

Cross Currents



March 2015 • Open Hearts & Open Minds & Open Doors

From Pastor Andrea

*remember redevelop refine rekindle rebirth reward revive restart reform
reunite refresh rebuild recycle redeem relieve rebound reflect remind
reopen redraw renew reinvent reclaim recreate reboot relax RE-LENT*

Those are the words splashed all across the multi-colored, jazzy cover of the Lenten Devotional 2015 published by the United Church of Christ Still Speaking Writers' Group. I am having a wonderful time reading the daily devotionals. Each one is more inspiring than the last! This is a great resource that has me thinking deeply about how to move through the Lenten journey in new, creative, and faith-deepening ways.

Even the Introduction on page 1 has my mind buzzing in new ways. Here's what they say: "Traditionally, Lent is thought of as a season of repentance, a time of giving things up and turning our lives around—or trying to. What if we thought about Lent instead as a time of giving in rather than giving up? A time to 'relent,' to back off imposing our wills on everything. To let go of a little bit of our need for control and let God be God....Lent happens every year, but you can experience it anew. Do Lent over again in a fresh way. This year, make Lent the time you practice giving in to God's amazing grace."

This is a startling and revolutionary concept for me! As an annoying "control freak" (which a number of you have correctly pointed out), "re-Lenting" or giving in to God's amazing grace is quite a challenge. I want to control the process of not having control. I want to over-plan how to plan less. And I want to do many new things while I try to do less. In other words, this is tough for a gal like me.

But I am loving this "re-Lenting" challenge and I think it is a worthy goal for my too-much-in-control-ness. I do believe in God's amazing grace and I believe I am bathed in it daily. And I do want God to be God, and me to not be a mini-micro-managing God myself. So I am trying the "let go, let God" approach to Lent and it is freeing.

Control less, exhale more. I am only taking baby steps, but even baby steps on this front are good. And speaking of baby steps...today I decided to forego my time sitting still in morning prayer and instead strapped on my snowshoes for

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a good winter outing. The snow was deep, the woods were silent, and the swish swish of the snowshoes meditative. My heart was filled with prayers as I moved past the frozen Oxbow, and I felt enveloped in the beauty of nature and the love of God.

Re-Lenting. It's a close cousin to many of the "re" words on the cover of the devotional book: refresh, revive, restart, reinvent, reboot, relax. It gives us all permission to do less and do it better this Lent. Permission to sit back and let God be God while we "chill" a little (as my son would say). Permission to reboot because we have dragged our weary selves into Lent pretty spent and in need. Yes?

Re-Lent. I recommend it. Try it and see.

May loving blessings be showered on each one of your precious heads,



The Real Leap of Faith

In the year 1859 twenty thousand people gathered to watch Charles Blondin walk across a tightrope over Niagara Falls; it was a very dangerous crossing. The winds were gusting and water vapor from the Falls made the 1,100 foot cable very slippery. The crowd was hushed when Blondin took his first step. For the first 300 feet he seemed scared, almost like he didn't believe he could do it. And the crowd seemed uncertain too. But somewhere in the middle of the Falls his faith in himself reasserted itself and he arrived on the American side with the crowd shouting: "Blondin, Blondin, Blondin."

Picking up a microphone he said to the crowd. "You didn't believe I could make it at first. Now you believe." "Yes," shouted the crowd. "Do you believe I can make it all the way back?" he asked them. "Yes, Yes, we believe," shouted the crowd. Then he said: "Which one of you shouting 'we believe' will go with me back across the tightrope on my shoulders?" Suddenly, the crowd became silent. There were no more shouts of "We believe, we believe." Then after a pause that seemed like a lifetime one man raised his hand and said he would go back on Blondin's shoulders. Standing in the crowd a newspaper reporter named

Anthony Campolo wrote into the New York Tribune: "Twenty thousand people had cried, "We believe, we believe, we believe." But in the end, only one really believed. Because he was the only one who was willing to go with Blondin all the way and stay with him to experience with him all the dangers that lay ahead.

Now, during Lent, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Palm Sunday we are being asked by Jesus to do that too. We are not just being asked to believe in Jesus. That was easy when they were on the Mountain of Transfiguration far away from the dangers of Jerusalem. Now we are being asked to go with Jesus into the city of Jerusalem and experience for ourselves what he is about to experience there. We are being asked to stay with him through all the trials he had to face, and experience for ourselves his disappointments, his betrayal and his abandonment. It is easy to say "we believe, we believe." But now Jesus is asking us much more. Jesus is asking us to go with him, and stay with him, all the way to the Cross, and still believe.

