

Cross Currents

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

FROM THE PASTOR

I know I am an annoying broken record on the topic of self-care. I hound you all relentlessly about taking good care of your precious selves. I do not do this so that you will be self-focused, smug, me/me/me airheads. I nag you about self-care because I want you to be your strongest, clearest, healthiest self so that God can use you fully to do God's work in the world.

As people of faith, we must do the hard work daily of creating the kingdom of God on earth. And it is difficult, tiring, important work. We need to be ready and able to serve well and share deeply, listen intently, help out when needed, vigil, sing, pray hard, and hug powerfully. In order to be fully used by God we need to be fully present, open and available—we need to be clear channels able to receive God's goodness and love and then equipped to share that love. Our goal is to be open vessels receiving God's grace and conduits extending that grace to others.

With this New Year breaking open before us, it is a good time to review how you are feeling and what blocks stand in the way of you being a clear, healthy and ready vessel to receive God's love and act on that gift. It is a good time to assess what burdens, behaviors, and "internal clutter" you may be carrying that prevents you from being fully used by God in the service of creating the kingdom on earth.

I am not interested in a number on a scale, the details of your cardio work-out, or the new hair-do you might

try out. I am interested in you determining what is optimally healthy for you and setting your sights on achieving that goal. We need to be our best and strongest selves to do God's work.



I believe that to achieve our optimal health, we need to attend to five specific areas: physical (exercise, diet, sleep); medical (check-ups, body, teeth, eyes, etc.); emotional (support, community, fellowship); intellectual (mental stimulation, reading, etc.); and spiritual (relationship with God, connection to Church, acts of service). To be active Christians (and I believe there is no other kind!), doing what we are called to do by God, we need to attend to our health in all of those arenas.

This is a tall order. But do not be discouraged... it is rewarding work. And we can help each other. We can talk to one other about our personal assessment and our realistic goals for the New Year. We can support each other by sharing how we intend to embrace wellness, health and wholeness in this New Year and we can cheer each other on all along the way.

God needs to use us...our voices, our feet, our hands, our minds....we are called to do good, hard work in the service of God. Clear the channel so you can be filled with grace and goodness. Clear the channel so you can do God's work with vitality, stamina, and light in your eyes. Let's help each other. God is near and we are ready!

With love,

NOTE FROM MATILDA, YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRIES:

An “Epiphany” for 2012: How Are We Ministering to Youth and Young Adults? (e·piph·a·ny: **a.** A Christian feast celebrating the manifestation of the divine nature of Jesus as represented by the Magi, on January 6, on which this feast is traditionally observed. **b.** A sudden manifestation of the essence or meaning of something.)

Dear Friends,

As we look forward to the year ahead of us, I would like us to think about the Ministry that we do in our church to YOUTH (Approx. 12-17) and YOUTH ADULTS. (Approx. 18-25) We have done a good job of drawing many children into our Church, but it is now time to look more deeply at how we are serving and ministering to teens and young adults. As you may know, 13-30 is the most underrepresented group in many church communities. The wider UCC is developing initiatives to address this discrepancy and reach out to a spiritually hungry generation who often feel disconnected from organized religion. (For many good reasons...) I am excited about these initiatives, and have been praying and thinking about our Youth and Young Adult Ministry at Haydenville. I have formulated some objectives and questions for 2012 which I want to share with you.

*First, we have five young people in our Church family who were confirmed in the spring of 2011. Many church leaders are working to keep them engaged and making sure they have an opportunity to perform service in the church and community, and that their gifts, talents and needs are recognized. Please make an effort to get to know these young people and find ways to share fellowship with them.

*Second, on **January 29th**, we will be having **Bring a Youth to Church Sunday**. Please bring any young person you might know, roughly between the ages 6th -12th grade. (Or younger or older OK too!) You will be hearing more about this this month, but please be thinking about a young person (s) you might know who might be interested in worshipping with us on 1/29. They will have the opportunity to join us afterwards for a Blue Moon Sunday Service Project.

