

# Cross Currents



September 2015 • Open Hearts & Open Minds & Open Doors

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## Open Arms for Trans Community *Reprinted from August 8 Daily Hampshire Gazette*

Recently, the light blue, pink, and white flag I ordered for our church arrived in my mailbox. I opened the package and studied the flag. The writeup in the ad had said that it was impossible to hang the flag upside down, and they were right. Because the flag is completely symmetrical, either way you hang it is the right way. The blue, pink, and white striped flag is the symbol of Trans (Transgender identified) pride.

Our church already has two large flags hanging from our sign out front: a rainbow pride flag and an Earth flag. I stared at the new flag and wondered where we would display it. I took the flag to our monthly Deacons' meeting, unfurled it, and asked where it should be hung. Half the group felt it should be displayed outside with the other two flags, half thought it should hang inside, in the sanctuary. Finally a reasonable person suggested we buy another flag and hang one outside and one inside.

When I was called to the Haydenville Congregational Church ten years ago, our congregation was strong—in word and in deed—on LGB issues. We were what the United Church of Christ calls an “open and affirming” church. And for ten years, we have not been quietly or subtly open and affirming. Our church has been wildly, visibly, and loudly open and affirming—in countless ways, and on many fronts we have been actively LGB-positive and empowering.

However, it took us years to bring our Trans affirming activism and visibility up to the level of our LGB activism and visibility. We had church members and frequent visitors from the Trans community who suggested that we get smarter about Trans issues and put ourselves forward, more formally, as welcoming to Trans folks. We heard that and nodded in agreement but did not become really active until about a year ago. Then, due to the loving nudges of the Trans community and some positive changes at the church, we embraced our identity as being a Trans Ally Church.

We are not done, the work is far from completed, we have not “arrived,” but we identify as a Trans Ally Church and recognize that we are a work in progress and on our way.

We believe that being a Trans Ally Church means we strive to be a place safe for the Trans community to gather and worship, a place saturated with positive messages about Trans issues, a congregation willing to listen deeply, learn, make

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mistakes and course corrections and continue on with integrity, open hearts, and a deep commitment to justice and equity.

We believe that taking many baby steps makes a difference, and so we have committed to taking many modest steps on our continuing journey to be a Trans Ally Church. We believe that the steps accumulate and strengthen our work to educate, welcome, model, grow and rejoice together as a Trans-affirming faith community.

So what kinds of steps have we taken as we grow, learn, and worship together? The biggest decision we made has been to listen deeply to our Trans members as they tell us about their lives, about the language that reflects love and respect for them, and about their hopes, desires and needs.

From our deep listening have come a number of changes at the church: we have asked every church member and friend to wear a name tag that shows not only the name they would like to be called, but the pronouns we are to use in conversation: he/him, she/her, or they/them. We have also bought countless books for the Church library (including young adult books) that focus on Trans identity, Trans spirituality, and how to be an effective Trans ally.

We have hired professionals to offer Trans-affirming workshops and the attendance and engagement at those has been high. Our Church Deacons also chose to change our ad in the Gazette to name that we are Trans-affirming, to make people know that we strive to make Trans folks welcome and safe in our community. And the Deacons also added these words to the Welcome said every Sunday from the pulpit: "Welcome to people of all colors, cultures, abilities, sexual orientations and gender identities. And welcome to people who identify as queer."

The list of steps goes on: this spring we had a formal ceremony reaffirming the baptism of Trans members who wanted to be blessed and have their correct names called out before God. This fall we plan to call a Trans pastor to our ministerial team. The pastor intends to offer a Trans support group open to anyone—whether members of our church or not.

Our church is taking these steps not to be on the right side of a social or political movement. Rather, we believe that we are being faithful disciples, doing what Jesus would have done—welcoming and loving those facing discrimination and marginalization. We are simply trying to be good Christians and follow the example of our radical teacher and savior who consistently stood with those who were targeted. We believe that if Jesus were

here among us now he would be leading the Pride March every spring, walking arm-in-arm with Trans folks, waving a blue, pink and white flag.