Jesus knows that if he now sets his face to go to Jerusalem he will have to face Roman soldiers who are ready to kill anyone who is a threat to their rule. To crucify anyone who calls himself the Christ as well as anyone who called himself Lord and King, because only Caesar could be Christ, Lord and King and the only kingdom in this world allowed was the Kingdom of the Roman Empire. And at this moment we are being asked if we are willing to set our own face to go with Jesus to Jerusalem. In other words: are you willing to go forward in faith and face your own suffering, your own pain and your own uncertainties right now? Going with Jesus to the Cross now is really your willingness to carry your own Cross; and in the face of your own suffering, letting your light shine every day, every step of the way. That's the real leap of faith.

We who have been broken by life are like a broken bowl. The delicate fabric of our lives can be shattered by suffering. Yet in the broken glass of our broken lives, we can always let our lives become shining crystals of sunlight. In our own special way we can shine when facing life's challenges before us. Not only Jesus, but all of us can reflect the light of God's glory from the core of our being. As Leonard Cohen sings: "There's a crack, a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in, that's how the light gets in."

- Rev. Peter Ives, *Theologian-in-Residence*

Jesus and the Tiny Donut Holes

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 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 countryside. 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 worshipping chocolate totally works—and his hard, ruthless interior will have disappeared. In this world, nothing hard 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.

- Annie Turner

March Birthdays!

- 2 Melissa Brown
Jessica LaCroix
- 6 Kathleen Kent
- 7 Amy McElligott
- 8 Bonnie Atkins
- 10 Susan Farrell
Olivia Schiaffo
- 11 Jacob Carbin-O'Brien
- 12 Jonathan Roberge
- 16 Hannah Karpman-Hull
Laura Paul
- 17 Kenneth Nichols
Gabriel Fournier
- 18 Shirley Sicurello
- 19 Sally Lemaire
- 20 Shelby McQueston
- 26 Robert Davis
- 28 Barbara Stowe
Hannah Durrant
- 30 Maureen Bourbeau



"Fridays @ 4:00" Name and Meeting Time has Changed!

Fridays @ 4:00 Writing Group is changing its name to **Haydenville Church Writers' Group**. Meetings will be at 2:30-4:00 on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. The meetings are open to all interested Church members at all levels, beginner to professional writers. Drop-ins are always welcome!

- Sally Lemaire

Endings, Beginnings, and Good Good-byes

The Haydenville Church has been blessed for three years with the remarkable leadership of Dawn Orluske and Joanne Morgan as Head of Children's Church and Youth Group Leader respectively....they have given much and worked far beyond their official hours, week after week, year after year. Lives have seasons, callings, beginnings and endings and both Dawn and Joanne will be leaving their staff positions on June 1, 2015. Dawn, now a Seminary student, must go to another church (specifically NOT her home church) to do her Field Education Training. So she will be at another church in a leadership role continuing her Seminary studies. Joanne is getting yet another graduate degree in the field of education to make her an even more fabulous kindergarten teacher! Both have decided that it is time to move on and pursue these educational opportunities and grow in new ways. We will miss them terribly. All of us, old and young, have learned much from them and we will always be grateful for their time with us. We send them off with admiration, appreciation, and an awareness of how precious they both are and how blessed we have been to worship, sing, study, learn, pray and laugh with them.

Hearing that both Joanne and Dawn would be leaving our Church in June, the Trustees decided to combine their two positions into one job, the Director of Family Ministries, and to make that a half-time position. We then proceeded to offer this Family Ministries job to our Pastor Chris and, to our great delight, he accepted. On June 1, our Pastor Chris will jump from being a half-time church employee as our Associate Pastor to being a full-time employee as our Associate Pastor and the director of Children's Church and youth program. This is great news for the Church, and our Chris is excited. We are thrilled that he feels ready to take on full-time employment and that he will be working closely with our young ones and youth in addition to his position as Associate Pastor. What a blessing.

Our Church is expert at good good-byes and we will be honoring Dawn and Joanne throughout the spring with a special blessing in worship, a dinner party in their honor, and times for children and families to speak to them, give them homemade cards, and thank them for all they have given us. We will make sure everyone has a chance to hug and thank our Dawn and our Joanne and express appreciation. We promise! We are stellar at good good-byes!

As our Church continues to grow and change, we take heart in the knowledge that we pretend to be in charge, but God's grace is being showered on our heads and quietly guiding us in our work, our decisions, and our transitions. God is near, rest assured, and smiling.

