

Cross Currents



March 2017 • Open Hearts & Open Minds & Open Doors

From Pastor Chris

Kindle, Continued

My dear siblings, brothers, and sisters,
On February 26th - - the final Sunday before Lent - - I preached about our need to kindle the fires that are within our bones. Each one of us possesses God-given gifts that we are called to share, and so many of us are passionate about a wide variety of social justice causes. Like the prophet Jeremiah, we feel this burning urge to share our gifts and passions. However, we also risk “burning too hot” and burning out!

During the sermon, I asked the congregation to take 5 minutes to consider some prompting questions listed on the back of the bulletin, suggesting that our responses could be taken on as a Lenten Devotion of sorts. I think it’s only fair for me to share with you how I responded to these questions!

What gives you a “fire in your bones?” I get easily “fired up” when it comes to issues of violence, oppression, discrimination, equal rights, and inclusion. The faintest hint of racism or prejudice can set my heart to beat faster, and I feel compelled to respond. That is one type of fire. I also get “fired up” when I encounter signs of hope: stories of ordinary and extraordinary kindness, triumph in the face of adversity, communities pulling together to strengthen and deepen relationships.

How will you be “on fire in the Spirit?” As I have said before, it is quite a privilege to have this job as your pastor. I am afforded countless opportunities to share my thoughts and opinions with you, and to

Highlights

visit us online at: haydenvillechurch.org

Lent and Holy Week Events and Worship Services

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“One of my most cherished roles is our sponsorship of new members.”

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receive immediate feedback. Being “on fire in the Spirit” is twofold in this case: I will continue to preach as dynamically as I can, but more importantly I will further nurture in myself a spirit of deep listening and willingness to grow and change - - which I hope to do my whole life long.

I also will fire up my spirit with some commitments to work on my social justice passions, finding the ways in which I can be most helpful to the individuals, organizations, and causes placed on my mind and my heart.

How will you kindle that fire and not burn out? Now this is a tricky one, and the essential one! What is the right amount of fuel to add to my fire? How do I temper it when it grows too hot and risks burning out? I now that I need to rededicate my efforts at self care. I need to put time for exercise on my calendar and honor it as I would any other scheduled obligation. I need to feed my brain and finally finish reading that stack of books that’s been languishing on my nightstand: “Glorify” by Rev. Emily C. Heath; “Blue Note Preaching in a Post-Soul World” by Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III; and “The Fire Next Time” by James Baldwin. I’ve also recently taken up cross stitching, and I find the repetition of each stitch and the gradual-but-steady emergence of a pattern and image both fulfilling and relaxing.

What are your gifts and passions? Confession: I always feel a bit funny talking about my gifts! I strive to be a good friend, a good partner, a good citizen, a good pastor, and a great parent. All of these things require adaptability, curiosity, humor, thoughtfulness, a willingness to change, a willingness to try and also fail, and the ability to truly be present and listen. I think I possess many of the gifts necessary to meet those criteria.

How will you find others that share these gifts and passions and have other gifts and passions that kindle your fire? Community! I am lucky to be part of a faith community with so many diverse gifts, passions, and resources. The same goes for my circle of friends and my clergy colleagues. I will seek out opportunities to join in and support efforts that call out to me, and if none arise, I will try to create those opportunities!

It looks like it’s going to be a busy, busy Lent both personally and professionally. I’m lucky and I am thankful to be on this Lenten journey with all of you.

Peace & Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Chris". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line underneath.

From Pastor Chris: A Note About My Schedule

I am available for evening meetings on **Tuesdays and Wednesdays**, and I will be blocking off all of **Wednesday** to write my sermon and prepare for worship. **Saturday will be my day off**, which will include staying away from email after about 6:00 pm on Friday. Please note that an email sent to me late Friday might not be read until late Sunday. However, if you have an urgent issue or a pastoral emergency, you can always call me at (860) 966-8055. Thank you!

