

# Cross Currents



October 2015 • Open Hearts & Open Minds & Open Doors

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## From Pastor Andrea

The *Daily Hampshire Gazette* picked up the story from the *Chicago Tribune*. And the *Chicago Tribune* was summarizing the findings of countless scientific studies. The studies were done, the facts were clear, and the news made headlines in newspapers across the country. In the *Gazette*, the headline read “Be generous: It’s a simple way to stay healthier” (September 8, 2015, C1).

The article began with these sentences, “If there’s a magic pill for happiness and longevity, we may have found it. Countless studies have found that generosity, both volunteering and charitable donations, benefits young and old physically.” The author goes on to say, “The benefits of giving are significant, according to those studies: lower blood pressure, lower risk of dementia, less anxiety and depression, reduced cardiovascular risk, and overall happiness.”

The article does not list “increased closeness to God” as one of the benefits of generosity, but I think it is. And so did the apostle Paul. He was on to something 2000 years ago when he named “generosity” as one of the “fruits of the spirit.” Paul claimed that generosity was one of the manifestations of a life of faith, as well as a way to draw closer to God.

I always get a kick of it when scientific studies—often at considerable cost and effort—prove things we already knew. The fact that generosity is good for our mental, physical, and spiritual health is something we already knew. Everyday people of faith already knew that; now scientists worldwide know it too.

We know at our dear Hilltown Church in Haydenville that when we give—time, talent and treasure—we feel good. When we shop at the mall and buy yet another pair of clogs or yet another black sweater we may have buyers’ remorse. But when we put a generous Offering in the plate when it comes around, we never have givers’ remorse. We always feel good about giving to a Church community that is a vital part of our lives.

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In October we will celebrate (as opposed to some churches that dread) the arrival of the Fall Stewardship Campaign. Bursting out of the gate on October 4th, the Fall Stewardship Campaign will be filled with fun, inspiration, a little goofiness, and some soul-searching. It will be good for us all.

Our annual Stewardship Campaigns always have an overarching theme. The theme keeps us focused and helps us rally around one idea that points the way for that particular year. This year the Stewardship Committee—Maggie Solis (Chair), Toby Davis, Bob Varnon, Chip Roughton and me—have settled on a theme we think is practical and very Haydenville Church. The theme is: *“Give the Gift that Fits: We are not a rich church, but we are a generous church!”* Okay, it is a little long and wordy but it’s a good theme.

The message behind the theme is that we want each person to reflect deeply on their income and assets and their debts and expenses and make what is a generous pledge to the Church based on that analysis...each person will decide what pledge “fits” for them. We are asking people to be generous. We are also hoping people will be realistic—even if they stretch a bit when making their pledge.

We have added that “tag line” which I think is very Haydenville, very touching and very true: we are not a *rich* Church but we are a *generous* Church. That really sums it up...we are a remarkably, powerfully generous church. Thanks be to God!

And so friends...do something that is good for your soul, good for your blood pressure, good for your heart, good for your overall happiness, AND good for your Church: be generous! As the article says, generosity may be the magic pill for happiness and longevity!

I thank you in advance for making pledges to the church that reflect your love of this community, your desire to cultivate one of the “fruits of the spirit,” and your desire to invest in a place and a vision that you believe in. Thank you for being generous when you complete your pledge form and put it in the basket that comes around in November. Until then, enjoy the skits the Stewardship Committee has written and will be performing for you. We like our theme a lot and have some funny ways to reinforce the message of generosity to our whole church family.

With thanks and with love,



## A Miracle Unfolding

*“There is, in every child, at every moment, a miracle unfolding.” ~ Erik Erikson*

*“...but Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.’” ~ Matthew 19:14*

I have recently asked for prayers for a family I have known for 24 years. I first met Don, Ledell, Katherine, and Devan Mulvaney at Silver Lake Conference Center in the summer of 1991, and have seen them there almost every summer. And while we did not see each other often outside of Silver Lake, I felt a closeness to them that comes with years and our shared love of the unique ministry of Silver Lake.