- Pastor Andrea

Good Good-Byes

We – Dawn Orluske, Head of Children's Church, and Joanne Morgan, Youth Group Leader – will be leaving our positions at church starting on June 1st. We will both be pursuing graduate work – Dawn continuing her studies at the Andover Newton Theological Seminary and completing an internship next year, and Joanne beginning a graduate program in teacher education this fall to further her teaching credentials.

We have had a wonderful time these past three years working with and getting to know the children, youth, and families at HCC and we are looking forward to a fun and rewarding next three months in Children's Church and Youth Group! We are truly blessed to be part of such a kind, creative, open, and loving church family! There will be many opportunities before the end of May for us to share together. We have already begun planning some "good good-bye" events for families and the congregation throughout the spring, including a potluck dinner, a pizza and games night, and a party for children and youth during CC in May.

We were both excited to hear the news that the Trustees offered the position of head of both CC and the Youth Group to Pastor Chris, and that he will be starting in that role beginning in June. That means he will now be working full-time for the church, as he is already employed half-time as Associate Pastor. We are very excited about this news! Pastor Chris has led youth programs in his previous ministry positions, and knows our children, youth, and families well. We will be meeting with him through the spring sharing stories and information with him about Children's Church and our Youth Group, and we invite you to welcome him to this new-to-him position!

With much love,
Dawn and Joanne

Pastor Andrea to Receive an Award

Pastor Andrea is being given the Queen Esther Social Justice Award at the Temple Beit Ahavah's annual Purim celebration on Saturday, March 7. The award is the highest honor given out every year (this is the 6th year) by the congregation to a member of our local community who they wish to acknowledge for their social justice work.

Purim is the Jewish holiday that takes place in the month of Adar in which they celebrate the triumph of the Jewish people over their oppressors, as told in the Book of Esther. The holiday is named after the word "pur," meaning "lot" or "lottery," which refers to the lot that the Jews' enemy Haman threw to determine the proposed day of the Jews' destruction. On that day, Temple Beit Ahavah celebrates the very brave Queen Esther who risked her own life to save her people and did so by the power of her word and the truth of her identity.

As part of our community's celebration of "v'nahafoch hu," the upside-down nature of many events described in the Book of Esther, they host a Drag Ball and Karaoke Dance Party at Diva's Nightclub where they will publicly present to Pastor Andrea this high honor in recognition of her work. The event begins at 7:00 and the award presentation should begin at approximately 8:00. Cash bar. Everyone is welcome.

New Church-Wide Email Service!

You may have noticed that a new kind of email is coming from the church. Through a service called Constant Contact, we are now sending church-wide emails on a weekly basis. If you subscribe to e-newsletters from other organizations, you might already be familiar with this service. This email is designed to replace the multiple emails that we send throughout the week, and will include links to our website, updated event information, and a few other features. Please give us (the Media Team) both your patience and your feedback as we launch this new endeavor! The e-newsletter will come from hccannouncements@gmail.com. While the use of Constant Contact should decrease the likelihood of these emails being labeled "junk" or "spam," please do check to see if our email has landed there.

Please look for this new and improved e-newsletter, as well as upgrades to our website, coming soon!

- Pastor Chris

Attention Gardeners!

Grow Food Northampton's Community Garden in Florence is opening up almost 50 new plots. If you're interested in having your own plot, registration for new gardeners is on March 21, 9-12, at Smith Voc. Novice gardeners are most welcome and get plenty of support to gain new skills. For more information go to <http://www.growfoodnorthampton.com/florence-organic-community-garden/> or contact me at pat@growfoodnorthampton.com.

Also, let me know if you'd be interested in forming a group from HCC to obtain a plot to grow food for a local soup kitchen. There are already several plots engaged in this important work, and an infrastructure in place to organize the deliveries. But we always need more gardeners to grow fresh produce. If you're interested in being part of a group, let me know.

- Pat James

A revision* to the 2013-2014 Directory

Karen Guiel's new cell phone number is:
413 887-1175

*Addresses and phone numbers of church members are only listed in the Newsletter with permission.

A2A to discuss "Any Body, Everybody, Christ's Body."

Join A2A during the next three months to read and discuss "Any Body, Everybody, Christ's Body, A Congregational Guide for Becoming Accessible to ALL". The A2A Committee will be discussing this guide in three parts over the course of their next three monthly meetings.

March 3 - "Any Body.."

April 7 - "Everybody"

May 5 - "Christ's Body."

The Guide was compiled by the UCC Disabilities Ministries and can be downloaded from their site, www.uccdm.org. The A2A meetings are held in the Church Dining Room, starting at 5:30 with a prayer, food and a general "how are you?" conversation and they end at about 7:00 pm. For more information, please contact Velma Garcia at (413) 219-8018 or vgarcia@smith.edu or Susan Sachs at (413) 527-8358 or ssachs611@gmail.com.