Lent @ Holy Week 2017

Haydenville Congregational Church

Ash Wednesday Worship Service

March 1st at 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary

We mark the start of Lent with this Evensong-inspired contemplative time of confession and reflection. You will have the opportunity to lift prayers, request a blessing, and receive ashes. All are welcome.

Rock and Shell Cross

Sunday, March 5th during Worship

On the First Sunday of Lent, we will make our Lenten Rock and Shell Cross on the floor of the Sanctuary in front of the chancel, calling out a litany of things you may want to let go of or heal during Lent. In addition to the rocks and shells that will be available, we invite you to bring an object that symbolizes this for you.

Lenten Devotional & Study Series

Wednesdays from 5:30 to 7:00 pm in the Dining Room

Devotions & Discussions

March 8th, 15th, & 22nd

Our first three Wednesdays will be a time of Devotions and Discussions. We'll begin our time with a brief spiritual practice or worship, which will guide our semi-informal and discussion time. Topics and themes will be announced in the near future.

Book Study

March 29th & April 5th

"The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem"

In this two-session study of this text by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan, we will follow Jesus day-by-day from his triumphant entry into Jerusalem to the cross to his resurrection. Borg and Crossan give us insight to the "Historical Jesus," bringing his world to life and deepening our understanding of Jesus's final days. Pastor Chris has a few loaner copies. You don't have to finish the book to join the conversation! Please also read the Gospel of Mark for some "primary source" background. Drop-ins are welcome, but your RSVP to Pastor Chris by March 22nd is much appreciated.

Holy Week & Easter

Palm Sunday

Jesus enters Jerusalem
April 9th at 10:00 am

Maundy Thursday

Service of Tenebrae
April 13th at 7:00 pm

Good Friday

Sanctuary open for prayer
April 14th from 12:00 - 3:00 pm

Easter Sunday

Christ is Risen!
April 16th at 10:00 am

Easter Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser

8:30 - 9:30 am
Dining Room

Come early and enjoy some pancakes while supporting the work of our church! Proceeds will be shared with Cathedral in the Night and the Interfaith Cot Shelter.

Details coming soon!

Our Beloved Community at the Women's Marches January 21, 2017



Transition Leadership Team Update

Next steps for our church in the transition to a new settled pastor

Dear Church Family,

On behalf of the Church Council, the Transition Leadership Team has worked to guide the process for selecting new pastoral leadership following the retirement of Pastor Andrea. The Annual Report describes the work we did together to select Chris Mereschuk as our Acting Pastor. Now we must address the path forward toward a new settled pastor.

The first step to write a Church Profile, which will reflect who we are as a church and what we want to become. The profile template that the Massachusetts United Church of Christ provides will ask us to consider and answer a number of questions as we explore where we have been as a church, who we are today, and what our vision is for the future. The profile also helps define the skills, gifts and graces we are looking for in our next settled pastor.

Writing the Church Profile is going involve a lot of conversation among all of us. We will build off the visioning work that the congregation did last year. The conclusions from the visioning process will give us a good start toward creation of our Church Profile.

Members of the Transition Leadership Team have spoken to Rev. Peter Wells and he has agreed to work with us to write the profile. Peter is a well-regarded former Area Minister for the Massachusetts UCC who knows our church well. Some of you may have met him at Andrea's retirement service. He has a lot of experience helping congregations write their profiles. Peter will work closely with our congregation and a Profile Committee, which will actually write the document with input from all of us.

Here's how that committee will be selected. Beginning today we invite you to nominate someone to serve on the Profile Committee. We suggest you talk with them first to see if they are interested. This will be a working committee and we expect it will meet at least twice a month from March through June. We need committee members who are good listeners, committed to the church, and open to shaping a profile that reflects our collective sense for the future. A few good writers are also needed. Nominations will close after Sunday service March 5th. There will be a box in the dining hall for you to submit the names of people for the Profile Committee, and tell us why you are nominating them.