## Summary of the United Church of Christ's 30th General Synod

Every two years, delegates and visitors from all settings and locations of the UCC gather for a time of worship, fellowship, service, education, and business. During each General Synod, resolutions are brought forth for the delegates to consider and vote upon. These resolutions are both for the internal life of the denomination (Procedural Resolutions) and for the public stances taken at the denominational level (Resolutions of Witness). This year in Cleveland, delegates debated and voted on nearly one dozen resolutions and formal motions. Additionally, delegates considered structural and bylaw changes that were ultimately not adopted.

One particular resolution that is perhaps most relevant to the life of the Haydenville Congregational Church calls for a comprehensive and intentional discernment process to be welcoming, inclusive, supportive, and engaged (WISE) of and with people who live with mental health issues. This discernment process includes the consideration of adopting a designation not unlike the Open and Affirming or Just Peace commitments.

Also highly relevant and deeply personal for our congregation, the General Synod voted to commemorate the centennial of the start of the Armenian Genocide. As you know, our Senior Pastor Rev. Dr. Andrea Ayvazian has carried the mantle of her father, Dr. Fred Ayvazian, campaigning for the recognition of the atrocities committed against the Armenian people by the Turkish government, calling upon both US and international governments to recognize this genocide for what it was. The UCC has observed Armenian Martyrs' Day on the Sunday closest to April 25th since the 1980's.

One of the more controversial resolutions called for the divestment of UCC Pension Board funds from corporations and entities that benefit from Israeli occupation of

Palestinian territories, as well as a boycott of those same corporations. The resolution also urged congregations to educate their membership on the “Kairos Palestine Document,” a resource concerning the affects of occupation on the Palestinian people. A similar resolution was passed at General Synod in 2005, and was met with challenging and tense relationships between national and local UCC settings and our Jewish partners.

Delegates also voted to enter “Full Communion” with the United Church of Canada, which is a covenant to engage in mission together. This is not a uniting or combining of the two denominations, but a strengthening of ecumenical ties in order to more broadly witness and engage in mission. Additionally, this agreement proclaims full recognition of each partner’s sacraments as well as the recognition of ordained clergy in each denomination, which allows clergy from one denomination to seek employment in the other. The UCC currently has Full Communion or a Formula of Agreement with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Presbyterian Church (USA), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Reformed Church in America.

Another exciting development was the launch of the Antoinette Brown Society (ABS), a foundation and network to support the nurturing of women in ministry. With its inauguration, the ABS secured over \$20,000 in pledges for their work.

This Synod also elected a new General Minister and President (GMP) for the denomination. Rev. John Dorhauer will serve not only as the leader of the Collegium of Executive Officers, but also acting as a public face for the denomination. There was some measure of controversy over Rev. Dorhauer’s candidacy and election due to the ethnic/racial and gender identity composition of the current executive office holders. Rev. Dorhauer joins two other male-identified and Euro-American pastors in the Collegium, and great concern was raised over the lack of ethnic/racial and gender identity diversity in the top offices. While past executive officers have included female identified persons and people of color, the current office holders do not represent the wide diversity within the UCC, nor do they demonstrate the UCC’s commitment to intentionally fulfill the assurance of diversity. However, Rev. Dorhauer openly acknowledged this troubling reality, and has pledged to engage further in the essential work of increasing diversity, referring to his established track record of advocacy for a wide range of social justice issues.

There are many, many more exciting and important things that happened at the General Synod! Take some time to find out what our denomination is up to in the world, and how we continually discern our call to discipleship. For a complete report of General Synod business and resolutions, or to see videos of worship services, please visit the United Church of Christ website ([ucc.org](http://ucc.org)), and click on the link for “News & Events” and choose “General Synod.” The next General Synod (2017) will be hosted in Baltimore, Maryland.

