

# Cross Currents

Newsletter of the Haydenville Congregational Church  
October 2010 *Open Hearts & Open Minds & Open Doors*

## FROM THE PASTOR

I have become quite enamored with a practice called “The Consciousness Examen” first presented by St. Ignatius Loyola in the 1550s. The examen of consciousness is often misrepresented as an examination of “conscience” but that is not the original idea as created and taught by St. Ignatius. An examination of conscience has narrow, moralistic overtones. The Saint’s “consciousness examen” is a way to review your day each evening, to ask yourself certain questions and pray in certain ways to draw closer to God. The examen has value and power when it becomes a daily habit, a daily experience of reviewing our thoughts and actions of that day while bringing God deeply into our hearts and minds. St. Ignatius believed that God was subtly and consistently inviting us to deepen our relationship with God and our identity as God’s beloved.

The examen is a time of prayer. It is suggested that we devote fifteen minutes to this review of our day each evening. The hope is that the examen will help us sense and recognize the interior invitations of God that stir in our souls each day and, over time, to be guided by those stirrings and the voice of God within us. St. Ignatius believed that if practiced regularly, the examen gradually transforms our hearts and our minds so that our lives become profoundly God-centered throughout the day, each and every day. He believed we grow more and more sensitive to the movement of the Spirit in our lives and more attuned to God’s presence and guidance in our daily lives.

The consciousness examen, as presented by St. Ignatius, has five steps which are outlined below:

**Prayer for Enlightenment**—This first step is to pray that the Holy Spirit may help us see ourselves a bit more as God sees us. We pray for deep insight into our lives and for the

sensitivity and courage to respond to God’s call in our hearts. This is a prayer for grace, insight and self-awareness.

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**—Now our prayer turns to expressions of gratitude to God. We thank God for the blessings and goodness in our lives.

**Practical Survey of My Day**—Now we look back over the events of the day, who we interacted with, the circumstances of the day. It is almost like seeing our day as a movie—we can scroll through the events of the day. We note when and where we listened to God. We ask: how and where was God meeting, encouraging, challenging me? We note such things as joy, pain, feelings of love or turmoil, anger, anxiety, freedom, fear. We note the feelings we experienced during the day and how those motivated actions, behaviors, and attitudes. Next we review the actions, thoughts and words of the day and ask: was I led to be more honest, just, fair, loving? When today was I closest to God? When was I farthest away?

**Prayer for Forgiveness**—Now we ask God to forgive us for the times during the day when we strayed farthest from God. We ask God to forgive us for any action, inaction, or word that was harmful or hurtful or placed a barrier between us and God.

**Prayer for Help and Guidance for Tomorrow**—Now we ask God for guidance for the challenges that tomorrow may bring and to be more courageous in changing what needs to be changed. We ask God to guide our actions and speech the following day and to be near us as we move through the new day.

I am finding the examen by St. Ignatius to be helpful and enlightening. I would love to hear from anyone who practices it for a while and has some insights and reactions to share. Blessings on your journey!

Love and Blessings,



## NOTE FROM MATILDA: CHILDREN'S CHURCH AND YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

*Dear Friends,  
On September 10<sup>th</sup>, the Friday before our Children's Church "Gathering Sunday" after the summer break, a group of fifteen of us attended a CC "retreat." It was a retreat as well as a planning meeting, because in addition to looking at what our goals and hopes are **as a program**, we reflected upon who **we**, as adults **were, are, and are becoming spiritually**, and how we in turn influence and are influenced by **our church's children**. Below is the wonderful write-up of our evening by Kayla and Coni Gilman Solomon, CC leaders and mothers of Talya, age 5. I am so grateful for their work and am as excited about, and deeply grateful for, the deepened investment in CC from church adults as I am about the many new children we continue to welcome into our program!  
In Faith, Gratitude, and Joy as we begin another CC year,  
-Pastor Matilda*

Last month a group of about 15 adults met under the leadership of Pastor Til to discuss our "Children's Church." We ate, prayed, heard inspirational readings, sang and discussed our early spiritual influences. The goal of the retreat was to generate participation and discuss direction for the children's program in the upcoming year. We shared a wonderful meal provided by Pastor Andrea who didn't cook it but with the help of the committee, heated it up and put out a great spread.

