, and God is the Giver of life.

His voice will direct you very specifically. You will be told all you need to know.

#8 Miracles are healing because they supply a lack; they are performed by those who temporarily have more for those who temporarily have less.

#11 Prayer is the medium of miracles. It is a means of communication of the created with the Creator. Through

prayer love is received, and through miracles love is expressed.

#17 Miracles transcend the body. They are sudden shifts into invisibility, away from bodily level. That is why they heal.

#18 A miracle is service. It is the maximal service you can render to another. It is a way of living: love your neighbor as yourself. You recognize your own and your neighbor's worth simultaneously.

#26 Miracles represent freedom from fear. "Atoning means "undoing." The undoing of fear is an essential part of the Atonement value of miracles.

#31 Miracles should inspire gratitude, not awe. You should thank God for what you really are. The children of God are holy and the miracles honor their holiness, which can be hidden but never lost.

#43 Miracles arise from a miraculous state of mind, or a state of miracle-readiness.

AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR CHURCH FAMILY

from Lisa Hall



After church the Sunday before Christmas I took my coat out of the coat rack, put it on and got into my car. I was surprised at the strong fragrance coming from my coat, because I'm fragrance free. When I got home I left the coat to air out over a chair, but the whole living room filled up with the smell. I put the coat outside in the woodshed for a week, but it was still very fragrant. I had to wash it before I could stand to wear it again.

Fortunately, I don't get sick from perfume. I just have to be fragrance free because I work in an office with patients who are chemically sensitive. But if I were someone who actually has the medical diagnosis of chemical sensitivity, I wouldn't have been able to wear my coat home. I would have had to leave church without a coat and have someone else retrieve my coat and wash it before I could wear it again.

We want to be as inclusive of everyone as we can at HCC. So please remember to avoid wearing perfume to church, or at least, a very light amount. The coat next to mine in the coat rack must have been dowsed with perfume to make my coat smell that strong.

LETTER FROM GERTRUDE RAMSTROM, NEWTON, NH TO RUTH BEEBE

(Reprinted with permission)

December 5, 2011

Dear Ruth,

How wonderful to find a letter from you in the mail! It was like reaching back to the old days when Haydenville was the focus of our fun and our endeavors.

I have been wondering about you and had no idea you were in touch with our church activities. I was so excited by your letter I immediately sought my old photo album where I had a picture of my first teaching experience. It is a photo of your Sunday school class. You are among twelve little girls standing on the front steps of the church. All are dressed up for a special service. It must have been a children's day observation before the summer recess. The date is June 1933.

Your description of the recent renovations of the church was astounding though I do get some news about it from Roger – I believe he gets notices of activities from reports mailed to him. It sounds like a very active congregation that is reaching beyond the village and to picture 130 parishioners at a Sunday service is beyond comprehension.

Thanks again for your letter. I am house-bound with disability but not really ill and am managing very well with health aids.

I hope you have a very merry Christmas and a year of health and happiness.

Love,
Gertrude

NEW GROUP FOR PEOPLE CONSIDERING PARENTING

A peer support group is forming for people considering adoption, foster parenting or pregnancy. The goals of the group are to provide enough information and resources so that individuals or couples are aware of the options and can guide and support each other through the process. Confidentiality will be honored. We would like to begin meeting in February. Please let us know if you are interested or have any questions by contacting Vicha Hajdamowicz, Administrative Assistant at 413.536.5676 or haydenvilleucc@comcast.net. Vicha is happy to be our contact person for confidentiality purposes.

HAYDENVILLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING

The Church Council has made the decision to split our Church Annual Meeting into two parts. The "Open Forum" to discuss issues that might arise at the Annual Meeting scheduled to be held after Church on February 12th, will not be held. Instead, on that day, we will hold the Annual Meeting Part 1. The Annual Meeting Part 2 will be held after Church on February 26.

The Annual Meeting is the Church's equivalent to a "town meeting." The Church Annual Meeting is the essence of our self-governance. We gather to hear reports, review our finances, and make important decisions about the Church for the year ahead.

Every Church member has both the right and the responsibility to attend, listen, participate and vote at the Annual Meeting. We encourage all Church members to please mark their calendars now and make every effort to be present for both sessions. The agendas for the two-part Annual Meeting are below.