~ Compiled and submitted by



## Rest-Darn it! (or the Worthiness Trap)

I’ve been thinking a great deal about the concept of “worthiness” lately, which is somewhat ironic as here we are in the small slice of weather called “summer” in the hills of Western Massachusetts—a time to garden, pick flowers, take walks up the road with our jumpy Jack, visit with friends, sip chilled wine or cold seltzer on the deck and watch the swallows dip over the green hills. So given all that, why, oh, why does my mind torment me in such a fashion?

This is probably due to my listening to a sermon podcast from my favorite evangelical Lutheran pastor, Nadia Bolz-Weber. It is a recent sermon on there being no time to rest because we are all so *busy* trying to prove our *worthiness* to others and to ourselves. This is a trap I often fall into, and I think sometimes we can fall into it in our marvelous, talkative, social-justice oriented UCC church.

If we are busy all the time saving the world, reaching out to the marginalized, working on our own soul work, when do we have time to really rest? And not the kind of rest, Nadia, cautions, which allows us to rush out the door to perform even more good works.

Pardon me for quoting Nadia too much, but I love what she says in this sermon: taking a rest should not feel like an addition to our “to-do list.” The Gospel lesson for

Sunday, July 19<sup>th</sup>, was on Jesus looking for a place to hide out with his peeps, a place to pray to his father, and a place—just maybe—free from the constant demands of his sheep, much as he adored them.

What happens when we really rest—just sit looking out at the green hills without murmuring to ourselves, “I really should edge that garden. Darn, the shingles on the barn are getting crumbly, time to replace them. But where will we get the money? And Jeez, is that really my *stomach* I see folding over my waistband???”

When we rest, and jumpy restless me finds this difficult, we see that God keeps on redeeming creation even when we aren’t in charge. Anne Lamott laments that God should have put her in charge of all events on the west coast; I sometimes feel that way myself.

So rest. Darn it! Not as a command, not as a way of becoming more worthy in the eyes of others or of our God—however you imagine her—but as a way of following Jesus. If He took time off, retreating to that cave in Capernaum overlooking the Sea of Galilee just to be with his god, then why can’t we? And we can do it not as something we *have* to do, but as something we *can* do.

I suspect—based on my own struggles with this resting thing—that we will then find ourselves filled with a different kind of breath; not the quick intakes that come from filling our days with “have-tos, shoulds, and ought-tos”, but the calm breathing that comes only from God and the Holy Spirit, reminding us that we are loved and held by hands that are not our own and which are not in our power. Thanks be to God.

- Annie Turner

*How beautiful it is to do nothing,  
and then rest afterward.*

- Old proverb

**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.

## Haydenville Congregational Church a Bold Initiative Award Winner

The Church Development Council of the Massachusetts Conference presented two churches with "Bold Initiative Awards" at the Annual Meeting on June 13th.

These awards recognize "churches and/or individuals who have taken bold steps to help their churches become more healthy, faithful and effective in the changing landscape of religion in our society," the council said.

"We look for churches that are engaging in deeply transformational discernment as they look both inward to their church and outward to their community. We look for models of churches that have found that place where their core values, passions and resources meet the needs of people who are longing for authentic community, to make a difference in the world and to be deeply rooted in the presence of God."

"A decade ago the future of (the Haydenville Congregational Church) church was uncertain. It was an increasing challenge to care for the building and maintain a sustainable budget. Years of delayed maintenance had left the church in rough shape. Worship attendance was in the single digits. Then the church captured a vision of what they could be: something true to what they had always been and at the