On August 15th, as Don, Ledell, and Katherine were returning home from their week of volunteering at Silver Lake (the 38th summer of volunteering for Don and Ledell), their car was struck by an oncoming vehicle. Ledell, the mother, and Katherine, her daughter, died on the scene. Don’s injuries were ultimately fatal as well, and he passed away on September 15th, surrounded by loved ones. I have scarcely met a more creative and giving family than the Mulvaney family. By my estimation, the Mulvaney family has directly impacted the lives of over 1,000 young people through Silver Lake, plus countless more in their roles as educators and instructors. This is a tremendous loss for more than a few communities.

Yet this story is not entirely about the Mulvaney family. It is about children.

A couple of weeks ago, Silver Lake Director Tim Hughes offered an open invitation for anyone to come up to Silver Lake - - no program, no agenda, just a chance to be together and share in our common grief. I brought my almost-7-year old daughter Izabel along because she knew the family, and she loves Silver Lake. I explained to her that we were not going up to have fun, that she would see many people crying (even Dad), and that we were spending time remembering Ledell and Kat. As much as she could, she understood that this was a solemn occasion.

We arrived, and found that several other families had brought their children, with many parents having apparently given the same speech to their kids: we are to be quiet, we are feeling sad, no running around or screaming please. But these kids know Silver Lake to be a happy and fun place, and the excitement of seeing other children, and with the presence of babies and toddlers, the school-aged kids couldn’t contain themselves. We parents

shushed and hushed our kids, admonished them to sit down, cajoled and bribed them with cookies.

But then the moment changed: the wind of the Holy Spirit blew through us as we sat morosely on a grassy hill, stirred up by the overflowing love and beauty of the children. The kids began laughing and yelling, climbing all over friendly adults like some sort of human jungle gym - - and we let them. They played chase and tag, got out a soccer ball, continued to wrestle and beg for piggyback rides. Then someone asked to hold one of the babies, and the three or four infants and young toddlers there got passed around to every Silver Lake aunt and uncle. The brightened mood of the children was infectious. Stunned and awkward silence broke with recounting memories, and laughter mixed with tears followed through our group. There were smiles amidst the overwhelming sadness. But if the children had not been there, or if they had obeyed their parents and kept silent and still, the day would've plunged many of us into deeper grief. I am certain of it.

People were bringing their children to Jesus so that he might bless them, but the Disciples tried to prevent it. This is a solemn time! A holy time! Keep quiet and don't fool around! But Jesus knew better, and he called the children to him. I'm picturing it now *not* with the children sitting still and serene on the Messiah's knee, but rather like the same scene at Silver Lake: the kids break free, climb all over Jesus, laughing and giggling while Jesus play wrestles and gives piggyback rides. The children were brought to Jesus so that they might receive a blessing from him, but perhaps it was the children who blessed him, blessed the Disciples, and blessed the gathered crowd simply through their "childness."

For it is to such as these - - these rowdy, exuberant, laughing, giggling, frolicking and rollicking, mischievous, curious and carefree children - - that the kingdom of heaven belongs. Children give us all a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven, and it looks like a whole lot of noisy fun. Developmental psychologist Erik Erikson draws our attention to the true wonder, beauty, and blessing of having children in our lives, urging us to view each child as a "miracle unfolding." And, truly, childhood and children are magical and miraculous. We at Haydenville are lucky and blessed to witness and nurture a few dozen of these miracles, these glimpses of the kingdom of heaven - - including all of the noise and chaos that so often comes along with them!

The next time you find yourself overwhelmed by the stress of adulthood, burdened by sadness or despair, or losing

perspective on the holy miracle that is life itself, I urge you to go find a child. Hold a baby. Volunteer in Children's Church or Youth Group. Remember that you were once a child, and that there is a child within you still. For it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.

Peace & Blessings,



## Discovering What Matters

*You do not know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes*

- James 4:4-14

James delivered these words in the aftermath of the death of Jesus to an audience searching for meaning in life. They were followers of Jesus trapped in a commercial world where value was measured by money and possessions, and James feared such values were robbing them of the experiences that make life most worth living. So he asks, "What is your life?" He urges them to live fully each day, for one does not know what will happen tomorrow. He reminds them that their lives are "but for the moment" like the mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. And he invites them to look at the end to see what matters most now.