At the retreat we discussed moving forward on some new initiatives that we want you all to know about: **First, CC Greeting:** We will now have a special CC greeter present with the regular greeter at the door on Sunday mornings to greet all *the families* as they arrive, and to orient any new families to the CC upon their arrival. **Second, Children's Stewardship:** We are considering ways for the Children's Church to have its own *collection* as part of their program, in order to expose the children to an experience of stewardship. We are designing a process that will create a space for children to have the experience of "giving" to the basket whether or not the gifts come from their home or pocket, or elsewhere, or whether they contribute "spare change" or possibly other types of gifts (pictures, art projects). **Third: Curriculum Updates and Calendar:** Please see the weekly bulletin for Children's Church activities, curriculum updates, and schedule. However, since many families don't make it to worship every Sunday, this information will also be *mailed* out to families periodically.

The time and energy we give to the spiritual life of our children reflects back tenfold on the health and future of our church. We are excited to report that the Children's

Church is growing in spirit and depth as well as numbers. Therefore, we will always have opportunities for service in the CC, whether or not you might want to teach formally or help out in other ways. We warmly and gratefully welcome non-parents to participate. We had much discussion at the retreat about feeling inadequate to teach, whether we were shy, self-conscious, lacking in Bible or Godly Play experience or just plain scared. *It became more clear that the only requirement to teach is a desire to learn, to be ourselves in the process and to respect and be open to the children and their wisdom.* There will be ongoing trainings for those who want to learn the Godly Play Curriculum.

Ultimately what we are trying to accomplish in Children's Church is to create an open, safe, quiet and reverent (yet fun!) environment for children to explore their own unique relationships with the sacred and their own spirituality. We want them to feel a sense of belonging to this church and their church family. We hope to allow the children to feel deeply *seen* and *known* by the adults and each other, and to model authenticity, courage and genuine care. This is the best way, we feel, to teach the Gospel Message.  
-Kayla and Coni Gilman-Solomon



### NOTES FROM THE CHOIR LOFT

By Diane Scott

It has been a great start to the 2010-11 year! We welcomed the voices of Kim Waddell and Anne Pratt, and we appreciate their contributions. I also want to honor our regular members who commit to this important part of the service every week. I thank you!

The choir rehearses on Wednesday nights from 6:30-7:30. We welcome new members! There are no auditions, just a desire to sing and a willingness to regularly attend rehearsals is required. I ask choir members to arrive early at the church on Sundays, to be ready to rehearse the day's music promptly at 9:15 AM.

If you are interested, please contact the Choir Director, Diane Scott, at 586-3008 or just arrive at rehearsal!

## THANK YOU CHURCH FAMILY

By Dale West and Hannah Durrant



As we approach the triplets' first birthday, we can't help but feel blessed by the bounty in our lives. The outpouring of love and support by this church family has been nothing less than astonishing. By February of 2009, we knew that Dale was pregnant. She felt great and dismissed Hannah's fears that we might be having twins. We postponed a trip to California until we were sure we were just having one. Dale's first ultrasound was a Tuesday in late March, and we all snapped to attention quickly when it was clear there was

more than one baby! The technician counted several times to be sure, and some admittedly un-Christian phrases escaped our mouths – yes, there were indeed three babies in there! We left the office in a fog, but three things were clear – there would be no trip to California, we were going to need a lot of help, and our lives would never be the same. When we told Andrea and Kate Davidheiser (Auntie Kate) our big news, we didn't even need to ask for help – they volunteered it. We said we weren't even sure what we would need or when – they said, "trust us, you're covered." Thankfully, we trusted, and we were most certainly covered. Kate and Andrea rallied to find and organize a whole corps of helpers that fed and changed babies, brought meals, ran errands, entertained Parker, held babies during church, and so on. People had regular shifts to help out – some still come today – or they came during "coverage gaps" when we really needed the help. Auntie Kate coordinated the calendar, called folks to let them know what we needed, and filled in the gaps herself on numerous occasions. On a couple occasions, LOVELY volunteers stayed overnight so that we could get a full night's rest. That was dreamy. While the outpouring of support has been truly wonderful and has kept us sane, we have been blessed by something we could not have imagined. We have gotten to know some incredible people that we may not have otherwise – from "Oh My Glory" Mary, speedy with a diaper change, to Carolyn du Bois, who fought hard for (and won) Ellie's favor, to Susan Farrell, who bakes as well as she sings – we are constantly blessed with not only the generosity, but also the company of some very amazing people. And of course, there's Auntie Kate. The first day we made it back to church after the triplets were born, the sermon was about the saints who carry us when we cannot carry ourselves. This reminded us not just about the folks who had been helping us, but also about Auntie Kate, who has been our steadfast friend and rock of support. We don't know where we would be without her help (she even let Dale sleep at her house when ours was too chaotic to take a sick day) – she has truly been a saint in our lives. It's impossible to mention all of the support from everyone we have received – it

has been boundless. We would like to say that it has been nothing short of miraculous – but really miracles happen when all hope is lost. With this church community, we have learned that hope is never lost, and for that, and for all of you, we are truly grateful. Thank you for everything.

