

Cross Currents

June, July, August 2017 • Open Hearts & Open Minds & Open Doors



From Pastor Chris

My sisters, brothers, and siblings,

I recently had the chance to attend the Festival of Homiletics (big, fancy preaching conference) in San Antonio, Texas. This is something I've been wanting to do since I was ordained 10 years ago, and I am grateful for the opportunity to attend, and grateful to Pastor Lindsey for covering our Pastoral Care during my week away.

Now in its 25th year, the Festival of Homiletics showcases both established and emerging Christian preachers and academics to share ideas, techniques, trends, and innovations with those of us in professional ministry. I also had the chance to sit in the pews and be a part of worship in a way that I don't often get to do!

As I suspected, I was bowled over by a number of the presenters and preachers. Nadia Bolz-Weber shared reflections on the transitions in her private and professional life, and reminded us of our call to be pastors and spiritual companions to those who suffer. Bishop Yvette Flunder drenched us in the Spirit and opened our hearts with her stories of radical inclusion and transformation. World renowned Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggeman argued against the vengeance-filled rhetoric of scripture. Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III cautioned us against the seduction of silence in the face of evil through his Star Wars-themed lecture. Rev. Dr. Amy Butler - - Senior Minister at the historic Riverside Church in NYC - - harkened back to Karl Barth's edict that we must "preach with the Bible in one hand" and the New York Times in the other. Truly, I wish I had a clone so that I could've heard all of the speakers!

Through the diversity of speakers, one message was clear: As preachers, we are called and compelled to preach on the justice and injustice in the world around us today. Not mincing words, Rev. Dr. Butler went as far as to say that to remain silent on these issues is to betray our congregations and our ordination vows! Wow!

Highlights

visit us online at: haydenvillechurch.org

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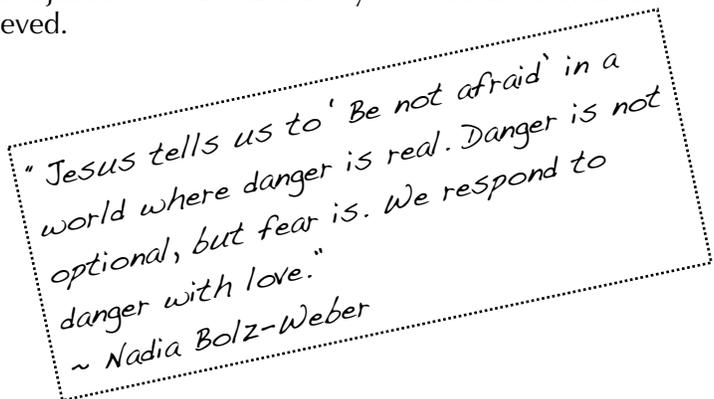
It is important for me to acknowledge that not every preacher is free to boldly and plainly speak to injustice from the pulpit unless they want to promptly receive their walking papers. But much like Rev. Dr. Butler, I am grateful to be serving in a congregation where my silence on injustice would be more likely to send me packing than my preaching on injustice.

I am proud to be part of a Beloved Community where we do not shy away from unmasking and critiquing personal and institutional racism, where we stand against violence and stand with those who are targeted and marginalized. It is right that we continue to work for the dignity, rights, and full inclusion of LGBTQ folks - - both in the church and in the wider society. It is right that we not only vocalize our support for refugees and undocumented immigrants, but that we take action and find ways to help people in our towns.

And while we do this, we are also called to continually deepen our relationship to God, to others, to ourselves, and to creation. Our bold Gospel witness is grounded in our faith. Our prophetic action must inch us closer to establishing the Kin-dom of God - - "On earth, as it is in heaven."

My friends, I feel lucky, blessed, and grateful to be doing all of this with you. I pray for strength, courage, and continual renewal in our witness. May our arms stretch ever-wider, our hearts evermore open, and our voices even louder as we proclaim justice for each and every beloved child of God - - walking and working together until that is achieved.