The Transition Leadership Team will review the nominations and select five to seven people to serve on the committee. Peter has stressed to us the importance of selecting a committee that is broadly representative of the congregation. The names of the Profile Committee members will be submitted to Church Council for their approval March 12 and the committee will start work right after that. The Profile Committee members will meet with various groups within the church, such as trustees and deacons, and hold all-church meetings to gather information and ideas for the profile. Everyone gets a voice.

The goal is to have the Church Profile completed by early September. Then we will follow a similar process to nominate and select a Search Committee, which will use the Church Profile to review the profiles of pastoral candidates, beginning with our Acting Pastor, if he wishes to be considered. Once the Search Committee makes a decision about a final candidate, that person will be presented to the congregation at a Candidating Sunday. The congregation will then vote on whether to call that person as our settled pastor.

Moving forward with prayers and deep commitment to our church community,

Your Transition Leadership Team,
Jo Cannon
Pat James
Lynn Fogg
Alice Barber
Jim Foudy

Winter Weather Alerts and Cancellations

Worship cancellations due to inclement weather will be publicized on TV channel 22, sent out on our email list, and posted on our Facebook page. Worship service cancellation decisions are made by 7:00 am. As always, please use your own best judgement about traveling to church if the weather is bad.

YOU Can Be a Worship Leader!

You can help "Widen Our Worship" by taking on worship leadership roles including leading prayers, Invitation to the Offering, readings, and sharing the News of the Community. Pastor Chris will gladly collaborate with you and offer tips/training. Please contact Pastor Chris (revcjm@gmail.com or (860) 966-8055) if you are interested, and thank you!

Summer Camp at Silver Lake Conference Center!

It's not too early to make plans for the summer! Silver Lake has all sorts of weeklong, overnight conferences for young people entering 4th through 12th grade, in addition to half-week family and off-site mission work camps. Whether you are the artsy or musical type, like sports and games, want to challenge the high ropes course or take a dip in the lake, Silver Lake has a conference for you!

Nestled in the Northwest Hills of Sharon, CT, Silver Lake is the year-round Outdoor Ministry site owned and operated by the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ. **Registration is going on now!** To register and for more information, visit silverlakeect.org. Financial assistance is available through Silver Lake and the Massachusetts UCC, and is always confidential. See Pastor Chris (a long time Silver Laker!) for more information.

Massachusetts UCC Super Saturday

March 18, 2017 from 8:00 am to 3:45 pm

Join with members of the Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island UCC Conferences for this semi-annual time of worship, fellowship, education and inspiration! Workshops will be offered on a wide variety of topics like care and wellness, church vitality, faith formation, justice and witness, and leadership. Internationally renowned author and activist Brian McLaren will be the keynote speaker. For more information, visit www.macucc.org/. Super Saturday will be held at Minnechaug Regional High School, 621 Main St., Wilbraham, MA.



Keynote speaker Brian McLaren

Women's Fellowship

Thursday, March 9th from 6:00 to 7:30 pm

The next meeting of the new Women's Fellowship will be held at Mariel Addis's home in Florence. The topic and discussion will be about the period of Lent and the opportunity it provides us to deepen our relationship with Christ. All those who identify as women are warmly invited to attend. At each meeting we focus on bringing God's presence into our daily lives by enriching our prayer life, reading scripture, having discussions, etc. Bring your bible, your ideas, and the desire to know Jesus on a deeper level. Please no food or drink. Any questions? Please contact Laine Wilder or Susan Sachs.

How Can I Help?

- Looking for a way to be more engaged in the life of our Beloved Community? Here are some ideas:
- Cook and deliver meals for Angel Take Out
- Bring in food donations for our Open Pantry
- Be an Usher or Greeter for worship
- Read scripture in worship
- Read the Announcements in worship
- Join the Coffee Klatch Support Team
- Join a monthly Coffee Klatch
- Serve on a committee
- Ask Pastor Chris about some administrative work
- Be a Children's Church teacher
- Help out with fundraising and stewardship
- Help publish the printed and email announcements
- Sign up to be a Snow Angel
- Attend a fellowship group
- Attend a Peace & Justice event
- Pledge!
- Participate!
- Pray!
- Then pray again!
- Interested? Look at the leadership list on page 10 of this newsletter for who to contact, or be in touch with Pastor Chris and he'll point you in the right direction.