## POEM

By Reilly McQueston

Written at Church Camp on  
Cape Cod—August 21, 2010

I fly, I soar, I roam  
I go where the wind takes me,  
I go where my heart takes me.  
I follow my peers,  
I follow myself.  
I might not know where I am going, or how to get there,  
But I'll get there somehow.  
I'll bring kindness and courage, and pick up wisdom along  
the way.  
I may not know a lot, but I know to spread my wings and  
fly every chance I get whether I am young or old,  
I fly, I soar, I roam



## GOOD FOOD!!!!!!



Here is the calendar for bringing Coffee Hour goodies in October. Please remember: when it is your turn to bring something to share, you also help set up and clean up! The calendar goes by last name. All edible foods

are welcome including unusual surprises. And we LOVE to have protein to give to the children. Thank you one and all!

October 3: L, M, N, O

October 10: P, Q, R, S,

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

October 24: A, B, C

October 31: **Blue Moon Sunday**, No Coffee Hour, we do Community Service Projects in teams

## BOOK GROUP PLANS FOR THE YEAR

By Paula Spencer



Our church book group held its first meeting in September and decided on our reading choices for the year. We will start with a novel, Breakfast with Buddha, by Roland Merullo for our October 9 meeting. On a cross-country road trip a middle class editor is joined by a 'rinpoche,' a Buddhist guru, and their journey becomes a spiritual as well as a literal one. The author lives in Williamsburg and has also written Revere Beach Trilogy, a memoir about growing up in a gritty coastal city.

On November 13 we meet to talk about Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion by Gregory Boyle. Several book group members have read this and it comes highly recommended. It's the true story of a Jesuit priest's work with gang members in Los Angeles and the creation of Homeboy Industries, a successful gang intervention program. Writer Anne Lamott calls it "An astonishing book . . . about suffering and dignity, death and resurrection, one of my favorite books in years."

In December it's Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan's The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus' Birth. That meeting will be on December 11.

We also discussed staying aware of readings, author appearances, films, theatre and other events in the Valley that may be of interest to the group.

We will be meeting on the second Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. in the Church dining room. Please plan to join us for some or all of our meetings, and do let me know if you have any questions.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

By Andrew Baker



Question 2 on the Massachusetts ballot this November 2 would repeal the state's primary affordable housing law, the Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit Act. We urge you to vote "no" on 2 to protect the affordable housing law for our seniors and working families.

This law is about fairness and equity. All families should have a choice about where to live. The affordable housing law sets a reasonable goal for each and every city and town to require at least 10% of its homes to be affordable. It encourages construction of new homes by allowing for a single comprehensive permit and flexible zoning for developers who build affordable homes.

Here are some facts about the law:

Over the last decade, this law has been responsible for approximately **80% of the affordable homes built** outside of the Commonwealth's major cities.

More than **58,000 homes have been created** for working families, seniors, and disabled individuals across the state.

A repeal would immediately halt the construction of 12,000 homes in the pipeline, and all of the jobs and economic benefits they would bring.

The Vote No on 2 Campaign has come together to ensure the law is not repealed. We are a grassroots coalition of more than 350 organizations and thousands of individuals committed to protecting this law. Our coalition includes civic, business, religious, and academic leaders as well as senior, environmental, housing, and civil rights groups. All three major candidates for governor agree we should all vote no to support this law.

For more info or to get involved, go to:

[www.protectaffordablehousing.org](http://www.protectaffordablehousing.org), call Western Mass. organizer for Vote NO on 2, Andrew Baker, at (413) 625-8465, or email him at [Andrew@andrewbaker.org](mailto:Andrew@andrewbaker.org). And remember in November, Vote "NO on 2" to protect the affordable housing law.

## LISTEN

by Wyatt Myers

Listen within.  
Listen to the breath within,  
feeling the life within.  
Listen to the rhythm of the drum beating within.  
Listen to that tiny voice within,  
urging you onward.  
Feel the earth with shoeless feet.  
Dance the dance of long ago.  
Remembered by the soul.

## GLORIA'S PICNIC

A pitch-perfect picnic day, Saturday, August 21<sup>st</sup>; a tempting variety of picnic

yummies; a wide ranging age span of those present including 3 Saints; and gorgeous Tom McCabe present not only with stories, but a great exercise to teach us how to tell them.