### September Birthdays!

- 1 Judy Bowker-Saulsbury
- 2 Ruth Loomis
- 3 Chester Cross
- 8 Chalet Seidel
- 9 Janice Mazzallo
- Maze Lawlor
- Marcelle Walters
- 13 Sharon Grace
- 14 Mary Martone
- 15 Charlie Agostino-Pierce
- Klare Carbin-O'Brien
- 16 Jim Foudy
- 17 Helen Symons
- Cricket Hughes  
(Rhonda Humphrey)
- 22 Anne Harrison
- Daniel Guiel
- 23 Ann Loomis
- 27 Nicole Nakashian
- 28 Mary Sheehan
- 30 Tobias Davis



same time something new. They reached beyond their walls and widened their extravagant welcome. Under the pastoral leadership of Rev. Andrea Ayvazian, they adapted their worship style and their programs to better echo the spirit and longing of those within their community. They claimed an open and affirming approach that offered an

“But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.”

– 2 Corinthians 4:7

authentic and deeply expressed invitation to all. In the last decade their worship attendance has

increased over 15 fold. That is mirrored in an increase in church school participation from 4 to over 65. But reaching out to those in need beyond their walls is more important to this church than drawing people in. That is a bold act of faith that we celebrate.”

### Treasure in Jars of Clay

And so throughout the Annual Meeting, clay jars abounded, from the displays of flower pots that surrounded the podium, to images on the screen of a cracked jar giving life to flowers, to Amy Bruch working live on stage at a potter’s wheel as part of each worship service.

There also continued to be glimpses of the treasure inside, such as powerful clay jar testimonials shared with attendees. “Liz” shared how she overcame drug addiction and homelessness with the help of the Worcester Fellowship’s outdoor church. “Cynthia” described visiting a parishioner in Intensive Care who had voted against calling her - a woman, a lesbian - to his church. She described praying with him at his bedside and hearing his quiet response: “I was wrong.” And “John” described how his tiny church in Dudley transformed into a place of wide welcome after members took the time to read every word of the Bible, together.

“God is trusting us to be the treasure. God is trusting you to be the treasure. God is trusting your church—your congregation—to be the treasure,” Conference Minister and President Jim Antal.

- Robert Varnon

## Refuse/Reduce/Reuse/ Repurpose/Reinvent/Recycle

The "old" recycling movement's catch words are “Recycle, Reuse, Reduce.” Now Upcycling has become popular, and repurposing.... such as I buy old bridesmaids dresses at Goodwill for the velvet and cover HCC hallway ropes with it, etc. So that's a new one, and reinvent, is sort of similar. I think of the tiny house movement.... reinvent one's need to have a big house, and that means the carbon footprint is that much smaller.

What really caught me on the revised list was Refuse. I have been trying to Refuse more. Mostly bags at stores, even if I forgot my fabric bags. After all, they are in the car most of the time!! So what if my groceries go out to my car loose in the cart. Other refusals are handouts if I can have the information emailed to me.

- Maureen Ricksgers

## Children’s Church and Youth Ministry: It’s not too early to think about volunteering!

Our fantastic and innovative Children’s Church program only works because YOU make it happen. Each Sunday, we need at least four adults to work with our young ones. Lead Teachers prepare and deliver the lesson for the day, while other volunteers assist in engaging the children and supporting the Lead Teacher. You can volunteer for multiple weeks or months or even just one Sunday morning. High school aged youth are also encouraged to be leaders in the classroom.

Additionally, we need people to work with our youth during service and fellowship activities, be it rock climbing, river cleanups, sledding, a weekend retreat, or volunteering in the community.

All volunteers are required to complete a criminal background check in accordance with our Safe Church policy. Please contact Pastor Chris for more information or to volunteer, and thanks!

**PLEASE NOTE:** Personal items may not be stored on church property without prior approval of the Board of Trustees.

## Don't Feed the Trolls!

In the world of the internet and social media, a "Troll" is someone who intentionally provokes, slanders, or otherwise bullies through the posting of comments on websites or social media profiles. The rule of the internet: Don't Feed the Trolls! On occasion, because of our various stances on justice issues, we will receive inflammatory comments on our Facebook page, which is moderated by Pastor Chris and several church members. Please, if you see such a comment, **do not engage in debate with the individual**, but contact Pastor Chris and he will determine the next steps. Thank you!