*Third, Youth and Family Ministries will be starting a “Youth Advisory Board,” which will advise me and others about how we can continue to grow the youth program, and help us lead and supervise service projects and youth activities in our community and through the UCC. Please let me know if you are interested!

*Fourth, I want us to ask ourselves if we are extending our *radical hospitality* to young people, and where and how we need to do better. Are we reaching out to look for youth that really need us? Are we offering worship that appeals to young people, and are we using the Gospel to help us grapple with issues relevant to youth, like

sexuality, bullying, and the influence of media?

Please consider bringing a youth to Church on 1/29, joining our Youth Advisory Board, and praying about these questions and goals. I am grateful to the *StillSpeaking* God who is leading our church to speak and think in new ways about ministering to young people so that we can continue to build disciples, spread the Good News, and benefit from more of the richness of our human family.

In Faith and Gratitude,

Pastor Matilda

Youth and Family Ministries January Dates

SUNDAY January 15th: MLK SUNDAY—A special worship service in honor of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King and his legacy. A special CC focus on King as well.

SUNDAY January 8th: GODLY PLAY TRAINING, 11:45 a.m. New CC teachers required, other CC teachers, church leaders, and all others encouraged to attend. See Pastor Matilda for more information.

WEDNESDAY, January 18th: CHILDREN’S CHURCH POTLUCK, 6:00 p.m. All parents and teachers and CC friends warmly welcome, please come for food, fellowship, and discussion. *Childcare provided.*

SUNDAY, January 29th – BRING A YOUTH TO CHURCH SUNDAY AND BLUE MOON SUNDAY, No Coffee Hour, Join us for a Service Project. Meet in Church Dining Room following worship. See Pastor Matilda for more information.

THURSDAY NIGHT LIVE

Brought to you by your Accessible to All (A2A) Committee!

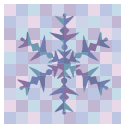
Join us in the Dining Room on Thursday, January 12 from 6:30-8:00 PM for a wonderful documentary called "Including Samuel" with discussion to follow.

About the film:

Before his son Samuel was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, photojournalist Dan Habib rarely thought about the inclusion of people with disabilities. Now he thinks about inclusion every day. Shot and produced over four years, Habib's award-winning documentary film, *Including Samuel*, honestly chronicles the Habib family's efforts to include Samuel in every facet of their lives. The film also features four other families with varied inclusion experiences, plus interviews with dozens of teachers, young people, parents and disability rights experts. “Including Samuel” is a highly personal, passionately photographed film that captures the cultural and systemic barriers to inclusion. More info online at <http://www.includingsamuel.com>. Contact a2a@haydenvillechurch.org for details.

NEWS FROM OUR BOOK GROUP

By Paula Spencer



We noshed on peanut butter-stuffed celery, cheese popcorn, Jello Stars and animal crackers and sipped hot chocolate (well, some insisted on coffee!). We played with Dreidels and read to one another from kids' books and stories including I'll Love You Forever, There Are No Cats in This Book!, When Mindy Saved Hanukkah, Donovan's Big Day, It's A Book! and an excerpt from Stuart Little. All this while hammering went on in the sanctuary hallway but we forged on undaunted. And that was our December meeting.

On January 14th we'll be meeting to discuss Brian McLaren's book A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions That Are Transforming the Faith. McLaren is a noted author and pastor. He wrote Naked Spirituality, which the HCC Men's Group read this fall. A New Kind of Christianity poses ten questions today's churches face which are "central to the emergence of a postmodern, post-colonial faith." (from McLaren's website). Amazon has paperback copies for \$10.19, there are some copies in the C/WMARS library system, and a few are owned by group members. We are considering a combined discussion with the Men's Group in late January if they decide to read A New Kind of Christianity as well. Get in touch with Paula Spencer if you have questions about Book Group.