All that had to add up to a truly successful Gloria's picnic. That says it all!



## POP QUIZ

Submitted by Wyatt Myers

Don't actually answer the questions.

Just read straight through, and you'll get the point.

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss America pageant.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
5. Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners for best actor and actress.
6. Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners. How did you do?

The point is , none of us remember the headliners of yesterday.

These are no second-rate achievers.

They are the best in their fields.

But the applause dies..

Awards tarnish.

Achievements are forgotten.

Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one:

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special!!
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

Easier?

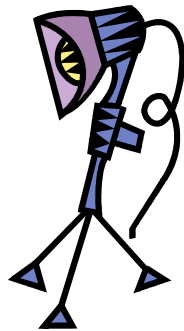
The lesson:

The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials...the most money...or the most awards. They simply are the ones who care the most.

## THURSDAY NIGHT LIVE!

Sponsored by the Peace and Justice Steering Committee.

"In Transition: The Movie" is the first detailed film speaking about the Transition Towns Movement filmed by those who are making it happen. The Transition Movement is about communities around the world responding with creativity, imagination and humor to peak oil and erratic climate and economic changes. The movie gives examples of creating local resilience within different communities. Open to all ages, this movie is positive, solutions-focused and fun.



## PEACE AND JUSTICE STEERING COMMITTEE

Submitted by Doug Renick

10/10/10 A Work Party

Friends, the Peace and Justice Steering Committee would like to invite you to join a work party on October 10, 2010. The exact time and location on 10/10 will be announced in the Sunday bulletin announcements. Why are we doing this? [Read Bill McKibben's letter that follows.](#)

Dear World,

It's been a tough year: in North America, oil gushing into the Gulf of Mexico; in Asia some of the highest temperatures ever recorded; in the Arctic, the fastest melting of sea ice ever seen; in Latin America, record rainfalls washing away whole mountainsides.

So we're having a party.

Circle 10/10/10 on your calendar. That's the date. The place is wherever you live. And the point is to do something that will help deal with global warming in your city or community.

We're calling it a Global Work Party, with emphasis on both 'work' and 'party'. In Auckland, New Zealand, they're having a giant bike fix-up day, to get every bicycle in the city back on the road. In the Maldives, they're putting up solar panels on the President's office. In Kampala, Uganda, they're going to plant thousands of trees, and in Bolivia they're installing solar stoves for a massive carbon neutral picnic.

Since we've already worked hard to call, email, petition, and protest to get politicians to move, and they haven't moved fast enough, now it's time to show that we really do have the tools we need to get serious about the climate crisis.

On 10/10/10 we'll show that we the people can do this--but we need bold energy policies from our political leaders to do it on a scale that truly matters. The goal of the day is not to solve the climate crisis one project at a time, but to send a pointed political message: if we can get to work, you can get to work too--on the legislation and the treaties that will make all our work easier in the long run.

Read more about 10/10/10 on [www.350.org](http://www.350.org).  
in Solidarity, Bill McKibben

So save Sunday afternoon on October 10, and watch the Sunday bulletin announcements for the work party time and location. Thanks, Doug for the P&JSC.

## A SERMON BY REVEREND LIFE, 100 YEARS AGO

By Kathleen Kent

(This article is part of an ongoing series for the HCC History Project.)

In 1910 Reverend Robert H. Life delivered a five page, single-spaced sermon titled, "Greet the church that is in their house." Rom.16:5. It opens with the history of Christian and Jewish meeting places and covers at length the history of our own church building, including repairs, additions, expenditures, and donors from 1850 to 1910.

In his description of the spire being lowered, he writes, "... as it rocked and creaked in the wind and threatened to fall, it was decided to remove a portion of it; and accordingly forty feet was taken from the top and it was remodeled in its present graceful form." He praises the Ladies Aid for meeting unusual expenses in the late 1800s. "This is not the first, as we all know it is by no means the last that the Ladies' Benevolent Society appears as an invaluable contributor to the material, as well as to the spiritual life of the church.

But most importantly, Reverend Life concludes his sermon with a blessing to present and future parishioners. Given the opportunity to deliver this sermon 100 years later, I believe this is the part he'd mostly want to share with us.