Church Visioning Day~

Where have we been? Where are we heading?

Saturday, March 7 • 9:30 to 12:30 pm

- All welcome to a gathering to think through together
- how we continue to move from a “pastoral” to a “program” church.
- Breakfast goodies and coffee provided.
- Church Dining Room

Special Mission Status

As part of its commitment to economic justice and social healing, the Haydenville Congregational Church may designate an organization as having Special Mission Status if, in the judgment of the Church Council, its work is consistent with the mission and message of the Church. Organizations seeking special status shall submit a proposal to the Diaconate and Board of Trustees for their recommendation which would be presented to the Church Council for a vote.

For consideration, an organization must be an established nonprofit with one or more members belonging to the Church. An organization accorded Special Mission Status may have a line item in the Board of Trustees budget and may benefit from a special collection one Sunday a year. The organization could also cite its special status in reaching out to other religious and civic organizations.

Special Mission Status may be conveyed for up to two years, with the possibility of renewal. An organization so designated shall make an annual presentation to the Church about its accomplishments and priorities, and use of donated funds. The Diaconate and Trustees are accepting letters of proposal through March 15th, 2015 for consideration at the April Council meeting for the 2015-16 period. Letters of proposal can be sent to Rick Turner, Chair of Trustees, at his home address (60 Briar Hill Road, Williamsburg, MA 01090) or sent to Rick via email (docrictur@gmail.com).

- Pastor Andrea

Meaning Well and Doing Badly

Several people have gently pointed out to me that my frequent use of “sisters and brothers” in our worship services reflects a binary division in gender identification and roles that some do not resonate with or relate to. I have been lovingly encouraged to say “my fellow siblings in the faith” when I would have said, “my brothers and sisters.” I agree with the analysis and feedback and I keep meaning to say “siblings” and then I fall into my old rut and say “sisters and brothers.” I mean well and do badly. So I am staying with it. And staying with it.

I also have noticed that some of us mean well but are doing badly around some names and pronouns in our Church family. There are some among us who do not relate to the pronouns “he” or “she” and have asked us to remember to refer to them as “they” and “them.” When we respond that “this is too hard” or “I just cannot remember,” our words are hurtful and diminishing. When we say, “Keep reminding me, I’ll get there...” we are placing the burden of teaching and reminding on someone else and not monitoring our own language ourselves.

We are a congregation of good and loving people. No question. And I know we all mean well. I also know we can do badly. Our lack of attention can wound beloved members of our Church family. Let’s be prayerful about this, and mindful about our language. Blessings on us all.

- Pastor Andrea

Adult Faith Formation

First and Third Sundays in the Dining Room, 8:45 am to 9:30 am

Join us for this new version of Adult Sunday School as we deepen our understanding of our faith.

We will continue to look at Paul’s letters to the Corinthian church, moving on to Second Corinthians with its theme of “power through weakness.” Though each session builds on the previous one, you are more than welcome to “drop in” at any time and join us when you can.

We are also looking ahead to the end of these sessions and discussing where we’d like to go next with our study. Your input is essential! For more information, please contact Pastor Chris.

**“Words make you think.
Music makes you feel.
A song makes you feel a thought.”**
- E.Y. (“Yip”) Harburg

Calendar for March

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

Date	Time	Event	Location
Sun. March 1	8:45 - 9:30 am 10:00 am	Second Sunday in Lent Adult Faith Formation Worship Service with Communion	Dining Room Sanctuary
	11:45 am	Special Men's Fellowship Meeting	Children's Church
Mon. March 2	6:00 pm	Diaconate Meeting	Dining Room
Tues. March 3	5:30 pm	A2A Meeting	Dining Room
Wed. March 4	12:45 pm	Church Book Group	Watson Room, Forbes Library
	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Sat. March 7	9:30 am	Church Visioning Day - Where have we been? Where are we heading? All Welcome!	Dining Room
Sun. March 8	10:00 am	Third Sunday in Lent Worship Service New Members Joining Ceremony	Sanctuary
	12:00 noon	Council Meeting	Sanctuary
Tues. March 10	7:00 pm	Men's Fellowship Meeting	Dining Room
Wed. March 11	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Thurs. March 12	2:30 pm	Haydenville Church Writers' Group	Dining Room
	5:30 pm	Trustee Meeting	Dining Room
Sat. March 14	9:30 am	Lenten Workshop - Writing as Contemplative Practice with Bonnie Atkins	Dining Room
	10:00 am	Living the Questions 2	Sanctuary
Sun. March 15	8:45 - 9:30 am 10:00 am	Fourth Sunday in Lent Adult Faith Formation Worship Service "One Great Hour of Sharing" Special UCC Offering Collected	Dining Room Sanctuary
Mon. March 16	6:30 pm	Peace and Justice Meeting	Dining Room
Wed. March 18	6:00 pm	Shepherds' Meeting	Children's Church
	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Thurs. March 19	1:00 pm	Ladies Aid Meeting	Dining Room
Sat. March 21	9:30 am	Lenten Workshop: Transforming the Cross with Pastor Andrea	Dining Room
Sun. March 22	10:00 am	Fifth Sunday in Lent Worship Service	Sanctuary