Please pick up and read the Annual Meeting Report which will be available in the Church Dining Room beginning January 29th.

Should you have any questions or concerns about this process, please contact Moderator Diane Scott, or Vice Moderator Sue Carbin.

ANNUAL MEETING: PART 1 - February 12th after worship
Held in the Sanctuary

Agenda:

Reading of the Roll
Approval of Minutes of Annual Meeting 2011
Reports from Church Boards and Committees

ANNUAL MEETING: PART 2 - February 26th after worship
Held in the Sanctuary

Agenda:

Reading of the Roll
Discussion of Church Finances including the Stewardship Committee report, Ladies Aid report and finances
Discussion of and voting on the Church Budget for 2012
Election of officers, board and committee members



STEWARDSHIP BY THE NUMBERS

from Lynn Goodhue, Treasurer

I'm a mathematician by training (not a budget analyst or a bookkeeper), and I love numbers. I like to see where numbers come from and to find the story the numbers tell us. That said, I hope you will indulge me in taking a different look at the stewardship campaign!

By the end of January 2011, 108 members and friends of our church (plus one anonymous donor) had pledged a total of **\$125,891** for the fiscal year 2011. This had exceeded our 2011 goal by quite a bit, and we were so thrilled that for 2012 we increased our goal even more, to **\$126,543**. And once again we exceeded the goal!

For 2012, 122 members and friends submitted a pledge form, or responded to phone calls, and of those 117 pledged **\$134,309** – an increase of 9 pledges (13%) and \$8,418 (8%). How did we do this when the economy has been bad, and so many of our church community are struggling to make ends meet? Here's what I discovered from the numbers:

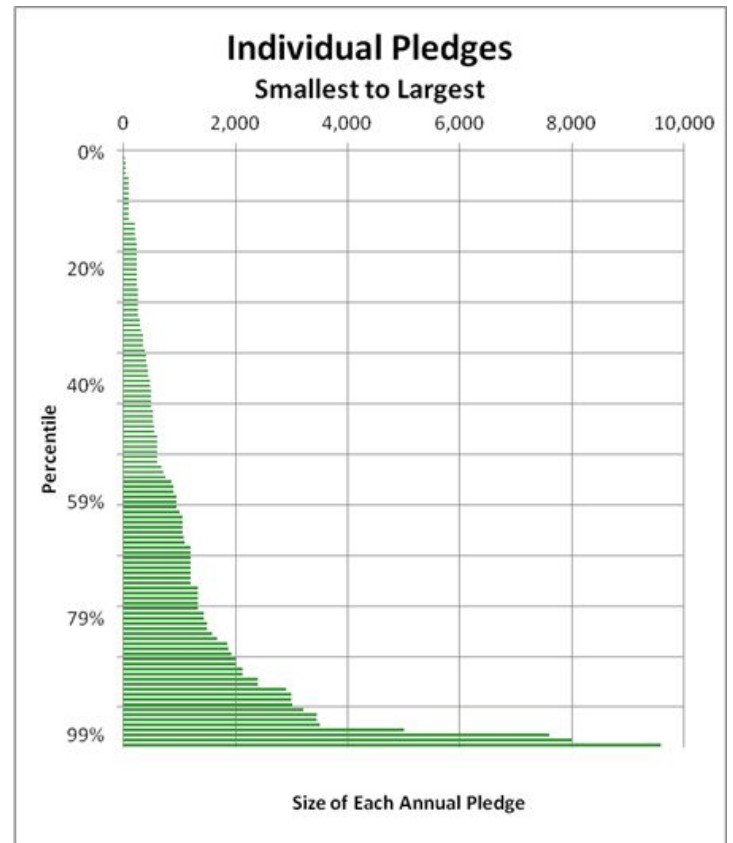
- We are missing nearly \$30,000 in pledges from people who did not (or could not) pledge this year,
- a small amount of the increase (less than \$500) is because of the extra Sunday in 2012,
- there were a good number of new pledges this year (24 new pledges totaling nearly \$13,000), and finally
- a major part of the increase was because of many people pledging significantly more than last year.

Kayla believes that a large part of this last amount may be due to Andrea's "8 for 8" challenge, and I am inclined to agree.