As a minister, I regularly see life at the end. In these moments I don't hear very much about assets accumulated, nor do families spend time marveling or bemoaning the loved one's stock portfolio or what they did or did not own. They want to tell stories and share memories. We celebrate the relationships the deceased fostered and enjoyed and the way he or she enriched the lives and touched the hearts of the people now gathered in grief. At a funeral it is clear, as Senator Paul Tsongas once said, "No one has ever gone to their death bed wishing they had spent more time in the office."

Unfortunately, we only have these story-filled, celebratory conversations when someone's life has come to an end. I believe we should have these discussions while life is still ahead of us. Really, eulogies and tributes at funeral services

are too late. We should talk about our lives while we are still alive, so that we can hear our accomplishments affirmed and feel our regrets, and if necessary, change the direction of our lives to better reflect what matters to us while we still have a life to live.

In response to this need, I have been leading small discussion groups of eight people to talk about what matters in our lives right now, focusing upon the ten threads of a life that become most visible at the end. These threads can be seen in the following questions:

- 1) How important to you is your family of origin?
- 2) How important to you is your family of choice?
- 3) How important is the one you love or the ones you love?
- 4) How important are your friends?
- 5) How important is your vocation?
- 6) How important are your avocations?
- 7) How important are your beliefs?
- 8) How important are your values?
- 9) How important is service to your community?
- And 10) how important is your self as a self?

I have just published a book entitled: *“What Is Your Life: Discovering What Matters Before It Is Too Late.”* that I would like to share with you. I will be doing a book reading in the sanctuary of the Haydenville Church on October 19th at 7:00 pm. I hope you will all come and join me to celebrate our lives together.

- Rev. Peter Ives, Theologian-in-Residence

## Finding God Among the Chaos

I may be the member of a minority in our UCC church, but sometimes I yearn for more quiet in the service, some moments when I can talk to God and listen for Her response. As I thought about this recently it came to me: I needed to figure out how to find God in our noisy, talkative, rambunctious, radically inclusive church. So I sat me down to think and this is what came to mind:

- Sit at the back of the church in one of the rocking chairs. There are not so many folks here, and I suspect the noise level is a bit less at the back. You could close your eyes and pray and hope that no one stops to enquire whether you are suffering from indigestion.

- Before church begins, try *not* connecting with people nearby (or farther off) and taking the time to sit in

meditation. If it is too distracting to meditate, open the Hymnal and find some hymns you like. Hum them softly to yourself and feel God’s merciful arms around you.

- Often the choir will sing an Introit or a beginning piece of music before the Welcome. This could be a time to reflect back on your week, thinking of the places where you experienced God and maybe the places where you felt far away from God. This is almost like a mini-Examen, a spiritual practice invented by the famous 16<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish saint, St. Ignatius of Loyola. Jesuits have suggested that we pray first for God’s light to shine on us; that we look at our day as if viewing a movie, finding where we were near God or far away; that we find places where we need forgiveness; and that we pray to have loving hearts in the day to come.

- When Pastor Chris is saying the Prayers of the People and the Lord’s Prayer, take hands with the people next to you and hold them. You can send good wishes for their lives while doing this, share a holy space with them, and feel connected to your people and your God.

- During the Joys and Concerns, write down the people who need prayers (I know many of you do this already!). After writing the name, put your fingers over it and breathe a blessing.

- If all else fails and you are searching for a quiet space to gather yourself together, try the bathroom! It’s often quiet there, and you can send up a small prayer, breathe deeply ten times, and feel more centered. (Note to self: Do NOT look in the mirror and start spotting new lines on the forehead or surprising sun damage you hadn’t noticed before. This leads to guilt and catastrophizing.)

Maybe other folks in the congregation have their own ideas about how to carve out space for alone time with God. I’m sure I have touched on only a few ideas. And, of course, I know deeply that God is in the noise; God is in the tears and laughter; and God is in the chatty beginning to our church.