Date	Time	Event	Location
Wed. March 25	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Thurs. March 26	2:30 pm	Haydenville Church Writers' Group	Dining Room
	5:30 pm	Family Ministries Meeting	Dining Room
Sat. March 28	9:30 am	Lenten Workshop - Expressive Movement with Opeyemi Parham	Dining Room
Sun. March 29	10:00 am	Palm/Passion Sunday Worship Service Blue Moon Sunday	Sanctuary

Idol Making

"You shall not make for yourself an idol . . . in the form of anything that is on the earth." - Exodus 20:4

Last fall I went for a run. On my street the leaves formed a canopy. Red, brown, some still green, a shield and a prism illuminating the street in a thousand different shades of orange glow.

The beauty nearly undid me.

And then the smell of exhaust was in my nose and a car horn went off angrily. I had run off the side street into one of Chicago's busiest thoroughfares. I jumped back onto the sidewalk. My transcendent moment collapsed.

But I wanted to preserve it. So at bedtime I told my kids, "Earlier today I saw God in the way the sunlight came breaking through the same leaves that held it back." They were startled. I was pleased. Maybe they'll start looking at

the trees more carefully, more wonderfully. That's good parenting! That's good spirituality! I felt smug.

And then I felt awful. Because, deep down I knew I wasn't telling the truth. Indeed, I'm afraid I hinted at an arrogant, even dangerous false religion.

First, equating God with an appreciation for nature risks suggesting that those who cannot afford leafy tree-lined streets don't have equal access to the divine. Less than two miles from my house there are kids running down the street in order to dodge bullets, not peep leaves.

Second, to say that God is found in nature is to conflate the Creator with creation. Nobody says that "Starry Night" is Van Gogh. So why are we so quick to make a similar claim about God?

It should be more than sufficient to say that I saw something beautiful. Beauty is rare enough. I don't need to try and make a god out of it.



Prayer Oh God, we long for you. Satisfy that longing so that we can stop trying to satisfy it on our own. Amen.

- Matt Fitzgerald, Senior Pastor of St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Chicago, IL.

The Narthex on a Sunday morning.

Lent 2015: Haydenville Congregational Church

- **Church Visioning Day~Where have we been? Where are we heading?** • Saturday, March 7 ~ 9:30 to 12:30 pm
- All welcome to a gathering to think through how we continue to move from a pastoral to a program church. Breakfast goodies and coffee provided. Church Dining Room
- **Lenten Workshop~Writing As Contemplative Practice with Bonnie Atkins** • Saturday, March 14 ~ 9:30 to 11:30 am • Writer Bonnie Atkins will lead us with prompts and suggestions to develop a contemplative writing practice. Church Dining Room
- **Lenten Workshop~Transforming the Cross with Pastor Andrea** • Saturday, March 21 ~ 9:30 to 11:30 am • Pastor Andrea welcomes anyone who wants to make a cross that will be raised and “turned” during our Easter Service. As in years past, we will “turn” or transform our crosses (for example, one side: LOST, other side FOUND) during our big Easter Service. All welcome who would like to make a cross and then be a part of our Easter Service. Materials will be supplied. Church Dining Room
- **Lenten Workshop~Expressive Movement with Opeyemi Parham** • Saturday, March 28 ~ 9:30 to 11:30 am • Guided, sacred movement allowing our bodies to lead us toward the divine. All ages welcome. Church Dining Room
- **Mundy Thursday Tenebrae Service** ~ April 2 ~7:00 pm
- **Good Friday** ~ April 3 ~ Noon to 3:00 pm ~ Sanctuary open for prayer and meditation
- **Easter Service** ~ April 5 ~10:00 am followed by a special Coffee Hour

Child Care is available at any or all of the gatherings if you call Pastor Andrea and request it so we can make the arrangements. Just let us know.