There were some losses. We lost two dear members of the church to death, and several others who had pledged last year have moved away, left the church or chose not to pledge this year. Five who responded could not make specific pledge but said they would give when they could.

If numbers, tables and graphs make your eyes glaze over, stop reading here! If you'd like to know how the numbers led me to these conclusions, read on:

We (the 117) pledged between \$20 and nearly \$10,000 each for the year, with an average of about \$1150, with half pledging less than \$600 and half more than \$600. Twenty-five percent pledged less than \$265 for the year, and 25% more than \$1325. The chart below shows the size of each of the 117 annual pledges sorted from smallest to largest, and you can see where your pledge fit in this distribution:



Twenty-two people or families pledged one-time gifts, 35 pledged weekly, 35 monthly, and 34 pledged an amount to be spread over the year. (Totals are more than 117 because some pledged over time plus one-time gifts.) Over \$12,000 was donated before Jan. 1. Fifteen of you have elected to pay via on-line bill pay, thirty would like to receive periodic pledge status reports via email, and more than 60 are using pledge envelopes.

And finally, here is a table that explains where the increase in pledges came from:

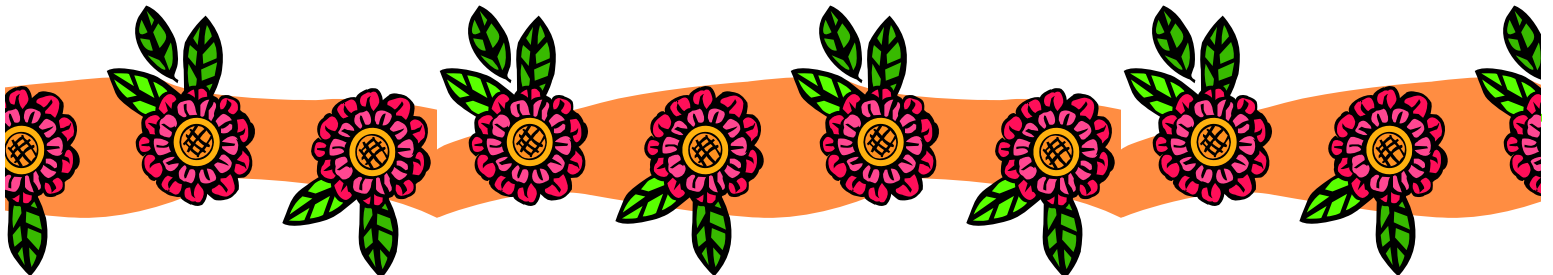
Change from Previous Year	Responses	Loss/
Pledged less than in 2011	22	-15,756
Did not respond	8	-11,002
Passed away	2	-2,540
Responded but could not pledge at	5	-478
Pledged the same as 2011	14	0
Pledged more, but difference is due to weekly pledges for 53 Sundays	13	445
New pledges	24	12,802
Pledged more than in 2011	44	23,991
Total Actual pledges, and increase for year	117 (132 –	8,418

In summary, as Andrea tells us, we are a generous church! And I'm sure the Stewardship Committee joins me in thanking each and every one of you for your generosity!