## Blessing of the Backpacks Sunday, September 20

As students, parents, and teachers begin the new academic year, we will offer a blessing of backpacks, books, and precious, well-loved items during our Children's Message in our September 20th worship service. Kids, parents, teachers, and students of all ages are invited to bring along a representative object to be blessed.

### Wake Up!

The Earth—its oceans, atmosphere and land; its flora and fauna—is in trouble! We must act now!

Local Interfaith events:

- September 21, 7:00 p.m., First Churches, Northampton. A community forum on the papal encyclical. Pastor Andrea is on the presenting panel.
- September 24, 7:00 p.m., interfaith watch parties at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic church, King Street, Northampton and St Bridget's Catholic church in Amherst.
- September 27, Pastor Chris will be preaching at HCC on climate change. The choir will be singing a special hymn that 20 other congregations will be also be singing.

The Justice and Peace Steering Committee will keep the congregation aware and involved. Stay tuned.

## Concert in Support of Refugee Relief

The Valley Syrian Relief Committee presents *Songs for Syria* on Sunday, September 27th, 3:00 pm at First Churches, 129 Main Street, Northampton.

After four years of war, half of Syria's people have fled their homes and are living in deplorable and dangerous conditions, many without access to food, shelter, and much-needed medical care. The United Nations has called this the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II.

The Valley Syrian Relief Committee is hosting a concert to raise funds for medical aid for Syrian refugees. The concert is free, but the Valley Syrian Committee will be requesting donations for the Syrian American Medical Society. The funds will be used to provide medical services, replace bombed hospitals, train medical personnel and purchase medical supplies.

The concert will feature a special performance by the highly acclaimed Layaali Arabic Music Ensemble with Syrian guest artists, as well as remarks by Dr. A.F. Elshaar, President of the New England Chapter of The Syrian American Medical Society. Local civil liberties lawyer, radio personality and author Bill Newman will emcee.

For more information contact: The Valley Syrian Relief Committee Phone: Michael Kane - 413-586-0403  
Email: [valleysyrianrelief@gmail.com](mailto:valleysyrianrelief@gmail.com)

## Calling All Jews at HCC

Let's get together and talk about what it's like to be Jews in a Christian Church. Time for serious discussion, lots of laughs, the hora, and anything else that comes up! Be in touch with Barbara Dreyer at (413) 586-0608 or [bdr46@comcast.net](mailto:bdr46@comcast.net). Friday, September 11 from 6:30 – 8:00 pm in the Dining Room.

- Barbara Dreyer

## Milestones and Celebrations

Have a significant birthday, anniversary, accomplishment or event that you'd like to have celebrated in worship? Please let Pastor Andrea or Pastor Chris know, and we'll be sure to lift it in our time of Joys and Concerns.

Thank you "Miracle Whips"  
for providing the coffee hour  
goodies during September.