“If you want happiness for an hour - take a nap. If you want happiness for a day - go fishing. If you want happiness for a year - inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime - help someone else.”

- Chinese Proverb

Lenten Circle: “The Spirituality of Parenting”

A non-time consuming opportunity to practice and share in the “Spirituality of Parenting.” Facilitated by Reverend Matilda Rose Cantwell, for parents and close caregivers of young people from age 0-18. (Grandparents, Godparents, and all manner of chosen family who take care of children are all welcome.) Participants will receive a reflection and exercise each week over email and then gather towards the end of Lent to share their reflections and experiences.

We will meet once-March 26th, 5:30 pm. Potluck/Pizza Dinner served and childcare provided. (Desire for deep theological reflection; OR a sense of humor; OR a feeling of utter bewilderment on some or most days; or better yet, all of these things, most welcome to this practice circle!) For more information or to register contact Matilda, otherwise known as “Til” at mcantwel@smith.edu

“To understand is to stand under which is to look up to which is a good way to understand”

- Corita Kent (1918-1986)

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 silverlaket.org.

“Camperships” (financial assistance) are available through Silver Lake and the Massachusetts UCC, and are always confidential. See Pastor Chris (a long time Silver Laker!) for more information.

In Hindsight

"Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the Lord. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug."
- Isaiah 51:1-2

When I need to get a piece of writing perfect, I take the advice of a middle school English teacher who taught me to read backwards. I start by reading the sentences, last to first. If I'm feeling picky, I go even further, reading each word in reverse order to catch any typos.

This old trick is based on the idea that there are things we only see when looking backward. Reading from beginning to end, the familiar story can blind us to hidden mistakes. But when we look backward we may notice something we've missed.

The same is true of our spiritual journeys. Isaiah urges his audience to "look to the rock from which you were hewn." It is there he believes they will find the hand of God helping to carve out their stories, the hand they may have missed in the forward movement of their lives.

God is chiseling away at me too, mostly in ways I don't recognize in the moment. But when I stop to look back, I see the chips of stone that have accumulated around me. I measure the distance I have come from the unformed block I once was. Patterns of grace and challenge emerge, and I recognize, with relief, the mark of God's handiwork, a mark I could only see in hindsight.

Prayer *Chiseling God, grant me the space and the wisdom to measure the difference you have made in my life. Show me my story as you read it.*

- Vince Amlin, Associate Minister at the United Church of Gainesville, Gainesville, Florida.

Can You Write a Poem to Share?

On February 8th during our Sunday Worship Service, Carole Bull read a poem she had written during our time of Offering called "Ode to a Plate that is Passed." (See below) Her poem served as the Invitation to the Offering, and I found it lovely and moving. So here's my question... are you a poet? Could you be? You are invited to write a poem that we could use in Church during our Worship

Service as the Invitation to the Offering sometime between now and June. If you write the poem but are too shy to share it during Offering, Pastor Chris or I will read your poem. If you write an Offering poem and would like to share it yourself, we will ask you to come forward and do the Offering with us. Then you reading your original words would be the Invitation to the Offering. The only requirements are that the poem is your own words, and that it somehow vaguely relates to our Offering in Church. But you can interpret that loosely. Please submit all Offering poems to Pastor Andrea and we will schedule you for some Sunday between now and June when your poem is shared (either by you or by us). This is exciting! Get your pens, capture the muse, and start writing!

-Pastor Andrea

Ode to a Plate That is Passed

Ponder this:

What you put in
May be what you get out
Though it is not the amount
But the love that dwells in what you give
Whether it is a painted ceiling
A more justice-like salary for a leader
Your mind riveted on a Sunday morning
Out of its downward tilt
To something greater than you

Bigger than the sum of our parts

Fathom that:

Our pennies, dollars and more
Are valued not for their separateness but for their comingling
Build or not our beloved community
The sum total says yes to whom we open our arms
And who we behold ourselves to be.

The offertory:

Is just that
Our hopes and dreams
Lying in the passed plate
How does what you give say who we are?

- Carole Bull

W I D E N I N G T H E
Welcome

Mini-Resource Guide

- **Safe Passage - Domestic Violence** 413-586-5066 or 888-345-5282 <http://www.safepass.org/>
- **Suicide Hot Line** (800) 273-8255
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
- **Veterans' Suicide Hotline** 1-800-273-8255
<http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/ForVeterans.aspx>
- **Crisis Intervention - Clinical Support Options**
413.586.5555 (Hampshire County) 800.322.0424
<http://www.csoinc.org/crisis-and-respite/>
- **Parental Stress Line** 1.800.632.8188
<http://www.parentshelpingparents.org/>
- **Everywoman's Center Sexual Assault Hotline**
413-545-0800 <http://www.umass.edu/ewc/>
- **Trans Lifeline** 877-565-8860
<http://www.translifeline.org/>

March Climate Actions of the Month

These 4-tiered featured actions are brought to you by the Climate Action Group of the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence.