Peace & Blessings,



"Jesus tells us to 'Be not afraid' in a world where danger is real. Danger is not optional, but fear is. We respond to danger with love."
~ Nadia Bolz-Weber

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 at revcjm@gmail.com or (860) 966-8055 if you are interested, and thank you!

Many Thanks for Your Leadership!

Your active leadership in the life of our Beloved Community makes our ministry possible. Many thanks to everyone who has helped to lead worship, been a greeter or usher, organized the Coffee Klatches, has served on a Coffee Klatch, took on administrative and organizational roles, shoveled snow, mowed the lawn, taught in Children's Church, and so many other things!

Leader Updates

Thank you to **Jackie Cloonan** for her years as our Green Angel (lawn mowing) coordinator. **Susan Farrell** has now volunteered to take on that role for this summer.

We are grateful to **Laura Paul** for her work as our Librarian, and we welcome and thank **Amy Andrew** for volunteering to care for this great resource!

Carla Imperial has volunteered to be the next editor of our Cross Currents newsletter, and we are thankful for **Richard Spencer's** work and guidance to help her get started!

From Our Transitional Director of Children's Church

Dear Haydenville,

It has been nearly six months that I have served as your Transitional Director of Children's Church! I have had the joy - and it is - of learning with the children of Haydenville.

How long the job would be "transitional" was up in the air from the start as Haydenville was, and is, in a time of broader ministerial transition. Well, the time has arrived. Pastor Chris and the Trustees have drawn up a settled position for a 12 hours a week Director of Children's Church and Youth Ministry. I have decided to not take the position. My last Sunday working with the Children's Church will be June 11th.

I moved to Northampton in September from the Hartford area to start a new chapter of my life. Up until July of 2016, I had been working as the Sr. Pastor of a UCC church in Glastonbury, CT. After a long period of discernment, I had made the decision to leave not only that job, but the role of Church Pastor. All the textures of that decision make for a long story - and too long of a letter!

Relevant to this letter are a couple points: I was raised in the UCC, in a church that loved me up. I found myself wanting to be a minister, declaring it from the pulpit at age 14. I meandered a bit to get there, but I did it - I became an ordained minister in the UCC and a church pastor.

We change, we grow, and we need and want different things as we do. I found myself needing and wanting a new context, outside the church. I wanted to know what my voice sounded like speaking to a people not gathered in pews. I wanted to know where my thoughts went when they were not bound to and by a Christian language. I wanted to know the community I could be a part of when I wasn't responsible for pastoring a community. There's more. But that's a sense of it for you.

I came to worship at Haydenville after I moved because I had heard wonderful rumors that you were an unapologetically queer church with lots of lesbians. You totally are! And I love that about you. I definitely did not come looking for a job. But, as it happens, the position of Transitional Director of Children's Church opened and an invitation was extended to me to consider it. I like to trust opening doors and I needed a job!

I am very glad I said yes. It has been a privilege to get to know you and the children of the church, to work with the Children's Church volunteers and with Pastor Chris and Jeff. Even so, I've learned that being back in a job in the church, well, it's not where I want to be. I need to continue on my journey to know myself outside the identity and role of Pastor. And even while the Children & Youth Ministry position is not the same as being "The Pastor", by fact of my ordination and my nature, I am "Pastor Lindsey". Were I to stay on, settling in to the settled position, I would become that all the more here. I need to be just Lindsey for a while.

Thank you for your support, trust and understanding.

All the best,
Lindsey Peterson

From The Children's & Family Ministries Committee and Pastor Chris

Dear friends,

We are so grateful for Lindsey's leadership of Children's Church over these past 6 months. Lindsey has shared her incredible gifts of creativity and music, and her thoughtful, calming presence with our children and in the wider congregation. She will be missed, and we wish her many blessings as her path continues to unfold before her.

We will begin our search for a settled Director of Children's Church very soon, with the goal of hiring someone by mid-summer. This 12-hour-per-week position will cover our Sunday Children's Church ministry as well as program coordination for our 6th through 8th graders. We will keep you updated as our process goes along, and we ask for your prayers and support as we seek out our next Director of Children's Church.

Peace,
Andrew Geery and Pastor Chris

Transition Leadership Team and Pastoral Search Update

Here's where we are in our work to transition to a new settled pastor.