- Annie Turner

## 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.

## Harvesting Hope Proclamation

As the autumn season turns and the earth yields her fruits of summer labor, we gather. We gather with the purpose of harvesting hope, to come together in community and envision a sustainable future. We are guided by the concept of *Shmita*, the ancient biblical wisdom that encourages us to provide the land a Sabbath one year out of every seven; to deeply rest from production; to cancel debts, to take down fences, to share the land, to bring the slow living of the Sabbath to an entire year and deepen our trust that the whole world is filled with Glorious Presence.

This deep breath of a year reminds us that there are no greater blessings than the gift of good land and fresh air; clear cool water and the changing glories of sun and shade. This deep breath of a year reminds us that all living beings are interwoven with earth, air and water; flowers of the field are interwoven; trees of the forest are interwoven; stones of the earth are interwoven and our actions carry real and meaningful consequence. We gather to find ways to bring these values into the next six years; to deepen Sabbath Mindfulness in our society.

*Hakhel* in Hebrew means gather and assemble. In the Biblical tradition, *Hakhel* was the moment at the end of the *Shmita* year, the Sabbatical year, when the whole people would gather in Jerusalem and listen to the King read the passages from Scripture that limited his power. Drawing from this ancient well of wisdom, we assemble together. We assemble to harvest the power from our diverse spiritual and cultural traditions to remind our governments, our corporations and ourselves that all life is important. Even kings, presidents, legislators and corporate executives can not rule the very Source of Life that provides for us all.

Together we gather so we will not forget, or fall asleep in comfortable living rooms and feign ignorance of the violence our wealth is perpetrating. The sudden weather calamities, the extinction of species upon species, the everyday use of dangerous chemicals, the spread of poverty and injustice across the planet destroying neighborhoods, communities and now, whole nations. We gather together and commit to feel so that we may act, we may dream and we may hope.

On this autumn day we remember what our ancestors always knew: blessings continuously flow from this Earth drawing us into wonder; calling us into responsible action. We renew ourselves by reading our holy texts together and

sharing our sacred stories aloud; speaking the truth we carry and planning street actions for protest and celebration. On this autumn day we gather and go forward as neighbors and citizens to harvest hope. We are ready to begin again; to plant and sow; and to be active partners helping bring the sustainable and regenerative future we all hope for.

If not now, when? If not us, who? If not here, where?

- *Maggid David Arfa and the Harvesting Hope Proclamation Committee, August 2015*

## Outside In

From the outside I may look like

- a timid rabbit
- a sweet lilly
- a light color of blue

And a traveling arrow that will never stop

But on the inside I am

- a fierce tiger
- a prickly rose bush
- a dark color of purple
- and a dot that has a point

From the outside I may seem like

- I am the forgotten number three
- I am the common quartz
- I am the calm water of the pond

But on the inside I am

- the remembered number one
- a rare emerald
- a uncontainable storm

- Lexi Fappiano- Whalen

## October Birthdays!

- 1 David Warner
- 2 Andrea Ayvazian
- 3 Alice Barber  
Donna Harlan  
Ileana Fournier
- 5 Kamali Joseph
- 6 Jayden Childs
- 7 Kathy O'Connor
- 9 Kathleen Kelleher  
Karen E. Lowe
- 10 Carlton Loomis  
Izabel Grace Mereschuk
- 13 Nicholas Elias-Gillette
- 14 Michael Klare
- 15 Lisa Kautz
- 18 Amanda Wilson  
Suzanne Brow  
Sarah Tompkins
- 20 Ernestine Stowell
- 21 Nicole Pagliaro
- 23 Michelle Fournier  
Beverlee Orluske
- 24 Carolyn du Bois
- 26 Robert Lampron
- 27 Wendy Gannett
- 28 Tina Newcomb-Gerken
- 30 Chris Mereschuk
- 31 Amy Andrew



## Hi All!

My apologies for not sending an update sooner - it turns out finding a community is more time consuming than I thought!

I hope all is well out in Haydenville. I very much miss the community out there. I've found a church that is similar to the service design at HCC, but the people and community certainly aren't the same.