Personal: Reduce the amount of meat and dairy, especially factory-farmed products, in your diet. Consider these facts presented in the documentary "Cowspiracy":

- "Livestock and their byproducts account for at least 32,000 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per year, or 51% of all worldwide greenhouse gas emissions."
- "Methane (emitted in abundance by cattle) has a global warming power 86 times that of CO₂."
- "One hamburger requires 660 gallons of water to produce – the equivalent of 2 months' worth of showers."

And this fact from the May 2014 issue of *National Geographic*:

- "For every 100 calories of grain we feed animals, we get only about 40 new calories of milk, 22 calories of eggs, 12 of chicken, 10 of pork or 3 of beef".

Community: Get together with some friends to watch and discuss "Cowspiracy", available for a fee online, or by

buying a DVD from www.cowspiracy.com. This feature-length film shows how "animal agriculture is the leading cause of deforestation, water consumption and pollution, is responsible for more greenhouse gases than the transportation industry, and is a primary driver of rainforest destruction, species extinction, habitat loss, topsoil erosion, ocean 'dead zones' and virtually every other environmental ill."

State, National or Global: Find out whether your state legislator has pledged to support the two "carbon fee and rebate" bills now before the MA congress. (See below.) If they have expressed support, contact them to thank them, and if they haven't yet made a decision, urge them to support the bills. Most of the legislators from the Valley have already declared their support but the following have not yet: Reps. Ashe, Kulik, Petrolati, and Wagner, and Sens. Downing and Lesser.

Inform Yourself: Learn about the 2 "carbon fee and rebate" bills proposed in MA. From the Climate Action Now blog: "You don't have to be an expert, but you should understand why putting a fair price on carbon is so important, and how the MA bills would do this. You can read talking points for the two bills and principles to consider in pricing carbon [here](#)¹ and [here](#).² And think about the "revenue neutral" vs. "revenue -positive" issue. In brief, a revenue-neutral bill sidesteps being attacked as "just another tax," while a revenue-positive bill may be more likely to result in significant emissions reduction." A good source of information about Sen. Barrett's version of the bill is here: <http://www.climate-xchange.org/>

1 <http://climateactionnowma.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Barrett-bill-2-page-flier-vs5.pdf>

2 <http://climateactionnowma.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Talking-Points-for-SD-1815-Sen.-Pacheco.pdf>

- Molly Mason

"Anger and hatred are the real enemies that we must confront and defeat, not the 'enemies' who appear from time to time in our lives."

