

Cross Currents



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

FROM THE PASTOR

Something Happened. That is the title of the 1974 bestseller by Joseph Heller. It is a long and weighty book, and throughout the book things happen. Then something big happens on the last page (at least that is my memory...it may have been a couple of pages before the very last page, I read the book literally decades ago!).

Something Happened--it is a great title, a great book, and it has a great ending. Something does happen.

I found myself thinking back on the title of Heller's book as I was meditating on Easter coming soon at the end of April, after the forty days of Lent--the time of discernment, preparation, self-reflection, prayer, meditation and acts of generosity. We could easily borrow the title of Heller's book, Something Happened, to explain Easter morning. Something happened. Something that changed the world forever happened.

Devout Christians have loving disputes about what exactly did happen on what we now call Easter morning and during the days that followed. And loving disputes are not only okay, they are welcome. Struggling with Scriptural texts, discussing our faith together, and even disagreeing are all part of being involved as a community of faith in our complicated, interwoven, mysterious, and life-giving spiritual journeys.

Some Christians believe that after Jesus was crucified he rose in bodily (physical) form and appeared to his followers and they could see, hear, and touch him and even place their fingers in the wounds in his hands. Some Christians believe Jesus' resurrection was more of a spiritual nature--that those who "saw" Jesus after his death were experiencing him with them spiritually, feeling his "presence." Some Christians believe a little of both.

I believe that Jesus' followers experienced him as right there with them after he died. It is not important to me if it was a physical, bodily resurrection that could have been videotaped if they had had that equipment at the time.

I do not doubt that Jesus' followers experienced him as very powerfully present to them after his crucifixion; I experience Jesus as very powerfully present to me and he has been technically dead for two millennia.

In my daily devotions and prayers and in my work as a Pastor, I find I am more focused on Jesus' work, words and witness during his lifetime than the circumstance surrounding his birth or the resurrection appearances following his death. Those are moving and beloved stories for me but my faith does not hinge on the details of those narratives being factually true.

What I know is that something that changed the world forever happened some 2000 years ago. An extraordinarily spiritual, God-centered, brave, gentle, radical, loving, visionary, Jewish peasant traveled through ancient Israel teaching, preaching, and healing the sick and he touched and changed all who he met. Something happened 2000 years ago that reverberates through our lives still, that gives meaning to our lives, shape to our days, hope in times of trouble, strength in times of trial, and makes us better people--more generous, more compassionate, more dedicated to service, more in love with the rest of humanity.

What amazes me about Easter and what I cling to year after year after year is that Jesus' death was not the end of the story. He was a lowly, wandering itinerant preacher who had no power, army, money, weapons or anything that could have been a threat to the Roman Empire. And yet he was a threat because he spoke about people of no worth and value (in the social hierarchy) having worth and value, people who were oppressed being free, people who were outcast and marginalized being especially loved and blessed by God. Jesus was a revolutionary and he paid with his life for his work, words and witness. What I love about Easter year after year after year is that Jesus' death did not have the last word. He was crucified but he is not gone. He was martyred and he lives on. We talk about him, talk to him, worship him, model our lives after his, see God in his actions, listen for his voice, delight in his presence....2000 years later.

Happy Easter to my beloved sisters and brothers in the faith,

MAY 8TH SERVICE TO HONOR MARY (AND ALL MOTHERS)

By Annie Turner

AN INTRODUCTION TO MARY:



On May 8th the UCC will host a special service to honor Mary and all mothers. This idea came out of the group, Catholics in the UCC, started by Andrea Ayvazian in the spring of 2010. In this group, many of us former Catholics who have since come into the UCC spoke of our memories, the things we missed from our former denomination, our emotional connection to Mary, and the relief many of us felt in being in this accepting and democratic UCC church.

In order to understand this upcoming service, I would like to talk a little bit about the role of Mary, and what we will be doing during worship.

SILENCE: Greeters at the door will respectfully ask the congregation to enter the church in silence and maintain that quiet during the opening. Silence is part of the atmosphere of worship in a Catholic church, and is one of the things many of us miss most. It enabled us to put aside the cares of the past week; to kneel and pray; and to encounter God in quiet.

MAY IS MARY'S MONTH: For Catholics growing up, May held a special importance. It was the month of Mary, and processions headed by a specially chosen girl would place a crown of roses on a statue of Mary, who was dressed in blue. Mary's color—blue: a flower special to her—roses.

WHY IS MARY SPECIAL? Mary Sheehan perhaps put it best in our recent meeting, "Mary became more important to me when I became a mother." Mary is someone Catholics go to with their concerns, wishes, hopes and dreams for their children, and desire for protection. For some of us, even now in the UCC, Mary remains a source of comfort and support.