# Calendar for September

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

Date	Time	Event	Location
Tues. Sept. 1	5:30 pm	A2A Meeting	Dining Room
Wed. Sept. 2	12:45 pm	Church Book Group <i>see page 8</i>	Dining Room
	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Thurs. Sept. 3	9:30 am	Café Office Hours @ Sunrise Over Florence	Florence
Sun. Sept. 6	10:00 am	Worship Service with Communion	Sanctuary
Mon. Sept. 7		<b>Labor Day</b>	
Tues. Sept. 8	7:00 pm	Men's Fellowship Meeting	Dining Room
Wed. Sept. 9	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Thurs. Sept. 10	9:30 am	Café Office Hours @ Sunrise Over Florence	Florence
	2:30 pm	Haydenville Church Writers' Group	Dining Room
Fri. Sept. 11	6:30 pm	Calling all Jews at HCC <i>see page 6</i>	Dining Room
Sat. Sept. 12	11:00 am	Alice Pannoni Memorial Service and Reception	Sanctuary/Dining Room
Sun. Sept. 13	10:00 am	Rally Day, Worship Service	Sanctuary
	12:00 noon	Council Meeting	Sanctuary
Mon. Sept. 14	6:00 pm	Diaconate Meeting	Dining Room
Wed. Sept. 16	4:30 pm	Spirituality and Aging	Dining Room
	6:00 pm	Shepherds' Meeting	Children's Church
	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Thurs. Sept. 17	9:30 am	Café Office Hours @ Sunrise Over Florence	Florence
	1:00 pm	Ladies Aid	Dining Room
	5:30 pm	Trustees' Meeting	Dining Room
Sun. Sept. 20	10:00 am	Worship Service, Blessing of the Backpacks	Sanctuary
		Trans Ally Workshop after Worship	
Mon. Sept. 21	6:00 pm	Peace and Justice Meeting	TBD
	7:00 pm	Community Forum on the Papal Encyclical	First Churches
Wed. Sept. 23	4:30 pm	Spirituality and Aging	Dining Room
	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary

Date	Time	Event	Location
Thurs. Sept. 24	9:30 am	Café Office Hours @ Sunrise Over Florence	Florence
	2:30 pm	Haydenville Church Writer's Group	Dining Room
	5:30 pm	Family Ministries Meeting	Dining Room
Sun. Sept. 27	10:00 am	Worship Service	Sanctuary
Wed. Sept. 30	4:30 pm	Spirituality and Aging	Dining Room
	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary

## Blessing of the Animals

*Saturday, October 3, 2015 at 10am*

Bring Fido, Fifi, and your other furry and feathered friends to our Blessing of the Animals! Join us for this brief service on the church front lawn as we welcome and bless companion animals that bring so much joy into our lives. For safety, please bring dogs on a leash, cats in a carrier or on a leash, and keep other animals appropriately within your control. Contact Pastor Chris for more information.

## Good News/Bad News

Want a cup of coffee and a donut on Sunday mornings before coming to Church? The good news is that the recently-closed Berkshire Bank across Rt 9 from HCC might soon become a Dunkin' Donuts. Of course the bad news is that the Berkshire Bank might become a Dunkin' Donuts thereby eliminating our Sunday morning overflow parking option (not to mention the appearance of yet another chain.) The Williamsburg Planning Board and the Conservation Commission still need to approve the plan but the change seems likely.

**The Church Book Group** will resume meeting on Sept. 2 at 12:45. We are leaving the Forbes Library and moving into our own DINING ROOM. Feel free to bring a bag lunch and eat while we meet! In both our September and October meetings, we will be discussing Brian McClaren's book *We Make the Road by Walking*. Everyone is welcome. Group facilitated by Pastor Peter Ives and Pastor Andrea.

## How Are the Children?

When Jesus was walking through Galilee and Judea he called children to his side and spoke to them. And he said to them they were very special in God's eyes. And he picked them up and said "let the children come to me for of such is the kingdom of God." And he put his hand upon their heads and he blessed them. And everybody took notice.

Everyone took notice because children were regarded as nobodies and a nuisance in circles of adults, especially the girls. That is why the disciples rebuked Jesus for paying any attention at all to the children. They did not have classes in the temple for children at the time of Jesus. They did not have children's messages during the worship service. They did not have children's choirs, or children's pageants, or a children's Sabbath. The attention that Jesus gave to children was radical.

Robert Fulghum tells a story of an African community that loved their children. Every morning when they said hello to each other they used the words "kasserian ingera" These words meant more than just "hello." The literal meaning of these words were, "And how are the children?"