- The Dalai Lama

Church Leadership

Rev. Dr. Andrea Ayvazian
Senior Pastor

Rev. Chris Mereschuk
Associate Pastor

Jan Varnon
Moderator

Lynn Fogg
Vice Moderator

Ann Loomis
Clerk

Jo Cannon
Treasurer

Margie Serkin
Bookkeeper/Office
Administrator

Karen Guiel
Diaconate, Chair

Rick Turner
Trustees, Chair

Dawn Orluske
Director of
Children's Church

Joanne Morgan
Youth Leader

Rev. Dr. Peter Ives
Theologian-
in-Residence

Rev. Susannah Crolius
Minister of
Creative Arts

Rev. Chris Mereschuk
Shepherds, Chair
860 966-8055

Jeff Olmsted
Minister of Music

Kathy O'Connor
Church Sexton

Jackie Cloonan
Ladies Aid, President

Andrew Geery
Youth & Family
Ministries, Chair

Jennifer Clarson
Angel Take-out

Sarah Bellows Meister
Angel Wings
Coordinator and
Church Intern

Vicki Hicks
Angel Hands,
Coordinator

Jackie Cloonan
Snow Angels, Green
Angels, Coordinator

Doug Renick
Peace and Justice
Steering Committee,
Chair

Maggie Solis
Stewardship
Committee, Chair

Carolyn DuBois
Music Committee,
Chair

Sue Carbin
Church Scheduler
scarbin1973@aol.com

Linda Zeigenbein
Interfaith Cot Shelter,
Meal Coordinator

Chip Roughton
Scripture Reader,
Coordinator

Laura Paul
Librarian

Shirley Sicurello
Welcome Ministry,
Chair

**Sharon Grace
Julie Salzman**
Head Ushers

Susan Sachs
Head Greeter

Laura Garcia
Webmaster

Richard Spencer
CrossCurrents

**Velma Garcia
Laine Wilder**
Accessible to All
(A2A) Co-chairs

**Jeff Olmsted &
Darien Gardner**
Men's Fellowship,
Co-chairs

Mary Gerken-Newcomb
Haydenville Church
Writers' Group,
Facilitator

Lay Delegates
Ross Bassett
Jan Varnon
Bob Varnon

Trustees (by Seniority)
Richard Turner
Alice Barber
Karin McGowan
Laura Garcia
Jo Cannon, *Treasurer*.
Sylvia Fappiano, *LA Rep.*

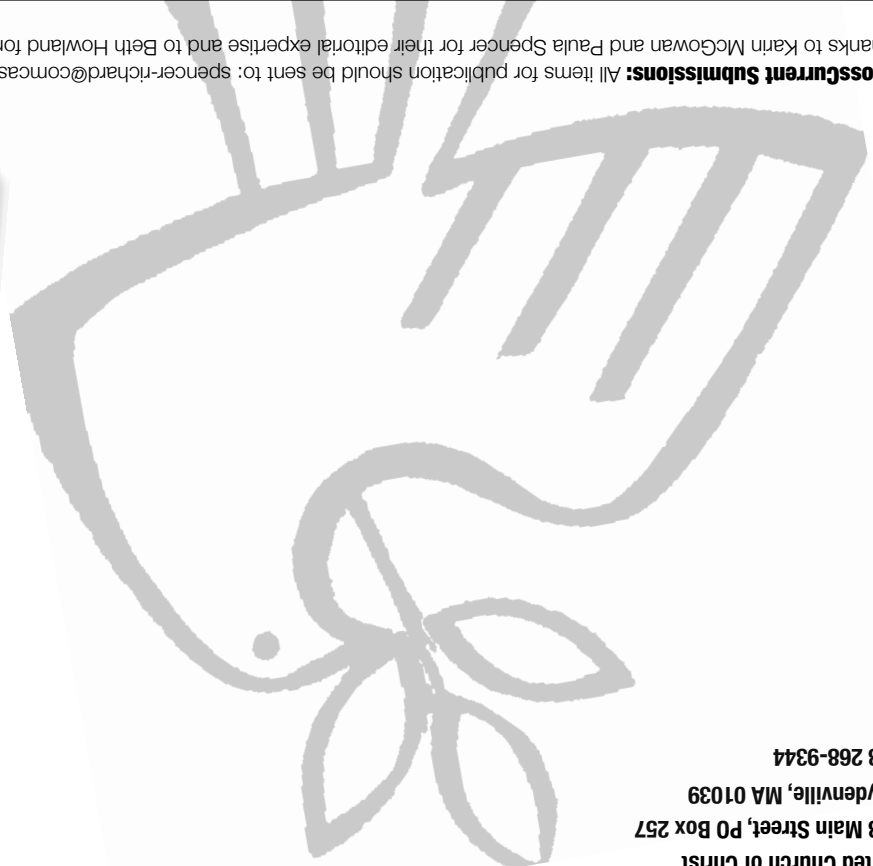
Deacons (by Seniority)
Karen Guiel
Mary Sheehan
Maureen Bourbeau
Karla Hathaway
Jen Matias
Amy Andrew
Pat James
Paula Spencer
Shirley Sicurello
Carolyn DuBois
Fred Goodhue
Tobias Davis

Shepherds
Ross Bassett
Robert Davis
Susan Farrell
Pat James
Tina Marini
Rev. Chris Mereschuk
Mary Sheehan
Ellen Tobiassen

Church Council
Senior Pastor
Moderator
Vice Moderator
Clerk
Treasurer
Trustees, Chair
Diaconate, Chair
Stewardship, Chair
Music, Chair
Peace & Justice, Chair
Family Ministries,
Chair
A2A, Chair

Crosscurrent Submissions: All items for publication should be sent to: spencer-richard@comcast.net by the 15th of the month. Thanks to Karin McGowan and Paula Spencer for their editorial expertise and to Beth Howland for labeling & mailing our newsletter.

Food, Glorious Food!
Our Church Family is so great at
bringing delicious goodies for our
FAMOUS Coffee Hour.
When it is your Coffeeklatch's
month please arrive early with
your food, help set up and
remember to help with
clean up too!
"Loaves and Dishes" Klatch is
providing the coffee hour goodies
as well as setting up and cleaning
up during March.



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