GOINGS ON IN THE HAYDENVILLE KITCHEN

By Jo Cannon

So you know we've changed the Coffee Hour lineup and maybe you're even aware that we're trying to get volunteers to help setup and cleanup in advance so that the same people do not always end up in the Kitchen until 12:30 or 1:00. But did you know that even you can make coffee, set a great table and learn the workings of the Haydenville Kitchen?

We're hard at work writing up the How To (make coffee, or tea, run the dishwasher, set up for coffee hour, ...) and labeling the drawers, cabinets and shelves so that the kitchen can truly be accessible to everyone. We are a 'public' kitchen so we have to follow State laws like:

Everything that we put food on has to be properly sanitized.

We can't store pots, pans and other items on the floor. All food has to be covered and labeled and properly refrigerated or put on ice.

There are many more regulations, but you get the idea. The Haydenville Congregational Church kitchen is a wonderful resource for us as a community. Almost all our community events involve its use and you are part of that community,

so we want you to know how to properly use it.

Check out the Kitchen. It has almost everything you might look for in a community kitchen. If we all take care of it and return everything to its location, we can all use it safely and effectively for many years to come. If there is something you'd like to see documented or a change you would recommend to the instructions you see listed, leave a note to let us know. We welcome your input and your help!

- Haydenville Congregational Church and Ladies Aid

PARENTS OF ADULT CHILDREN

By Jo Cannon



So, when does a child become an adult?

Do you have a son or daughter who is legally an adult: "legal adult" refers to "a person who has attained the age of majority and is therefore regarded as independent, self-sufficient, and responsible." Is your child ready to be 'self-sufficient and responsible?' While the USA defines 18 as the 'age of maturity' most older adults in our society generally agree that 21 is closer to the actual age at which most young adults begin to be ready to be independent. Some 18 year-olds are adults. For some youth adulthood comes after college graduation, for others after a few years of working, while living at home with their parents. Each young person is different. Some simply have a rocky transition into adulthood despite all we might do to try to smooth the road for them.

If you have a young adult son or daughter, who is struggling with adult decisions and responsibilities, you are not alone. I know you are not alone, because I have just such a daughter. I spend my days trying to answer challenging questions such as: "How do I help my daughter become independent?"; "When is bailing her out being supportive and when is it enabling poor decision making or bad resource management?"; "What is reasonable to expect of her at this point in her life, and what do I do when she doesn't meet those expectations?"

I don't have the answers, but I'd like to propose we get together and share our ideas and experiences. Perhaps we can help each other find the answers that work best for our individual circumstances. It's likely that no two of us will help our adult children in exactly the same way, but I believe we will all learn from each other's experiences and points of view. If you might be interested in starting a discussion with other parents facing similar challenges, send an email to padultchild@gmail.com. I'll find a time when we can chat.

COFFEE HOUR FOOD!

Here is the line-up for January, with the new divisions our faithful Jo Cannon created for us. Please remember to HELP IN THE KITCHEN! We need you to set up and clean up when it is your week! Let's not leave the Saints and a couple of hearty souls in the kitchen working away alone. Thank you one and all!

January 1: L and M

January 8: N through R plus 5 helpers (Jo, Til, Andrea, Sue C and Jackie)

January 15: S through V

January 22: A through C and W through Z

January 29: Blue Moon Sunday; no Coffee Hour

ATTENTION ALL MEN!

By Pastor Andrea

During the Fall, we held a Book Group just for the MEN in our Church. About a dozen of us gathered weekly for a month and read NAKED SPIRITUALITY by Brian McLaren. We found the gatherings moving and meaningful and when the four-week series was over we did not want to separate! And so the MEN'S BOOK GROUP is continuing. Any MEN in the Church are invited to join us.

We will be reading another Brian McLaren book, this one called A NEW KIND OF CHRISTIANITY: TEN QUESTIONS THAT ARE TRANSFORMING THE FAITH.