My job is going really well! MGH has been working with me on transgender issues and how to make the hospital as an employer more trans-friendly, and I'm working on starting a Transgender Alliance at MGH and within Partners to get more of us together. I'm learning a lot, both in my attempts to navigate the institutional bureaucracy in forming this alliance, and in the lab. The research I'm doing on chronic kidney disease has the potential to have a direct impact on a significant number of people with chronic kidney disease.

I ask for your prayers as I move on to my next phase in life, both for me, and for my family. At this point, I've done all I can do to navigate my relationship with them. I'm out of ways I can deal with the situation, so I offer the rest up to God.

I'm going to try to make it out to Northampton for a visit hopefully sometime by the end of the year, but I'm not sure what my schedule is going to look like in a few months! Please keep in touch - I'd love to hear how you all are doing.

Love always,

Garrett

"...faith is faith, not common sense, not even pious common sense. In the bleak landscape between ordinary devotion and extraordinary desperation, it demands a kind of surrender and bestows a mysterious courage. By its peculiar grace alone, we grope and anguish, remember and pray, hope and wonder, obey and persist our way towards healing, a new humanity, an impossible love, a someday resurrection."

*\_ Mary Luti is a long time seminary educator and pastor, author of Teresa of Avila's Way and numerous articles, and founding member of The Daughters of Abraham, a national network of interfaith women's book groups.*

## Photo Directory UPDATE

There will soon be a link on our church website to the New Photo Directory!

\* People with email: You will soon be receiving an email from [info@onlinechurchdirectory.com](mailto:info@onlinechurchdirectory.com) with directions on how to access our Photo Directory online and how to edit your personal information.

\* People without email: Once the directory is complete, we will print hard copies for everyone without email who would like one.

### Notes:

1. For most people, the only information in the directory at this point is your name and email address. **It is your responsibility to go online and add/edit your information including your photos.**

2. The directory lists "Families" and "Members." A "family" consists of anyone living under the same roof. A "member" is anyone living in that house (whether they are a church member or not). You have the option to include members of your "family" (i.e., household) in the directory or not.

3. Even if you are the only person in the church with your last name, you are still listed as both a "family" and a "member."

4. If two adults live under the same roof but have different last names, the surnames are put together in alphabetical order. For example, Sylvia Fappiano and Cheryl Whalen are listed under the family name "Fappiano & Whalen," but not under "Whalen & Fappiano."

5. Photos: You can add both a "family" photo (i.e., a group shot of everyone living in your house) and a "member" photo (an individual photo of yourself). It is important that you use a clear, close-up photo of your face for the "member" photos. (Think passport photo). Do not use whole or even half-body shots. We need to see your face. If you would like your photo taken and uploaded, Jen Clarson will be available to take your photo during Coffee Hour on select Sundays (dates tbd).

6. The App. A link to the mobile app is on the directory site.

• Any questions or problems, contact Chip Roughton at [chip.roughton@gmail.com](mailto:chip.roughton@gmail.com) or 413-387-5214. If email, please put "Photo Directory" in the subject line.

**CrossCurrent Submissions:** All items for publication should be sent to: [spencer-richard@comcast.net](mailto: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.

Thank you "Hilltown Hosts"  
for providing the coffee hour  
goodies during October.