SPECIAL PRACTICES: Whether Catholic or not, most of you probably know about Rosaries and the practice of saying the Rosary. This set of prayer beads, numbering 50, represents five salvation events (with various themes), and one praying the Rosary says a "Hail Mary" on each bead, after reciting the Our Father. *Novenas* are also a Catholic practice, with the petitioner saying special prayers for nine straight days in order to obtain a particular wish or petition. *Devotion and not Worship* is how Catholics speak of our relationship with Mary: we honor her, look to her for help and support, and also pray through her to Jesus and the Trinity, the idea being that His mother will have great influence on Jesus and how He answers prayers.

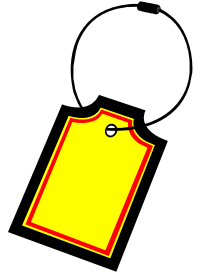
MUSIC: During the service, special songs honoring Mary will be sung by all of us and will give us a chance to feel with our bodies, hearts, and voices some of the wonderful music composed for Mary.

At the same time that we honor Mary, we honor ALL mothers in the congregation, all grandmothers, and all great-grandmothers. Where would we be without you?

NAME TAGS, WHY BOTHER?

By Jo Cannon

We are a friendly, tight-knit community where most of us feel we know each other, so why do we wear nametags as if we were strangers?



Some of us have been active in the church for years and surely, everyone knows who we are, don't they? Some of us have held leadership positions or been at every service since Andrea came; surely everyone knows our names.

Let's look at it from the perspective of someone who has been coming for less than a year. If I am a relative newcomer, I only have about 150 people to meet and names to learn. Fortunately there are some unique names, which might be a bit easier to remember. Of course, I do actually know a few people from outside church, so maybe I only have to learn about 140 names. I've heard it reported that we humans can remember about seven new things at any one time, so if I set a goal of learning seven people's name each week, it'll only take me about twenty weeks.

Well I miss a week every now and then, and I don't always remember all seven from the previous week, so here we are half a year later and there are still some folks I don't know. By the way, which Ruthie is that? Is that Sue or Susan or Sally, or Shirley? And how many new people have now joined or started coming regularly? It seems impossible – I never was very good with names anyway.

If, on the other hand, I've been coming to the church for quite some time, it means a lot to be addressed by name, but it sure does feel awkward not to be able to return the courtesy. I can't remember all these newcomers, but I would like to welcome them and thank them properly when they help out. I just can't keep up.

If we would like to maintain our sense of community, let's have compassion for new folks; for those of us that are just plain bad with names, we have a few other talents; for those who can remember the details of x years ago, but aren't quite so clear about what happened yesterday. Let's actually wear our nametags.

BOOK GROUP SPRING MEETINGS

By Paula Spencer

In March, a smaller-than-usual group of us met and found ourselves somewhat uninspired by Diane Ackerman's Deep Play, our chosen title. So we kept the discussion of that book short, took a look at our upcoming reading choices and made some changes. We also shared books we've been reading and enjoying and came up with some ideas for next year's selections.

On April 9, we have decided to read Here If You Need Me, a memoir by Kate Braestrup. The author is chaplain for the Maine Warden Service and is called to the scene when there is a drowning, a child lost in the woods, and other tragedies. She writes wonderfully and with compassion and sums up her theology by stating: "So if you want to know where God is...look for love."

On May 14, we're reading Marek Halter's Mary of Nazareth: A Novel and will finish the year with our 3d Annual Poetry Read-out and Potluck. Details to come. All are welcome to participate in book group, which meets once a month in the Church Dining Room on a Saturday at 10. Paula Spencer will be happy to answer your questions (prspencer1@comcast.net).

**"Life is full of pain, suffering,
anguish and sorrow.
And then it is over too soon."
-Woody Allen**

REFLECTIONS...

By Jim Palermo

Is Jesus telling us to be complacent, not worrying about what to wear or what to eat and mindful that worry will not add even an hour to our lives? (Matt 6: 24-34) Are we to believe that we should find inner peace in the knowledge that God will provide and that all we need do is pray and meditate? Not really.



I believe that Jesus is calling us to be selfless, not to worry excessively about our personal comfort or survival. Rather, I believe that what Jesus is teaching is similar to a doctrine that Buddhists call "anatta," and which Karen Armstrong, in her book *The Case for God*, defines as "no self." Armstrong writes:

Anatta required Buddhists to behave day by day, hour by hour, as though the self did not exist. Thoughts of "self" not only led to 'unhelpful'...preoccupation with 'me' and 'mine' but also to envy, hatred of rivals, conceit, pride, cruelty, and – when the self felt under stress-violence...