**see the back page for one more graphic!*

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Sunday, February 5:	10 AM 12 -2 PM	Worship Service with Communion. Godly Play Training, Children's Church. Contact Pastor Matilda for more info.
Monday February 6:	6 PM	Diaconate Meeting, Church Dining Room
Tuesday, February 7:	5:30 PM	Trustees Meeting, Church Dining Room
Wednesday, February 8:	7 PM	Shepherd's Meeting, Church Dining Room
Thursday, February 9:	6:30 - 8:00 PM	Thursday Night Live! <i>Psalms in Ordinary Voices</i> Interactive Workshop learning about and rewriting Psalms! Workshop Leader: Pastor Andrea
Saturday, February 11:	10 AM	Book Group. Open Forum~~all welcome to come and discuss Brian McLaren's book, A NEW KIND OF CHRISTIANITY: TEN QUESTIONS THAT ARE TRANSFORMING THE FAITH. Contact Paula Spencer for details. Church Dining Room
Sunday, February 12:	10 AM 12 PM	Worship Service. Annual Meeting Part 1, Church Sanctuary
Thursday, February 16:	1 PM	Ladies Aid, Church Dining Room
Saturday, February 18:	10 AM	Book Group discussing the book HOLY HUNGER by Margaret Bullitt-Jonas. All welcome. Contact Paula Spencer for details. Church Dining Room.
Sunday, February 19:	10 AM 12 PM	Worship Service. Transfiguration Sunday. Council Meeting, Church Sanctuary
Monday, February 20:	5 PM 6 PM	Youth Gathering, Children's Church. Contact Pastor Matilda for more info. A2A Committee Meeting, Contact Toby Davis for more info. Church Dining Room
Tuesday, February 21:	5:30 PM	"Soup, Salad and Social Change" Program focusing on poverty issues. Church Dining Room
Wednesday, February 22:	7 PM	Ash Wednesday Service with the imposition of ashes
Sunday, February 26:	10 AM 12 PM	First Sunday in Lent Worship Service. Annual Meeting Part 2, Church Sanctuary
Monday, February 27:	5:30 PM	Peace and Justice Steering Committee Meeting. Church Dining Room
Wednesday, February 29:	5 PM	Lenten Bible Study with Pastor Andrea, Church Dining Room





Haydenville Congregational Church

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

Dear Lord,

So far today I am doing all right. I have not gossiped, lost my temper, been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or self indulgent. I have not whined, cursed or eaten chocolate and I thank you.

However, I am going to get out of bed in a few minutes and I will need a lot more help after that. Amen.

Submitted by
Beth Howland
January 2012

A2A FILM "INCLUDING SAMUEL"

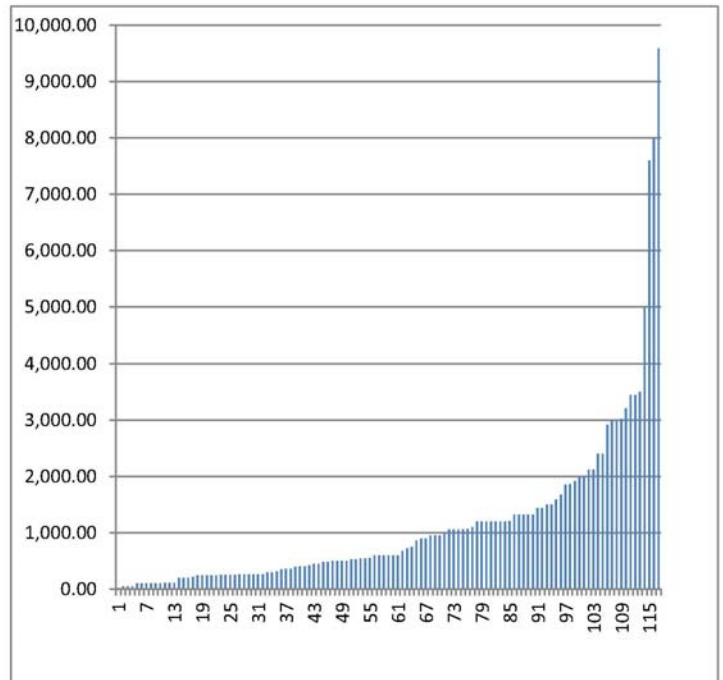
By Jim and Christine Foudy

A powerful film about one family's challenge to raise a physically disabled son prompted meaningful discussion among participants at the Thursday Night Live meeting January 12. The film, "Including Samuel," was sponsored by the HCC Accessible To All (A2A) Committee.

The film was produced by New Hampshire photojournalist Dan Habib. It is the story of Habib, his wife, Betsy, son Isaiah, and youngest son, Samuel, who was born with cerebral palsy. It is the story and journey of how this family, focusing on a commitment to include their son in every aspect of their life, found a school that would embrace and support Samuel and his family in all the ways they needed. The journey transformed not only the family but all that were involved. The film also featured four other families with varied inclusion experiences and included interviews with dozens of teachers, young people, parents, disability rights experts and activist.

Everyone that attended agreed the film was well-worth seeing. This is a must see documentary that will support the mission of the A2A committee which is about inclusion and acceptance of all no matter what their disability.

**Continue from page 6*



EACH INDIVIDUAL GIFT IN ORDER OF SIZE