# Calendar for October

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

Date	Time	Event	Location
Thurs. Oct. 1	9:30 am	Café Office Hours @ Sunrise Over Florence	Florence
	1:00 pm	Ladies Aid Meeting	Dining Room
	5:30 pm	Trustee Meeting	Dining Room
Sat. Oct. 3	10:00 am	Blessing of the Animals	Church Lawn
Sun. Oct. 4	10:00 am	Worship Service with Communion	Sanctuary
Mon. Oct. 5	6:00 pm	Diaconate Meeting	Dining Room
Tues. Oct. 6	5:30 pm	A2A Meeting	Dining Room
Wed. Oct. 7	12:45 pm	Church Book Group	Dining Room
	4:30 pm	Spirituality and Aging	Dining Room
	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Thurs. Oct. 8	9:30 am	Café Office Hours @ Sunrise Over Florence	Florence
Friday, Oct. 9	12:30 pm	HCC Writers' Group	Dining Room
Sun. Oct. 11	10:00 am	Worship Service	Sanctuary
	12:00 noon	Council Meeting	Sanctuary
Tues. Oct 13	7:00 pm	Men's Fellowship Meeting	Dining Room
Wed. Oct. 14	4:30 pm	Spirituality and Aging	Dining Room
	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Thurs. Oct. 15	9:30 am	Café Office Hours @ Sunrise Over Florence	Florence
	1:00 pm	Ladies Aid	Dining Room
Sat. Oct 17		UCC Super Saturday	Framingham, MA
Sun. Oct. 18	10:00 am	Worship Service	Sanctuary
	12:00 noon	Trans Ally Workshop after Worship	Sanctuary
Mon. Oct. 19	6:00 pm	Peace and Justice Meeting	TBD
	7:00 pm	Peter Ives: Reading and Book Signing	Sanctuary
Tues. Oct. 20	7:00 pm	Active Hope, Inspiring Change	Dining Room
Wed. Oct. 21	4:30 pm	Spirituality and Aging	Dining Room
	6:15 pm	Shepherds' Meeting	Dining Room
	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary

Date	Time	Event	Location
Thurs. Oct. 22	9:30 am	Café Office Hours @ Sunrise Over Florence	Florence
Fri. Oct. 23	12:30 pm	HCC Writers' Group	Dining Room
Sat. Oct. 24	3:00 pm	Cathedral in the Night Fundraiser	Kitchen & Dining Room
Sun. Oct. 25	10:00 am	Worship Service	Sanctuary
Wed. Oct. 28	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Thurs. Oct. 29	9:30 am	Café Office Hours @ Sunrise Over Florence	Florence

## Thank you....

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to pursue my dream career at a school I would not be able to afford without your extremely generous Robert Life Scholarship. Although I have not spent as much time at the Church as I would like, every Sunday I have been there has been magical. It is such a warm and welcoming atmosphere where I feel that my mother and I have been able to heal. I truly believe that this community has made all the difference for my family and even Jed. I cannot thank you (Pastor Andrea) and the Haydenville Congregational Church enough not only for this scholarship but for really taking care of my mother when I haven't been around. To be honest, Church had never been a place I had been drawn to or interested in attending. Your church is incredibly unique and what I have heard you preach truly resonates with me and I always walk home feeling at peace. It is a community I hope thrives for many many years to come.

With lots of love and thanks,

Molly Wilder

## 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.

When I was young, I admired clever people.  
Now that I am old, I admire kind people.  
- Abraham Joshua Heschel

## 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!

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### Please Note our Publication Deadlines:

- Weekly Sunday announcements are due to Pastor Chris [revcjm@gmail.com](mailto:revcjm@gmail.com) by Tuesday at 5:00 pm.
  - Weekly e-newsletter announcements are due to our Office Administrator, Margie Serkin [office@haydenvillechurch.org](mailto:office@haydenvillechurch.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.
- .....

WIDENING THE  
*Welcome*

"...Living with men and women with mental disabilities has helped me to discover what it means to be in communion with someone. To be in communion means to *be with* someone and to discover that we actually belong together. Communion means accepting people just as they are, with all their limits and inner pain, but also with their gifts and their beauty and their capacity to grow: to see the beauty inside of all the pain..."

- Jean Vanier, Founder of L'Arche communities

## Grasshill Christmas Gallery

22nd annual Craft Fair

Saturday Nov 28th 9-3:00 pm

Haydenville Congregational Church

On Shop Small Saturday, one of the best things you can do is come to our beautiful, light-filled Church dining room for a relaxing and wonderful experience. Twenty local crafters/artisans--including several from our Church family--offer their one-of-a-kind treasures for your holiday shopping. Included are paintings, photography, quilts, jewelry, gourds, embroidered tiny stuffed toys, soaps, pottery, hand carved wooden utensils, seasonal decorations, knitted items, cards, and whatever my eight-year-old grandson Rowan comes up with (last year, it was enchanted islands, Buddha trees, Zombie Claus cards and feather ornaments from his own chickens).