Thanks for all you do!

Annual Meeting Highlights

- We held our Annual Meeting on February 26th following worship, engaging with a packed agenda!
- More detailed minutes will be available soon, but here are some highlights:
- Proposed 2017 budget approved
- Nominations approved
 - See the leadership list on page 10 of this newsletter for new leaders
- Bylaw changes approved
 - Addition of Human Resources Coordinator position, plus a voting seat on the Council
 - Change to composition of Trustees reflecting loss of Ladies Aid Trustee position
- Transition Leadership Team Update
 - Update on search process for next settled pastor (see page 5 for report)
- Circle of Care refugee relief update
- Approval of signing on to "Faithful America" pledge regarding non-cooperation with any deportation attempts at our church
- Coffee Klatch system and Support Team
 - Affirmation of current system and invitation for others to join the Support Team
 - To be discussed further at March 12th Council meeting

March

- 1 Dust (Ash Wednesday)
- 2 Journey
- 3 Birth
- 4 Witness
- 5 Peace
- 6 Sin
- 7 Searching
- 8 Confession
- 9 Questions
- 10 Resist
- 11 Beauty
- 12 Hope
- 13 Redemption
- 14 Known
- 15 Unknown
- 16 Sanctuary
- 17 Belonging
- 18 Faith
- 19 Joy

20 Invite

- 21 Community
- 22 Stumble
- 23 Temptation
- 24 Repentance
- 25 Strength
- 26 Love
- 27 Embrace
- 28 Weakness
- 29 Quiet
- 30 Guide
- 31 Awe

April

- 1 Playful
- 2 Belonging
- 3 Healing
- 4 Worship
- 5 Salvation
- 6 Forgiveness
- 7 Justice
- 8 Transformation

Social Media Lenten Photo Devotional

For each day, post a photo that represents the word of the day on your Facebook or Instagram page.

"Tag" your photo with #Lent, the word of the day, and our church!

- 9 Royalty (Palm Sunday)
- 10 Temple
- 11 Sacrifice
- 12 Prayer
- 13 Communion (Maundy Thursday)
- 14 Despair (Good Friday)
- 15 Longing
- 16 Rise (Easter)



Instagram

@haydenvilleucc



Facebook

Haydenville
Congregational Church

Is God on Crack?

From the blog of Annie Turner

What happens when you don't know how much time you have left in your life but you are still filled with desires? To learn a new language, see the Parthenon again, have another baby (impossible now), become a pastor, travel to New Zealand, and to do more and be more than you have previously been?

I think we ALL struggle with this as we age: it is the serious time when you hunker down, lean in, and figure out—"What's next?"

Obviously—and you know where this is going—the stakes are higher when you've had cancer, and though things may *look* good, there are no guarantees you will have years ahead of you.

Recently, a dear friend who we thought had pretty much "beaten cancer" with harsh treatments, found there is a new shadow on his CAT scan. What comes next? Can we hope or not?

God only knows. Sometimes I think God is on crack. We get good results from a scan and our heads lift up, we take out our planners, and think about renting a villa in Tuscany (surprisingly cheap). Then a bad scan comes in, our hearts plummet, and we start thinking about buying a cemetery plot and whether we prefer cremation or a good old-fashioned Catholic burial. Total whiplash.

How to keep a sense of balance in this?

I am actually not sure. I have a very strong faith, great attitude, lots of supportive friends, two (2!) faith communities, a beautiful house with a view to sustain me, an adorable dog, and a husband beyond marvelous.

But how to craft a life when we don't know how much time we have left? Here are a few modest suggestions:

--Forget going back to college.

--Forget wishing to be the oldest new neurosurgeon on the planet.

--Forget about learning Latin, which I wish to heck I had.

--Forget about Alpine climbing vacations. Heck, I'd settle for a brisk walk around Look Park.