Think for a moment what that would be like if we did that. The first words we said upon greeting one another were "And how are the children." Think if the Governor of Massachusetts began his or her press conference with the words "And how are the children?" Or if the President of the United States began his or her words with the greeting, "And how are the children?" Or if our political debates during this up and coming election year began with the Moderator saying to Republicans and Democrats alike: "And how are the children of American doing tonight from California to the New York Island, from the redwood forest

to the Gulf Stream waters in this land made for you and me?"

What I like so much about this time of year in September is that we see all of our children in Church once again during the worship service. It is just great to have our children back with us after their absence during the summer months. When Jesus was walking through Galilee and Judea he called the children to his side. He spoke to them and he picked them up and he laid his hands upon their heads and he blessed them. He always asked about the children. And then he said, let the children come unto me for such is the kingdom of God. I can't wait to see our children back in Church again this Fall.

- Rev. Peter B. Ives, Theologian in Residence

## Pledging Online

**Why set up electronic payments for your contributions to Haydenville Congregational Church?**

1. It benefits the church with a steady and predictable contribution.
2. It is safe, convenient and never forgets!
3. No more envelopes, check writing, stamps etc.
4. You control the payments and can stop or modify them at any time.

**What do I need to set up ePayments (the electronic version of a check)?**

1. A bank checking account
2. Set up an online account
3. Once online, type "ebills" into the Help or Search box
4. Follow the directions for your bank
5. You only need to fill out a "Pay To Account" for HCC once
6. Select a payment period like monthly, an amount and date for the payment and you are done!

- Rick Turner, Trustee

**Office hours** for Margie Serkin, our Church Bookkeeper/Office Administrator, are from 1- 6:00 pm, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

## Fabulous Raffle

### Don't miss out!

Win a ride to get ice cream with Chip Roughton in his beautiful 1948 Pontiac Silver Streak!!!



There will be three lucky winners!

\$1 per ticket; 3 tickets for \$2

Names drawn on September 20<sup>th</sup> after Church.

All proceeds used to support the Thursday Café Office Hours at Sunrise Bakery in Florence.

Tickets sold at table in Dining Room after Church every Sunday until the drawing.

## Coming Soon... our new Online Photo Directory

Sometimes it's hard to put a name with a face. That's why we are launching our new Online Photo Directory. Here are the basics:

- It's safe and secure. Your personal info will be encrypted and no one will be able to access the directory without their own individual password.
- You will add/edit your own information and upload your own photos. So it's up to you how much personal info—including what photos, if any—you'd like to share.
- You'll have a chance to have your photo taken during Coffee Hour if you prefer.
- There's a free app for mobile devices.
- You can still receive a paper version of the directory on request.

More details will come in the following weeks from Chip Roughton, the directory administrator.

## **Goodbye Sunrise! Welcome New Local NGO!**

Since our last newsletter, Sunrise has gone through a challenging process of transformation. As you know, we have been working to create a strong organization that can sustain our services for the children and families of Camoapa into the future. This year we were able to bring together a dynamic and engaged board that was poised to do serious fundraising. And Yrene Jimenez del Rio, our Executive Director since July 2014, was able to obtain additional grant funding, and manage those grants so well that we expected increased funding from our foundations this fall. With these funding sources, added to the support of all our faithful donors, we truly felt that Sunrise could reach long term sustainability within six months.

However, global economic pressures and the difficulties of operating in two different countries, with different languages and cultures, caused challenges that built into a crisis situation. Despite everyone's best efforts over many weeks, we finally could see no way to continue as an organization. It was with heavy hearts that we made the decision to close Sunrise.

But then something like a miracle happened. Some of the staff joined with Rachel Greenwood, our founder, to see if they could maintain some of our programs on a local basis. And the community rose up to own the project and offer support. Because it will now be a local, grassroots NGO, our center was placed on the list of organizations to receive food donations from the Sandinista Party, the Director of the Public Schools offered to send us a teacher for the children in our Integral program, and other resources have been offered. We are delighted to announce that the programs at the Hogar will continue, though in a somewhat reduced form.