Our Profile Writing Committee has been meeting regularly on Thursday nights since the end of March and will continue through the summer, with the goal of having a draft of the Church Profile ready by the end of September and completed in October.

Those serving on the Profile Writing Team are: Anne Warner, Fred Goodhue, Jan Varnon, Mariel Addis and Nancy Winninger. They are guided by Rev. Peter Wells, a former Area Minister for the Massachusetts UCC who knows our church well and has helped churches in this process in the past.

The profile template from the Massachusetts United Church of Christ asks 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.

During meetings the committee has reviewed the profile asking questions like:

- What do we already know
- What do we not know that we should find out
- How do we find out what we don't know
- Who do we need to talk to
- How do we involve the congregation and others in the process

That last question is perhaps the most important given we want the profile to reflect the Haydenville Congregational Church. This can only be done with as much input as possible.

The Profile Committee's work includes a lot of meetings, interviews and conversations with members of the congregation as well as gathering financial and demographic information about the church. Two all-church meetings were held in May and the profile committee is asking every church family to complete an anonymous survey form. (The survey can be found under the News and Events section of our church web site [www.http://haydenvillechurch.org](http://haydenvillechurch.org).)

In addition they have and will continue to reach out to leadership, committees, staff, members and friends, and stakeholders to help create the profile.

For the profile to be complete, it must reflect the interests and concerns of all constituencies in the congregation; it must present our best collective vision for the future.

Once the Church Profile completed, the Transition Leadership Team will then work with the congregation to select a Search Committee. Candidates for the Search Committee will be presented to Church Council for approval.

The Search Committee 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.

The profile template and documents being used by the Profile Writing Committee can be found with this article on our web site under the News and Events section.

Our deep thanks for the willingness of the Profile Writing Committee to serve our spiritual community in this important way.

Your Transition Leadership Team

Jim Foudy, Jo Cannon, Carolyn DuBois, Sam Icklan

It's more than words — Photos needed

Your Profile Writing Committee wants to create a photo and a video essay of who we are as a church and we need your help.

We need photos and videos of the things we do at church. We need photos of people in the kitchen during coffee hour, we need photos of the people enjoying coffee hour, and we need photos of various meetings and church events. We need photos of people arriving at church and being greeted. We need photos of cool things that happen during the services or anywhere else 2 or more of us are gathered: The Pride Parade and the Climate March.

If you have older photos we would love those too: The Women's March, Cathedral in the Night, people serving at the Cot Shelter, baking, cooking, eating, crafting, speaking, sharing, greeting, hugging, whatever. *(Just a reminder, we need to have permission of people in the photos and permission of parents whenever children are in the photos or videos.)*

If you have digital photos, send them to hccnews@haydenvillechurch.org. Attach then to an email with Photos for Profile in the subject line and a brief explanation of the photo and who took it in the text of the email. Format: pngs, tif and jpegs formats all acceptable.

So get out there and get those photos taken so you have something to share.

If you are someone who loves to take photos and would like to sort of be the official person doing this please let us know, but we would love photos from as many different people as possible.

Thank you in advance.

Your Profile Writing Team

Let Your Voice Be Heard: Take the Church Survey

The survey being conducted by the Profile Writing Committee is now available on our web site in the News and Events section. It is a PDF format. Print out a copy, complete it and return to the box in the church dining hall by Sunday, June 4. We need your opinions!

Green Angels Needed

Green Angels are needed to keep the lawn mowed and help with the gardens. Please sign up in the Dining Room to mow the lawn during a week of your choice. If you are interested in helping with the gardens please contact Susan Farrell by email farrellsings@comcast.net or call (413) 268-9298.

"Love My Church" Work Day

Saturday, June 17th from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm • Put on your gardening gloves and bring your organizing skills to the church! We'll do some weeding and yard work outside and declutter and organize inside. All ages and all abilities are welcome. Contact Pastor Chris if you'd like to lead a project.

Annual Church Picnic!