So, we let go of things, but there are paths we can take which nourish us and keep us from fretting about our lifespans.

--Get wiser.

--Read the Bible more thoroughly and compare translations. (This will make me seem cool when I stand up for Sermon Response.)

--Volunteer at the Soup Kitchen and bring food to the Survival Center.

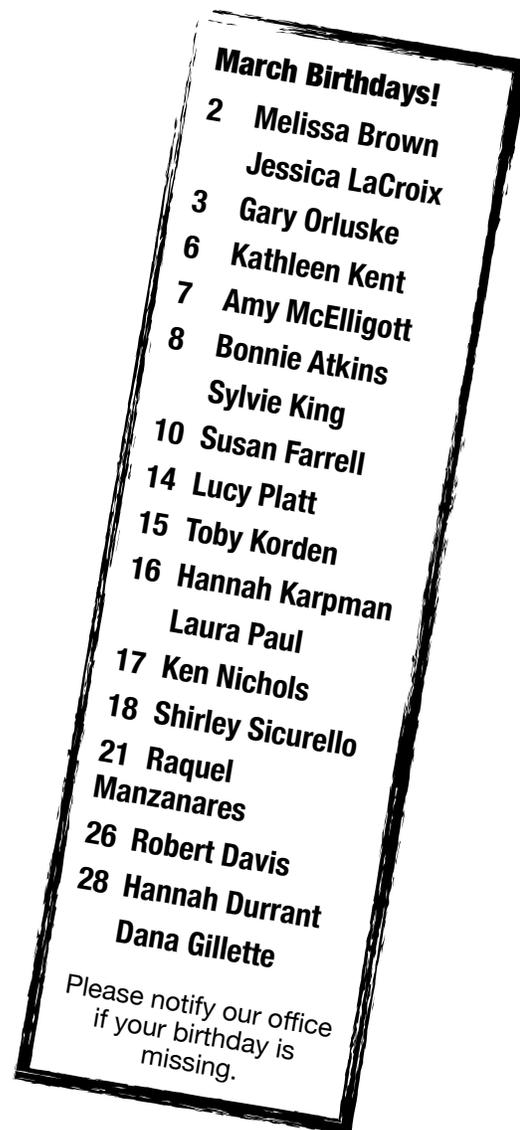
--Practice humility. This happens naturally when wearing a Johnny with portions of your fundament in view, but there are other ways to learn this: Listen first, talk second; don't assume you are right; think less of me, more of you.

--Get more laugh lines around your eyes and mouth. This is easy being married to a stand-up comedian.

--Continue to "mother" my adult children IF and WHEN they need me. Maybe I'll just morph into a giant, sympathetic ear.

And above all, love, just love, for then Julian of Norwich's words will ring true: *All will be well, all will be well, and all manner of things shall be well.*

Because no matter how long we have left or how few days, if we love widely, expansively, and without thought to the cost, all *will* be well.



Calendar for March

Please check the online church calendar to confirm meeting dates, times and locations.

Date	Time	Event	Location
Wed. March 1	7:00 pm	Ash Wednesday Worship Service	Sanctuary
Thurs. March 2	6:30pm	Diaconate Meeting	Dining Room
Sun. March 5	10:00 am	Worship Service with Communion & Lenten Cross	Sanctuary
Tue. March 7	5:30 pm 5:30 pm	Soup & Salad: "White Like Me" Film Trustees Meeting	Dining Room Children's Church
Wed. March 8	5:30 pm 7:00 pm	Lenten Devotions & Discussions Choir Practice	Dining Room Sanctuary
Thurs. March 9	6:00 pm	Women's Fellowship	Marief Addis's Home
Sun. March 12	10:00 am 11:45 am	Worship Service Council Meeting	Sanctuary Sanctuary
Tues. March 14	7:00pm	Men's Fellowship Meeting	Dining Room
Wed. March 15	5:30 pm 7:00 pm	Lenten Devotions & Discussions Choir Practice	Dining Room Sanctuary
Thurs. March 16	6:00pm	Journey: Support Group	
Sat. March 18	8:00 am	MACUCC Super Saturday	Wilbraham
Sun. March 19	10:00 am	Worship Service; Rev. Dr. Peter Ives, Guest Preacher	Sanctuary
Mon. March 20	6:00 pm	Peace and Justice Meeting	Dining Room
Tue. March 21	6:00 pm	Trans Writing Group	
Wed. March 22	5:30 pm 7:00 pm	Lenten Devotions & Discussions Choir Practice	Dining Room Sanctuary
Sun. March 26	10:00 am	Worship Service	Sanctuary
Wed. March 29	5:30 pm 7:00 pm	"The Last Week" Book Study, Part I Choir Practice	Dining Room Sanctuary
Thurs. March 30	5:30 pm	Soup & Salad: Black Lives Matter Series	