In some ways this is the best possible outcome for any nonprofit: for the local community to recognize the needs which we were working to meet, take ownership of the programs, and offer grassroots support where possible. Every one of our past donors has had a hand in the good work that we have done in Camoapa, and the community support that has been built over the last 10 ½ years, and every one of you can take pride in the legacy we are leaving there.

Although Sunrise will no longer exist as a US non profit, and can no longer accept tax-exempt donations, the new organization is actively networking with other small NGOs

and hopes to have a fiscal sponsor to process tax-exempt donations in the near future. The project will continue to operate under the name of our Nicaraguan center, Hogar Luceros del Amanecer (Home of the Dawning/Awakening Light). If you're interested in learning more about the programs that are continuing, or in supporting the grassroots NGO, please contact Rachel Greenwood at [HogarLDA@yahoo.com](mailto:HogarLDA@yahoo.com).

- Lisa Hall

## **Looking Ahead to the Visioning Process!**

The Transition Committee (Co-chairs Ruthie Jacobson-Hardy and Lisa Hall, plus Jan Varnon, Lynn Fogg, Pastors Chris and Andrea) would like our Church family to know what lies ahead in the next nine months! We have some exciting plans! The Committee has decided we need to do more visioning, and make sure we include everyone. We are planning MANY visioning exercises, experiences, and workshops over the course of the next nine months. Between now and June 2016, there will be a host of mini-workshops that get people moving, talking, and dreaming about our Church in the years ahead. These many offerings will be highly interactive so participants think and play and brainstorm from both right and left brain centers! We want to encourage creativity, slightly outlandish thinking, risk-taking and the identification of our themes and priorities, as we chart a course for our Church for the next five years.

Our plan is to have one, two, or three "scribes" at each event taking notes. Then we will see what themes are emerging. Sometime next spring we will synthesize what we have heard. Then our church leaders (and anyone who wants to be a church leader) can gather to turn these visions and themes into a strategic plan for how we will move our Church in the directions that are right for us all.

So watch for Transition Committee offerings coming your way probably monthly over the fall, winter and spring, and please attend as many of these workshop/exercises/events as you would like. We want to involve and hear from you! The more voices that chime in during the process, the more creative, inclusive and very-Haydenville our final plan for the future will be!

- the Visioning Committee

## Remembering the Gala

A gala celebration honoring the renewal of the Haydenville Congregational Church and Pastor Andrea's Ten-Year Anniversary happened this past May at the R. Michelson Gallery in Northampton. There were toasts, tables full of delicious hors d'oeuvres and desserts, wonderful music and two hours of sparkling conversations. Here are a few images from the event.



# 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

**Rev. Chris Mereschuk**  
Director of Children's  
and Youth Ministries

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

**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

**Vicki Hicks**  
Angel Hands,  
Coordinator

**Nancy Winninger**  
Angel Wings,  
Coordinator

**Jackie Cloonan**  
Snow Angels, Green  
Angels, Coordinator

**Doug Renick**  
Peace and Justice  
Steering Committee,  
Chair

**Maggie Solis**  
**Bob Varnon**  
Stewardship  
Committee, Co-chairs

**Carolyn DuBois**  
Music Committee,  
Chair

**Sue Carbin**  
Church Scheduler  
[scarbin1973@aol.com](mailto: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

**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

## Please Note our Publication Deadlines:

- Weekly Sunday announcements are due to Pastor Chris [revjcm@gmail.com](mailto:revjcm@gmail.com) by Tuesday at 5:00 pm.
- Weekly e-newsletter announcements are due to our Office Administrator, Margie Serkin [office@haydenvillchurch.org](mailto:office@haydenvillchurch.org), by Tuesday at 5:00 pm.
- Contributions to *CrossCurrents* are due to Richard Spencer [spencer-richard@comcast.net](mailto:spencer-richard@comcast.net) by the 15th of the month.