Sunday, June 25th following Worship

Let's celebrate the start of summer and enjoy some food, fun, and fellowship at our annual church picnic! We will host the picnic at the church (indoors if it rains), with activities for the kids and food for all. Kathy Walsh and Christine Foudy are heading up the event, so keep an eye out for a sign up sheet and more information coming from them soon.

So that we can use the parking lot, please park on the street or at the Brass Works on that day unless you need to park at the church for mobility accommodations. Thanks!

Jesus and the Tiny Donut Holes

From the blog of Annie Turner

We are in the run-up to Easter, and it always makes the hair on the nape of my neck stand up. It is so definitely not *fun*. I'm one of those people for whom saying even the Stations of the Cross is equivalent to getting a Root Canal done without Novocain. I just can't do the suffering part. It hurts too much.

Part of the problem is that I live in a culture which tries to pretend that suffering does not exist. We are good at complaining, though, as in: this is a very bad hair day; my kid is not toilet-trained yet and I'm going out of my mind; my mother-in-law is interfering in my life; and my car makes this funny *crrsshkkk* sound as it goes around a corner. What is *that* about?

So signing on to a religion which has a substantial amount of pain at its core is a very radical and scary thing to do. I know that in the end it turns out all right. More than all right. I carry pictures in my head of the people in the upper room that day when the Holy Spirit lit on their heads in tongues of flame. But at this time of the year—with my hatred of pain and my teensy-tiny attention span—I have difficulty seeing beyond the cross to the glorious end.

I have a modest proposal: let's insert a Scene Selection button into Holy Week. Then I can imagine myself lounging on the sofa, covered in Dorito crumbs, looking at what's to come, and getting a glimpse of the Via Dolorosa and rearing back in horror. "Say it ain't so!" I mutter, pressing the button and re-casting how the lead up to Easter should go.

Jesus comes into Jerusalem on a fine, white charger, all of the red leather trappings gleaming in the hot sun. He is welcomed by the High Priests. He is invited to lie down to supper with the Romans and feted with song and wine and perhaps some very delicious olives sent especially from the country side. There is no betrayal, no

scourging, no horrific walk down the Via Dolorosa, and no final ending which we can scarcely bear to witness.

Instead, Jesus hands out boxes of tiny donut holes to his followers, and all is well. People sign on to his renewal of faith and pledge to follow his way with no complaining. His dear mother, Mary, does not have to suffer with her son but instead hands out cups of strong coffee to their followers, happy that Simeon's dire prophecy has not come true. She envisions a tiny stone house with olive vines growing around its edges and Jesus, her son, growing old and wise along with her.

In my alternate universe there will be no pain, no beating, and no accusations of the innocent. In this universe Pilate will hand out chocolate Easter eggs—having discovered that worshiping chocolate totally works—and his hard, ruthless interior will have disappeared. In this world, nothing difficult will be asked of me, no sacrifices need to be made. I smile in relief, thinking--*This is a religion I can get behind! Coffee, donut holes, chocolate, and an absence of suffering.*

Bemused by my happy rewriting of history, I forget there is one small infinitesimal problem, hardly worth mentioning. When I die there will be a pause, a moment of silence as I come to the startling realization--there is also *no* resurrection.

*"We make a living by what we get,
but we make a life by what we give."
~ Winston Churchill*

June, July, and August at Haydenville

Summer Playgroup • From June 18th through September 3rd, our programming for children switches to the Summer Playgroup. We need 2-3 volunteers to play with the kids each Sunday. See Pastor Lindsey to sign up to help out. Please make sure your child is wearing clothes for outdoor play, sunscreen, and bug spray.

Worship • We will not hold worship at the church on July 2nd, 9th, or 16th, but will return for worship on July 23rd and 30th, which is a Blue Moon Sunday.

Outdoor Worship • Join us for an outdoor worship on July 16th! Watch for details in the Sunday bulletin and in our midweek emails.

Pledges Continue • You might be on vacation, but our expenses are not! Please remember to send in your pledge during the summer months so we can keep on track with our financial obligations. Thank you!