And I should mention the food! My sister Shirley channels our Grandma Warner and pulls off the most fabulous luncheon for sale. Famous corn chowder, plus another homemade soup, sandwiches on homemade bread, cookies, sweet buns, brownies, and her spectacular cream puffs! Also, she'll be selling packages of assorted homemade cookies, loaves of bread, and whatever else she thinks up.

All in all, this is just the way you want to spend the Saturday after Thanksgiving. No hassles, free parking, no admission fee, handicap accessible.

Questions? call Trish @ 268-7254 or 413 727-5150 or see her in Church.

## Calling all Shutterbugs

The HCC Media Team is in the process of creating a new web site for the Church. It will have lots of space for photos and we are asking everyone at the Church to help provide them.

We're looking for candid photos from coffee hour, workshops and programs, Church committee meetings, fundraising events, choir, baptisms, weddings, the welcome of new members, and work in the community by HCC Church members. In other words, photos that show the people of HCC, who we are and what we do. If anyone has historic photos, or images of things like "Black lives matter" buttons, food on the Coffee Klatch table, etc. we would love to see those as well. The more we have to choose from, the better.

So bring your camera to Church events, take candid photos but *make sure* the people you photograph are OK with appearing on our Internet site, and make note of when and where it was taken. We'll provide information for uploading your photos to our webmaster at a later date.

- Jim Foudy

**The end of Daylight Savings Time - November 1, 2015**  
**One extra hour! Don't squander it!**

Join Pastor Andrea for her world-famous (it could be)

**"Sweep of the Bible"  
Lecture**

**An overview of the Bible  
from Genesis to Revelation  
in 59 minutes!**

**Sunday, November 1 from 8:45 am to 9:45 am**  
**Starting promptly at 8:45 am**  
**Church Dining Room**

• Coffee and donut holes available •

**Don't be late or you might miss the entire Old Testament**

## Children's, Youth, and Family Ministries: Our programs have begun!

If you would like to have your child participate regularly in our Children's Church or Youth Group, please fill out a registration form. All forms are on our website under the "Children's, Youth, and Family Ministries" section, and are also outside of Children's Church classroom upstairs.

While you're there, take a look at our Volunteer Opportunities. We couldn't offer these great programs without the generous help of our dedicated volunteers. Won't you join us?

Our Youth Group for kids in 6th through 12th grade has also begun. We're going to try meeting on the first and third Sundays of the month from 6:00-7:30pm at the church. Let's strengthen our Fellowship!

We are also starting a Constant Contact email list specifically for people enrolled in our Children's, Youth, and Family Ministries programs. We need you to "opt in" to this list by allowing us to use your email from your registration or by providing a different email address.

Please contact Pastor Chris for more information, to volunteer, or if you have any questions.

### Youth Group at Shelter Sunday! October 4th from 12:00 noon to 2:00 pm River Valley Market

All youth from 6th through 12th grade are invited to help us collect donations for Shelter Sunday. We will be stationed outside of the River Valley Market from 12:00 noon until 2:00 pm. Please let Pastor Chris know if you can join us, and/or just show up!

### Youth Group Fellowship Meetings!

Come check out Fellowship at Haydenville Congregational Church on the *1st and 3rd Sunday of the month (starting with October 18th) from 6:00-7:30pm*: October 18, November 1, November 15, and November 29th: Cathedral in the Night (5:00pm in front of First Churches in Northampton).

Your life as a Christian should make unbelievers question their disbelief in God.

- unknown

## 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

## The Girl Scouts Return a \$100,000 Donation

SEATTLE (AP) — The Girl Scouts of Western Washington said it has returned a \$100,000 donation because it came with the provision that the money couldn't be used to support transgender girls.

"Girl Scouts is for every girl, and that is every girl regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion. Every girl is every girl," Megan Ferland, CEO of the Girl Scouts of Western Washington, said in an interview Tuesday. "It was a sad decision, but it was not a difficult decision. There was no way I would be put in a situation of refusing a girl participating because of a gift. It was really that quick."

On Monday, the group set up a crowd funding campaign asking for help to fill the gap. "Help us raise back the \$100,000 a donor asked us to return because we welcome transgender girls," it said on its fundraising page on [Indiegogo.com](http://Indiegogo.com). By Tuesday afternoon, thousands had given more than \$185,000.