"I cannot help feeling that through all these changes there is a sense of continuity that makes the building seem a living thing; and the place where we worship now is the same as that which we built here nearly sixty years ago. A dedicated house is a precious thing; once consecrated, it may not carelessly be profaned. It is worthy of our honor. It is a proper incentive to reverence. It is a reasonable encouragement to righteousness and love. May I hope that in this room the children shall find their love for Jesus grow stronger and purer; that here young men and young women may be inspired and encouraged to find and to keep the paths of honor and noble ambition; that here the strong and the weak in the mid-time of life may know that those walk surely and happily who walk in the company of their Lord; and that those whose years are many may find that their meditations are rich in the strength of their faith, and the beauty and reality of their hopes."

*Reverend Robert H. Life served the Haydenville Congregational Church From 1904 to 1934.*



*HCC with its original spire*

## A PSALM BY GINA AYVAZIAN

When I Pray

Each morning before I open my eyes I start to pray :  
Dear Lord, Thank you for my health, and wealth, a lovely home and people that love me.  
Then I pray for those specifically and generally that are homeless, unhealthy and unloved.  
I pray for God's help to make me more patient and kind.  
I pray for continued health and safety for those closest to me  
and those that need my prayers.

Oh dear... My mind begins to wander into silliness and trivia!  
My eyes are open and I realize that I forgot I was praying.  
So I close my eyes and my prayer by giving thanks again and asking God to let me live this day as if in mid-prayer.

Amen.

## OCTOBER CALENDAR

- Saturday, October 2: 8 AM TAG SALE (to benefit the HCC) at Ann Podolske's house, 92 Blackberry Lane, Northampton
- Sunday, October 3: 10 AM Worship Service with Communion and Ceremony to Welcome New Members  
Confirmation Classes (during CC) Church Dining Room  
1 – 3 PM Shelter Sunday Downtown Florence, see Pastor Matilda for more information
- Monday, October 4: 6 PM Diaconate Meeting
- Monday, October 5: 5:30–7 PM DVD Series First Light, Session 3, HCC Dining Room
- Wednesday, October 6: 7 – 8:30 PM Confirmation Class, Church Dining Room
- Saturday, October 9: 10 AM Book Group Meeting, HCC Dining Room, [Breakfast with Buddha](#) by Roland Merullo.  
Contact Paula Spencer for questions: [prspencer1@comcast.net](mailto:prspencer1@comcast.net)
- Sunday, October 10: 10 AM Worship Service
- Tuesday, October 12: 4 PM Catholics in the UCC Group Meeting - HCC Dining Room  
6 PM Trustees Meeting
- Wed., October 13: 7 PM Shepherds' Meeting, HCC Dining Room
- Thursday, October 14: 6:30 PM Thursday Night Live! HCC Dining Room: Soup, Salad & Social Change showing the film, "In Transition", and discussion following the film. See article page 5.
- Saturday, October 16: 9:30 AM  
- 2 PM Deacons' Retreat, Church Dining Room
- Sunday, October 17: 10 AM Worship Service & Hilltown Crop Walk (following worship service) hosted by the HCC!
- Tuesday, October 19: 5:30–7 PM DVD Series First Light, Session 4, HCC Dining Room
- Thursday, October 21: 1 PM Ladies Aid meeting
- Saturday, October 23: 9 AM **Church Fair**
- Sunday, October 24: 10 AM Worship Service
- Monday, October 25: 5:30–7 PM Peace and Justice Meeting, HCC Dining Room
- Tuesday, October 26: 5:30–7 PM DVD Series First Light, Session 5, HCC Dining Room
- Wed., October 27: 6 – 7:30 PM "Parenting and God" support, discussion and reading group. Supper and child care provided. See Pastor Matilda for more information, Church Dining Room
- Sunday, October 31: 10 AM Worship Service, Blue Moon Sunday, No Coffee Hour, Community Service Projects following worship



## Haydenville Congregational Church

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

### Haydenville Congregational Church Mission Statement

Haydenville Congregational Church,  
United Church of Christ,  
is a dynamic, growing, diverse, and  
welcoming faith community.  
We are on a journey together to  
experience who God and  
Jesus are for us and our world.

We are deeply committed to love,  
service, justice, peace, and  
care of the Earth.

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL THOSE CELEBRATING IN OCTOBER!

October 1 David Warner & Brenna Ryan  
October 2 Andrea Ayvazian  
October 3 Donna Harlan & Chester Cross  
October 5 Bonnie Roberge  
October 6 Jayden Childs & David Avakian  
October 7 Kathy O'Connor  
October 9 Maryanne O'Toole  
October 13 Mae Smith  
October 15 Lisa Kautz  
October 16 Irene Sicurello  
October 20 Ernestine Stowell  
October 23 Brandy Mimitz & Jamie Poudrier  
October 24 Carolyn du Bois