By far the best way of achieving anatta was compassion, the ability to feel with the other, which required that one dethrone the self from the center of one's world and put another there. (emphasis added)

I have much work ahead of me.

THOUGHTS ON CHILDREN'S CHURCH

By Dawn Orluske



Each week in Children's Church we have something called "an opening circle." We greet and welcome new children, say hello to friends we have not seen for a week or

two, and sing our welcome song. We usually ask if anyone has had a birthday the previous week, or is about to, and then sing "Happy Birthday." We sing songs with Cindy McQuestion. Lately, we talk about how we miss Matilda and how she is taking care of Haical and enjoying family time with Angie and Olin.

With the enormous help of other parents, Children's Church has been running happily and smoothly!

But one of the many things that Matilda does so well, we cannot do – offer communion. We are having our wonderful ordained ministers, Carol Rinehart and Phil Hall administer communion while Til is on leave.

This past month Carol came upstairs and brought her Jesus "action figure" with her! This was inspired by Andrea's children's sermon the week before on super-heros. We talked about Jesus' amazing life and the Last Supper. The kids lined up beautifully, reverently, to take the bread and the cup from Carol. This is truly one of my favorite times in Children's Church as the kids are very serious about this covenant, and it is evident in how they carry themselves. While the kids were taking communion, Cindy led us all in 'Let us Break Bread Together'.

Many thanks to Reverends Rinehart and Hall for helping us have our monthly sacred time reflecting on the bread and wine and Christ's life and works.

HAYDENVILLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 1851- 2011

By Paula Spencer

On Sunday morning, March 6, we took a journey back in time to honor the 160th anniversary of the founding of our beloved Church. Pastor Andrea created a beautiful service that drew on our rich history. She quoted from a "Hampshire Gazette" article dated March 11, 1851 which covered the dedication of the newly-built church, and the ordination of its first minister, Rev. Edward Sweet. The event took place on the evening of March 4. The new church was deemed "neat and commodious, and... capable of seating 500 persons," and the sermon that evening was "one of high excellence. "

We traveled from that early spring day to 1901 (the 50th anniversary), 1951 (100th) , 1976 (125th) and 2001 (150th) hearing words spoken in services and commemorations over the years. The language of those earlier times was non-inclusive, and the words were read as written.

We sang lovely traditional hymns and anthems that had been especially requested by our Saints: "The Old Rugged Cross," "How Great Thou Art," and "I Love to Tell the Story." At communion we used the original silver communion set.

Once again, as was done in 1951 on the 100th anniversary, the congregation stood to recite a Covenant of Rededication renewing our commitment to continuing the tradition of giving our time, money and energy to our beloved Church.

Through the years our Church has served as the final resting place for victims of the 1874 Mill River Flood. Our foremothers and forefathers spoke out against slavery, and supported those in the armed services while praying for peace. We were a village Church, a Church of the working people-- factory workers, mill workers and farmers. Our welcome then as now is extravagant and inclusive.

On April 8 we will celebrate the 160th anniversary with an evening program including videotaped oral histories, exhibits and a potluck supper. Looking ahead to the 200th anniversary in 2051, we will be adding our own stories while being fiercely proud of our history.

COFFEE HOUR FOOD!

Dearhearts, do not forget to bring food of some kind for Coffee Hour when it is your week (listing goes by last name). Cut up veggies, crackers and cheese, nuts, fruit, coffee cake, donut holes--everything is welcome! And please come early to help set up and stay after worship to help clean up! We do not want to leave "the Saints" in the kitchen doing 90% of the work!

Thank you one and all!

April 3: L, M, N, O

April 10: P, Q, R, S

April 17: T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z

April 24: A, B, C



NEWS BY THE NUMBERS



We warmly welcome the eight new members who joined our Church on March 13. We are so happy to have added these WONDERFUL men and women to our Church family! Welcome to Barry Bernier, Jil Blake, Christine Foudy, Robert Lampron,

Domenico Romero, Laine Romero-Alston, Christine Russell and Rose Sullivan.

The "From Charity to Change" cross-class dialogue and action group received \$500 from Class Action to continue their good work--meals, programs, workshops--in our Church!

Our Church raised \$316 after worship one day in March to give to a parishioner in need. This person was having difficulty paying for food, fuel and medicine and is very very happy and grateful with the money contributed to help! This person says THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

The three velvet chairs in the Chancel (up by the pulpit) are being repaired and reupholstered and will be back (we hope) up front by Easter. We are so happy that they will have new springs and new fabric and be sturdy and gorgeous. Thank you Richard, Kathy and Vicha for helping this happen!