Pastor Chris's Summer Schedule • Pastor Chris will be volunteering at the UCC General Synod from June 30th through July 4th, and will be taking several days of vacation throughout the month. He will also be volunteering as a chaplain at Silver Lake Conference Center from August 5th through 12th. Updates on exact vacation days and urgent pastoral coverage will be announced soon.

Rally Day • Our Children's Church programs begin again on Sunday, September 10th with a raucous Rally Day worship.

Racial Justice Sunday with TJ Harper

June 4th • On June 4th we will welcome Guest preacher Toyan "TJ" Harper to the pulpit. TJ serves as the Associate for Racial Justice Ministries for the Massachusetts Conference UCC. Our worship service will have a racial justice focus, led in collaboration with the Peace & Justice Steering Committee.

Strengthen the Church: UCC Special Missions Offering

Sunday, June 4th • Strengthen the Church is a special missions offering of the United Church of Christ benefiting our sibling congregations throughout the denomination. Haydenville donates to all 5 of these annual offerings, making us a "5-for-5" congregation. Please bring a little extra funds to donate to Strengthen the Church. Checks can be made out to HCC, with "Strengthen the Church" in the memo. Thank you!

Prayers for the Planet: Reverence and Resistance

June 11th at 2:00 pm • Congregation B'Nai Israel, Northampton • This outdoor festival will include a festive, interfaith service of inspirational speakers, song, and prayer. More information can be found at <http://www.gazettenet.com/earth-matters-9630749>. To volunteer, contact Lainie

Summer Birthdays

June

1 Gloria Lampron
Chris Perry
2 Thomas Thomas
3 Dale West
4 Travis Emerson
5 Lynn Fogg
Jeff Olmsted
10 Tatum Hathaway
11 Fred Goodhue
Susan Sachs
Anna LaCroix
12 Anne Warner
14 Sam Icklan
16 Miles Swanson-Ricksgrers
19 Al Neal
22 Paul Dunphy
Bob Varnon
24 Sylvia Fappiano
27 Piper Russell-Jones
28 Anna Swanson-Ricksgrers
29 Ellie Loomis
30 Jesse Atkins-Barber
Micah Kumar

July

3 Marcia Gomes
4 Jennifer Clarson
7 Anne Pratt
13 Willot Joseph
Phyllis Muldoon
15 Linda Ziegenbein
16 Cindy Drake
24 Cheryl Whalen
30 Laura Garcia
31 Trish LaFreniere

August

1 Rachel Greenwood
2 Lisa Hall
3 Jo Cannon
7 Ian Wallace
8 Kristina Malek
13 Jenny Flemming-Ives
14 Julie Salzman
17 Christine Foudy
Elise Rymer
18 Paula Spencer
20 Philip Maurer
21 Carol Rinehart
Patti McManamy
28 Richard Spencer
29 Rick Turner
31 Malie Geery

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

Kathy O'Connor
Church Sexton

Linda Babcock
Office Administrator

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

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

Bob Varnon
Stewardship
Committee, *Chair*

Francie Lin
Angel Take-out,
Coordinator

Nancy Winninger
Angel Wings,
Coordinator

Susan Farrell
Green Angels,
Coordinator

Jackie Cloonan
Snow Angels,
Coordinator

Doug Renick
Peace and Justice
Steering Committee,
Chair

Sam Icklan
Jim Foudy
Carolyn du Bois
Jo Cannon
Transition
Leadership Team

Sue Carbin
Building
Maintenance, *Chair*

Anne Pratt
Scripture Reader
Coordinator

Susan Farrell
Music Committee,
Chair

Amy Andrew
Librarian

Shirley Sicurello
Welcome Ministry,
Chair

Cindy Dolgoff
Head Usher

Laurie Priest
Ann Loomis
Co-Head Greeters

Francis McKane
Mount Holyoke
College Intern

Carla Imperial
CrossCurrents Editor

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Cathedral in the
Night and Interfaith
Cot Shelter Meal,
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Webmaster

Bev Orluske
Nancy Winninger
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Ross Bassett
Jan Varnon
Bob Varnon
Lay Delegates

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Susan Farrell
Laine Wilder
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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.