## Go Tell

*"Give thanks, for God is good. God's love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story—those God redeemed from the hand of the foe..." - Psalm 107:1-2*

Psalm 107 charges us to share our good news. Those who wandered lost...those who sat in darkness...those whose ships were nearly sunk...tell your story!

So, here goes.

Last November, my wife and I went to our 19-week ultrasound and found out that our baby was only measuring 15 weeks. After a series of tests, we were told we would lose her.

But through eight weeks of repeat scans, she held on. Then through five weeks of hospital bedrest. Finally, Nola was born, a scrappy one pound, one ounce.

She spent 12 weeks in the hospital. Her life is still full of challenges. But yesterday we celebrated four months with our daughter, who now tips the scale at five pounds.

I won't say that God saved Nola. There are too many other beloved children who don't make it. But I must say that God has saved me again and again through these long months. God has sent a legion of angels to my side...

...the anonymous person who left a fully-decorated Christmas tree on our porch, when we didn't have the energy to celebrate...

...the ten-year-old girl who prayed for Nola every day of her winter vacation...

...the church member who struggles with anxiety but sang "It is Well with My Soul" on my voicemail...

So many angels. So many stories to share. God is good. God's love endures forever. Give thanks, and go tell yours.

### Prayer

Yarn Spinner, write your story of love in me. Send me as an angel to those who are lost and sinking. And bless sweet Nola.

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

*"A dream is the bearer of a new possibility, the enlarged horizon, the great hope."*

*--Howard Thurman*

## Keepers of the Covenant

We're happy to announce the formation of a new Church committee: *The Keepers of the Covenant*.

*Living the Welcome: A Covenant of Right Relationships*, ratified at the 2014 HCC Annual Meeting, defines HCC members' agreement to respect and care for each other as we build and nurture our Beloved Community. In recognition that conflict is a normal part of all communities, a new committee has been formed. This committee will act as a team to be available to those who feel that the Covenant has been broken and would like to seek resolution.

*Keepers of the Covenant* is a small group of Church leaders with training in mediation and conflict resolution. The team includes Rev. Peter Ives, Pat James, Raquel Manzanares, and Jen Matias,. Members of the committee are available to work with church members toward mutual understanding, reconciliation, and forgiveness with all those who feel the Covenant has been broken, whether that conflict be between members or between members and church leaders.

If you feel the Covenant has been broken and you would like to seek resolution, please contact any one of the four members of our committee to ask for a meeting. We promise you our trust, care, and confidentiality. And we make a solemn promise to the whole Haydenville Church family to continue to help build our congregation in love and in the belief that everyone matters, everyone is welcome, and everyone is dear to our hearts.

## Questions for God

Why does the moon seem so intent to cry,  
and yet it is your tears that give us dew?  
Why do the flags grasp silently at wind?  
Why does the sun refuse to let me stare,  
and yet it is your hand upon my face  
that burns? Why does my mother die  
without remembering my name, while she  
still sings in the church? Why does the IV bag  
float like my prayer does in this emptiness?  
Where was it that I lost my way? Why do  
I see the cross in window panes, in two  
downed branches broken in the road, in shirts  
hung out to dry? Why does the mystery  
of faith sustain us when we keep on asking  
such questions? Why must we ask such questions?

*- Rafael Campo*

## 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 Winner**  
Angel Wings,  
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](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*

**Laine Wilder**  
Accessible to All  
(A2A), Chair

**Jim Foudy**  
Men's Fellowship,  
Chair

**Mary Gerken-  
Newcomb**  
Haydenville Church  
Writers' Group,  
Facilitator

**Lay Delegates**  
Ross Bassett  
Jan Varnon  
Bob Varnon

**Keepers  
of the Covenant**  
Rev. Dr. Peter Ives  
Pat James  
Raquel Manzanares  
Jen Matias

**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  
Carole Bull  
Robert Davis  
Rev. Chris Mereschuk  
Mary Sheehan  
Ellen Tobiassen  
Nancy Winner

**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