***When the soul first put on the body's shirt,
the ocean lifted up all its gifts.
When love first tasted the lips of being human,
it started singing.
by Rumi
(submitted by Annie Turner)***

CHURCH BIRTHDAY PARTY! SAVE THE DATE!

Friday, April 8th - Potluck dinner- 5:30 Celebration - 6:30

Come celebrate our history and our future. HCC is holding a birthday party to celebrate 160 years of serving the spiritual needs of its members and the community.

The evening will include samples of food from the mid-1800s, a display of photographs of "The Saints" by Emily Dines, displays of archival photos and news articles, and the presentation of a time capsule by the youth (sealed at the ceremony to be opened in fifty years).

The highlight of the evening will be a video presentation compiled from our Story Corps interviews combined with the opportunity to meet the members and talk about their spiritual and social development in the last eighty years.

We will also have a brief memorial segment to honor the saints who have died since we did the original taping.

Don't miss this extraordinary opportunity to become a part of the history of HCC.

30th Annual Northampton LGBT Parade and Pride Event 2011 Saturday, May 7, 2011

Mark your calendars now! Our Church will again march as a big Church Family.

Meet at 11:30 in the parking lot across the street from the Northampton Post Office.

We will be there will purple balloons for everyone, and we'll be ready to sing and march.

Strollers, wheelchairs, tricycles,
dogs all welcome!

We LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE marching
with children!

Additional information about the Pride March is available at: www.NohoPride.org

THURSDAY NIGHT LIVE! NEW PROGRAM IS A BIG SUCCESS

By Pastor Andrea

In the Fall 2010, the Deacons and Pastor Andrea launched a new program called Thursday Night Live! The second Thursday of every month is now dedicated to this special new offering, and each month is hosted by a different Church group. The numbers have been high for every one of the programs, and we are grateful to the different groups that have stepped forward to "sponsor" an evening. Here is what we have enjoyed since last September and the line-up for the rest of the year until we take our usual July break. Thank you one and all for making these programs such a big success!

September: Willot Joseph gave a presentation about Haiti, his homeland--sponsored by the Deacons

October: Film and discussion about the Transition Towns Movement--sponsored by the Peace and Justice Steering Committee

November: Community Supper and Sing-along--sponsored by From Charity to Change

December: "Blue Christmas" Service--sponsored by the Shepherds

January: "Martin Luther King, Jr.: Man of Peace in a Time of War"--film and discussion sponsored by the Peace and Justice Steering Committee

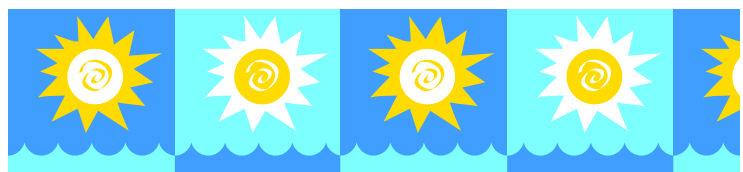
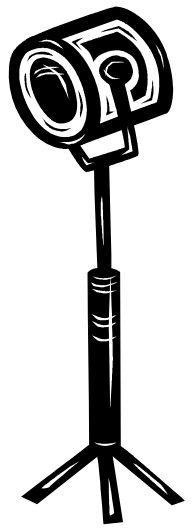
February: "The Future of News and Why it Matters" Discussion with Jim Foudy, Publisher of the Daily Hampshire Gazette--sponsored by the Deacons

March: "Transformational Breathing" Workshop--sponsored by the Deacons

April: End of Life Care with Johanna Lillian Brown--sponsored by the Deacons

May: Dinner and program on Food Sustainability--sponsored by From Charity to Change

June: Christian, Muslim, Jewish Dialogue with guest speakers--sponsored by the Deacons



PASTORAL PRAYER AFTER PACIFIC EARTHQUAKE & TSUNAMI

The Rev. Dr. John Tamilio III, Ph.D.
Pilgrim United Church of Christ
Cleveland, Ohio

Psalms 46:1-3

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear,
though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake
in the heart of the sea;

though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains
tremble with its tumult.