We will meet again for a month, on four Saturdays from 4:30 PM to 5:45 PM. The dates are: January 7, 14, 21, and 28. Any men connected to our Church (members, friends, visitors) are welcome to come to any or all of the sessions (whether you have read the book or not!). MEN...break away from your Saturday routine and come join us. We are a great group and we welcome your input and presence!

"Our life is love, and peace,
and tenderness, and bearing one with
another, and forgiving one another —
and helping one another up
with a tender hand,
if there has been any slip or fall."
Isaac Pennington, 1667

OCCUPY MOVEMENT

By Doug Renick for Peace and Justice Steering Committee

We are the 99%! Banks got baled out and we got sold out! I wish I could afford to buy my own politician! Hey, Hey, Ho, Ho corporate greed has got to go! Why are they wiggling their fingers like that? Got a minute to talk about why this country is heading in the wrong direction? And how do you feel about the inequality of income and wealth in this country? We have the best democracy that money can buy! People in tents. Tear gas. Pepper spray. 700 arrested on Brooklyn Bridge. No bankers or brokers arrested. What is going on?

Such a swirl of images, sounds and sound bites. The Peace and Justice Steering Committee hosted a conversation about the occupy movement on December 1st at our beloved Bread Euphoria. Seven of us shared our perceptions, our questions and our hopes for this movement. This conversation was summarized well by the prayer written by Lisa Hall on behalf of the group and included in the following Sunday's Prayers of the People.

"Prayers for the Occupy movement across the country and the world -- for its inclusive, non-violent, awakening spirit. For the way it is getting conversations going between people of all kinds, and helping the 99% find their connection and their voice. Bless those who have committed their lives to it, and those who are just curious. And bless the positive changes it could bring to our world."

Those who met want to keep the conversation about the movement and the movement's issues (our issues) alive at Haydenville Congregational. Watch for coffee hour conversations and other opportunities to talk about this. Also watch for opportunities to act—our own actions and actions supporting Occupy Northampton when possible.

Here's a report on a previous occupation that relates to our series on poverty: *"With the Poor People's Campaign, Martin is talking about taking these poor people to Washington, build tents, and live on the [Washington] mall until this country does something about poverty... Can you imagine what would happen if all these black and white and brown people go to Washington and build tents and live in tents in Washington?"* - Reverend Samuel Kyles.

If you want more information here are some sources: <occupywallstreet.org> <occupytogether.org> <youtube.com/occupyvtv> Google "Occupy Northampton" to connect with our local group and find out when and where they are holding their general assemblies. Go to a general assembly to see who's involved and what local and national issues they are discussing. Stay tuned.

JANUARY CALENDAR

Sunday, January 1:	10 AM	New Year's Day Worship Service with Communion. No Children's Church
Tuesday, January 3:	5:30 PM	Trustees Meeting, Church Dining Room
Saturday, January 7:	4:30 PM	Men's Book Group Meeting, Church Dining Room
Sunday, January 8:	10 AM 11:45 AM 12:30 PM	Worship Service Godly Play Training All new CC teachers required, other cc teachers, church leaders, and all others encouraged to attend. See Pastor Matilda for more information. Meeting to discuss formation of a men's group, its interests and direction. Contact Wyatt Myers for details. Church Dining Room
Monday January 9:	6 PM	Diaconate Meeting, Church Dining Room
Tuesday, January 10:	5:30 PM	A2A Accessible to All Meeting. Contact Toby Davis for details. Church Dining Room
Thursday, January 12:	6:30-8:00 PM	Thursday Night Live. A short (1 hour) film "Including Samuel." Before his son Samuel was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, photojournalist Dan Habib rarely thought about the inclusion of people with disabilities. Now he thinks about inclusion every day. It's a film that captures the cultural and systemic barriers to inclusion. Discussion to follow. Contact Toby Davis for details. Church Dining Room
Saturday, January 14:	10 AM 4:30 PM	Book Group. Brian McLaren's A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions That Are Transforming the Faith. Contact Paula Spencer for details. Church Dining Room Men's Book Group Meeting, Church Dining Room
Sunday, January 15:	10 AM	Worship Service. Martin Luther King Day, Pastor Matilda preaching
Wed., January 18:	6 PM	Children's Church Potluck All parents and teachers and CC friends warmly welcome, please come for food, fellowship, and discussion. Childcare provided, Dining Room
Thursday, January 19:	1 PM	Ladies Aid, Church Dining Room
Saturday, January 21	4:30 PM	Men's Book Group Meeting, Church Dining Room
Sunday, January 22:	10 AM	Worship Service
Tuesday, January 24:	5:30 – 7:30 PM	Soup, Salad and Social Change presents Katherine Callaghan, leader of the Northampton Living Wage Coalition, Guest Speaker. Church Dining room
Saturday, January 28:	4:30 PM	Men's Book Group Meeting, Church Dining Room
Sunday, January 29:	10 AM	Worship Service