Church Leadership

Rev. Chris Mereschuk
Acting Pastor
revcjm@gmail.com
(860) 966-8055

Jeff Olmsted
Minister of Music

Rev. Lindsey Peterson
Transitional Director
of Children's Church

Sam Icklan
Church Moderator

Toby Davis
Church Vice Moderator

Nancy Winninger
Clerk

Jo Cannon
Treasurer

Shirley Sicurello
Carolyn du Bois
Diaconate, *Co-Chairs*

Karin McGowan
Trustees, *Chair*

Rev. Dr. Peter Ives
Theologian-
in-Residence

Rev. Yohah Ralph
Minister of Outreach,
Advocacy and
Pastoral Care

Kathy O'Connor
Church Sexton

Jim Foudy
Human Resources
Coordinator, Men's
Fellowship, *Chair* &
Church
Communications

Andrew Geery
Children's and
Family Ministries
Committee, *Chair*

Bonnie Atkins
Linda Ziegenbein
Toby Davis
Pastor Chris
Pastor Parish
Relations
Committee

Francie Lin
Angel Take-out,
Coordinator

Nancy Winninger
Angel Wings,
Coordinator

Jackie Cloonan
Snow Angels, Green
Angels, *Coordinator*

Bev Orluske
Nancy Winninger
Angel Hearts

Doug Renick
Peace and Justice
Steering Committee,
Chair

Bob Varnon
Stewardship
Committee, *Chair*

Susan Farrell
Music Committee,
Chair

Sue Carbin
Building
Maintenance, *Chair*
& Church Scheduler
scarbin1973@aol.com

Linda Ziegenbein
Interfaith Cot Shelter
Meal, *Coordinator*

Anne Pratt
Scripture Reader
Coordinator

Laura Paul
Librarian

Shirley Sicurello
Welcome Ministry,
Chair

Cindy Dolgoff
Head Usher

Laurie Priest
Ann Loomis
Co-Head Greeters

Francis McKane
Mount Holyoke
College Intern

Laura Garcia
Webmaster

Hannah Karpman
Katie Hull
CrossCurrents

Bev Orluske
Nancy Winninger
Keepers of the Keys

Ross Bassett
Jan Varnon
Bob Varnon
Lay Delegates

Rev. Dr. Peter Ives
Pat James
Keepers
of the Covenant

Trustees
Karin McGowan
Laura Garcia
Jo Cannon, *Treasurer*.
Carol Shaw
Diane Scott
Robert Davis

Deacons
Shirley Sicurello
Carolyn du Bois
Olivia Ilano Davis
Ellen Tobiassen
Trish LaFreniere
Cate Shaw
Mariel Addis
Heather King
Susan Farrell
Laine Wilder
Philip Maurer

Church Council
Pastor
Moderator
Vice Moderator
Clerk
Treasurer
Human Resources
Coordinator
Trustees, *Chair*
Diaconate, *Chair*
Stewardship, *Chair*
Music, *Chair*
Peace & Justice, *Chair*
Family Ministries,
Chair

CrossCurrent Submissions: All items for publication should be sent to: hcnews@haydenvillcongregationalchurch.org by the 15th of the month.



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