Holy God of Earth, and Sea, and Sky,
of all that was and all that shall be —
It all seems to happen so quickly:
a rumble, a buckle in the earth, a swell.
And then, catching us unawares,
all that surrounds us is reduced to rubble.
Stone upon stone. Ash thickening the air.
Silence. Tears. Even nature laments.
And in the aftermath, the ocean travels
to foreign shores bringing ominous waves,
water that will obliterate, not baptize.
This is where the world stands at the
start of this somber, Lenten season.
Earthquakes thunder and tsunamis inundate
with little warning and even less prejudice.
We lift up our prayers and our hearts for
the people of Japan and Hawaii, indeed all,
who lie in the wake of such callous catastrophes.
As death tolls rise, and warnings increase
as far afield as Canada and South America,
our feelings of helpless intensify.
Our intercessions are with those who border
the Pacific, which is anything but placid now.
We turn our despondency over to you, O God.
We know, at the core of our being, that
you are not the cause of such travesty.
We also confess that we do not understand
why evil, be it natural or human wrought,
exists in this world you created and blessed.
For you are a God of minimum protection,
yet you are also a God of maximum support.
For this we offer you our prayers of gratitude
and we ask that your sacred presence surround
the victims of such devastation and that you
give them the strength and courage they need
as they gather with family and friends, with
relief workers and missionaries, to rebuild their
homes and communities. Bless them, we pray.
Offer solace to the loved ones of those whose

lives were lost and to those who desperately
search for bodies that may never be found.
Indeed, we are dust and to dust we shall return.
The finitude of our earthly sojourn hits hard
during this penitential season of prayer and fasting.
Be with us through these forty days, O Holy One,
as we try to make sense of it all. Help us be still.
We ask this, and all things, in the name of your
Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ — the One in
whose name we forever rejoice to pray.

Amen.

LOVE WINS

A book to recommend
submitted by Annie Turner



A courageous pastor called Rob Bell has just written a book called [Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived](#). This rather long title gives us a hint as to the scope of Bell's book: his contention is that hell does not exist; that Jesus' central message of an all-embracing love has been hijacked; that the truth of his deep and all-embracing love has been covered over and made into a "toxic" message of non-acceptance; and that we need to ask probing questions of Jesus, none of which he can't answer. Fundamentalist churches are in an uproar about this and Bell's belief that hell does not exist. But for those of us who have struggled with this part of accepted Christian message, this is the book for you.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS! HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL!



April 2	Mike Estes
April 4	Johanna Newcomb-Gerken
April 5	Karen Guiel
April 6	Sasha Klare-Ayvazian
April 7	Deb Luekens
April 9	Laine Romero-Alston
April 11	Beth Howland & Danny Hathaway
April 14	Diane Gahres
April 15	Will Demarais
April 16	Ruth Parsons
April 18	Mollie Whittaker & Ellianna Chappuis
April 19	Lisa Ellingsen
April 21	Shirley Riga
April 22	Norma Kellogg
April 23	Tammy Walker
April 27	Carol Prior & Cheryl Nugent
April 29	Claudia Downey & Mary Meg Elias-Gillette
April 30	John Warner

APRIL 2011 CALENDAR

Sunday, April 3:	10 AM	Worship Service with Communion, 4th Sunday in Lent. Hampshire Association Meeting in Edwards Church from 2-4 PM
Monday, April 4:	6 PM	Diaconate Meeting, Church Dining Room
Wednesday, April 6:	7 PM	Confirmation Class, Church Dining Room
Friday, April 8:	5:30 PM	Potluck supper and Special StoryCorp Program: A history of the HCC Church, Church Dining Room
Saturday, April 9:	10 AM	Book Group Meeting, Church Dining Room
Sunday, April 10:	10 AM	Worship Service, 5th Sunday in Lent
Tuesday, April 12:	4:00 PM 6:00 PM	Catholics in the UCC meeting, Church Dining Room Trustees Meeting, Church Dining Room
Wednesday, April 13:	7 PM	Shepherds Meeting at Pastor Andrea's house 17 Columbus Ave., Northampton
Thursday, April 14:	1 PM 6:30 PM	Ladies Aid Meeting, Church Dining Room "Caring for Dying Loved Ones" special program with Author Joanna Lillian Brown, Church Dining Room
Saturday, April 16:	9 - 2 PM	Cookie Walk, HCC Dining Room
Sunday, April 17:	10 AM	Palm Sunday, Worship Service
Thursday, April 21:	7 PM	Maundy Thursday Worship Service
Friday, April 22:	Noon to 4 PM	Good Friday, Sanctuary open for prayer and mediation
Sunday, April 24:	10 AM	Intergenerational Easter Sunday Worship Service (no Children's Church)
Monday, April 25:	5:30 PM	Peace and Justice Meeting, Church Dining Room
Saturday, April 30:	9 - 1 PM	Deacons' Retreat



Haydenville Congregational Church

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