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS!

January 3	Wilson Molano, Doug Renick & Jil Blake	January 19	Francesca Piantedosi
January 7	Cindy McQueston & Debra Edwards	January 20	Leon Hajdamowicz & Julia Guiel
January 9	Sue Carbin	January 21	Nancy Capron & Christina Sample
January 10	Gloria Ayzavian, Sandy Blackmon & Allen Warner	January 22	Beth Warner & Jose Newcomb-Gerken
January 11	Diane Bushee & James Palermo	January 23	Lynne Wallace
January 12	Eliza Warner & Tim McQueston	January 26	Shirley Warner & MaryEllen McQueston
January 16	Vicha Hajdamowicz & Haley McElligott	January 27	Bill Loomis, Linda O'Dea, Cherilyn Strader & Mesfin Daniel McManany
January 17	Emily Dines	January 28	Samuel Wheeler
January 18	Myanna Carbin-O'Brien	January 30	Phillip Hall & Harry Warner
		January 31	Adriana Piantedosi & Aidan Chappuis



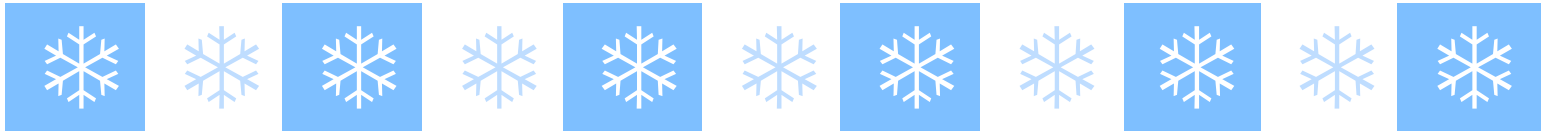
Haydenville Congregational Church

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THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS

by Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
 To find the lost,
 To heal the broken,
 To feed the hungry,
 To release the prisoner,
 To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers and sisters,
 To make music in the heart.



SUPPORT GROUP FORMING FOR PEOPLE CONSIDERING PARENTING

A new support group is forming for people somewhere on the spectrum from considering parenthood to trying to become a parent via 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 to guide and support each other through the decision-making process. Confidentiality will be honored. We hope to have an initial meeting in January in which we can make plans together, including a regular time and place to meet. Vicha Hajdamowicz, Administrative Assistant, is our contact person. If you are interested or have questions please contact Vicha. [413.695.1395](tel:413.695.1395) / haydenvilleucc@comcast.net.

REFLECTIONS ON THE DECEMBER BOOK GROUP MEETING

By Christine Foudy

What a great time we had at the December book club meeting. Remember the books, poems or stories that we either read as a child or had read to us? And what about the food and drink that we could not get enough of as children. With that in mind, we brought in books, poems and stories to read to one another along with snacks of cheese popcorn, peanut butter stuffed celery, wiggly, jiggly jello stars and animal crackers followed by a steaming cup of hot chocolate with marshmallows. We laughed, cried and just plain enjoyed going down memory lane and sharing those childhood memories with one another.

