

Cross Currents



April 2016 • Open Hearts & Open Minds & Open Doors

From Pastor Andrea

We have all heard Proverbs 29:18 quoted endlessly. But it is true, and worth quoting again. *"Without vision, the people perish."*

About two years ago, a group of wise and forward-thinking church leaders realized that our progressive, growing, and vibrant church needed a vision so we could move into the next five years with a sense of clarity and purpose—focusing on the areas of spiritual growth, the political issues, and the social movements that mattered most to our congregation. The decision to begin a Visioning Process to discern the road ahead was another sign that our church was moving from a pastoral to a program church. It was exciting to see this hallmark of a program church bubbling up within the Deacons, Trustees, and Church Council. Sometimes a good idea, like the common cold, spreads rapidly through a group!

And so the Visioning Process began, with the Transition Committee at the helm (Ruth Jacobson-Hardy and Lisa Hall, Co-Chairs, Lynn Fogg, Pastor Chris, Jan Varnon and me). Over the last 18 months, the Transition Committee has hosted a number of Visioning Workshops to “stir the pot” and have church members and friends share their ideas about where we should be heading and where we want to be in three to five years.

The Committee intentionally and purposefully planned a series of workshops that were very different in nature from one another. One workshop, led by the Rev. Kelly Gallagher, focused on “Who is my neighbor?” We were asked to think deeply about where God is calling us, and what God is asking of us.

Another workshop used the “Fishbowl Model.” We had folks moving in and out of four chairs in the middle of the room engaging in quick, staccato responses to a series of questions about our future direction.

Another workshop, facilitated again by Rev. Gallagher, used the “Dream Room” framework. We were asked to dream and imagine the future of our church without limitations of money, people, building, committee structures or other “givens” that are operative in our church life now.

Highlights

visit us online at: haydenvillechurch.org

How Can Our Church Support Refugees Coming to Our Communities?

“We’re starting an HCC community-wide effort to collect materials needed by Jewish Family Services to give to new refugee families.”

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Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People? ”

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From the Deacon's Bench

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Another workshop used the World Café model and we moved from table to table drawing, envisioning and answering a series of questions in small groups that focused on social justice.

The gatherings in our series of workshops have been wildly different—meant to engage those who like to sit still and listen and those who like to run into the middle of the room and occupy a waiting empty chair for 2 minutes; those who like to talk together in one large group, and those who prefer opening up in small groups; those who like to write, color or draw while brainstorming and those who focus intently on a contemplative process, waiting their turn to talk.

The workshops have truly been wildly different—just as we planned!

There is one remaining Visioning Workshop and we invite you to join us! It will be Sunday, April 24th after worship. Pastor Chris will lead us in further conversation, dreaming and scheming about our community's present and future focusing on our mission. Pastor Chris will ask us to wrestle with these (among other) questions: What defines our community? Where do our passions lie? How do we shape a future that honors and nurtures our mission?

This workshop will be our final one in the yearlong series of gatherings to help us hone our vision for the next three to five years. We hope you can come and be a part of this most important discussion and sharing.

Following this final workshop, the Transition Committee will be hard at work synthesizing the input we have heard during this whole series of gatherings. (In fact, we are changing our name to the "Visioning Committee"—more accurate and reflects what we are now actually doing!) We will be checking our notes, meeting with one another, and trying to distill all that we have heard down to a few themes that we will present to the congregation as a whole in September! We will still need YOUR input! After we have synthesized our themes, we will be holding a strategic planning meeting during which we can all discuss and plan together how to make these themes that have been identified happen in our church and in the wider community.

We want to include your voice! Please come to the final workshop in this series following our worship service. The synthesis we present to the church as a whole in the fall will be only as strong as the diversity of voices we have been able to hear that shape the themes we present. We want to include your voice! I hope to see you on April 24th

after worship. I know Pastor Chris has an exciting workshop planned for us, and I know it will move us forward along this path of envisioning our church in the future.

Many blessings and love,



How Can Our Church Support Refugees Coming to Our Communities?

The P&J Steering Committee has heard from you, and you were enthusiastic about supporting these new neighbors in several ways:

- The Understanding Islam series will help HCC members and others understand our Muslim neighbors and refugees better.
- The "Refugees Welcome Here" posters announce that we are welcoming.
- We're starting an HCC community-wide effort to collect materials needed by Jewish Family Services to give to new refugee families. There is a list of Welcome Kits with household items that are needed. You'll be seeing flyers with the lists in your bulletin and in the dining room, starting the Sunday after Easter, April 3rd.
- We also thought we'd ask everyone to bring an item from the lists to the next "Understanding Islam" events: the church service on April 10th with Dr. Ali Hazratj; the Roots of Islamophobia event on May 14; and the Being Allies workshop on June 4th.
- We'd like to start making hats (and mittens and scarves) for infants, children and adults to give to refugees with notes of Welcome. (Jewish Family Services thought this was a good idea, and we have knitters!)
- Working with the Hampshire County Interfaith Working Group on Refugees.

Look for more announcements about this new HCC project.

- Lisa Hall

Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

It was a dark night in January of 1983 when Bill Coffin's son Alex was driving home during an ice storm near the edge of Boston Harbor. Suddenly something happened. The car careened off the road and plunged into the icy waters below. Bill's son Alex was killed immediately. He was only four years old. Bill Coffin was devastated as were members of his family. People called to try and console him. Some words were helpful but many words made the pain even worse. One of the most painful comments was from a friend who said, "Bill, I'm sorry, but I guess it must have been God's will."

Reflecting on these words Bill Coffin said in a sermon months later, "For some reason, nothing so infuriates me as the incapacity of seemingly intelligent people to get it through their heads that God does not go around this world with his finger on triggers, his fist around knives, his hands on steering wheels of cars. God is dead set against all unnatural deaths. And Christ spent an inordinate amount of time delivering people from paralysis, insanity, and leprosy. The one thing that should never be said when someone dies tragically is, 'it is the will of God.' Never do we know enough to say that. My own consolation lies in knowing that it was not the will of God that Alex died, but that when the waves closed over the car, God's heart was the first of all our hearts to break."

Jesus expresses these same feelings in Luke 13:1-9. When a large group of Galileans were just killed by Pilate and some suggested it was God's will because they were sinners, Jesus responds, "Do you mean to say that God used Pilate to kill these Galileans because they were sinners; and that their death was God's punishment for their sins?"

"No, No" says Jesus, "God is not like that." So too with those who were killed by the collapse of the tower in Siloam. Again, it was the cultural assumption that accidents happen to people because they had sinned. But again, Jesus responds, "Our God is not like that."

So why do bad things happen to good people?

John Vanarsdall, former chaplain at Yale, once said to me, "God cannot protect every human being every minute of the day or we wouldn't be human and the world would not be the world. In order for creation to happen there had to be some distancing between God and the world and God and ourselves." This distancing on God's part is necessary

for us to be human and not puppets. For the world to be the world, God had to allow individuals the freedom to be human and nature the freedom to be nature. As a result there will always be the possibility of bad things happening to good people. These bad things are not caused by God, but happen because living means living with risks. My mother suffered a brain aneurysm at the age of 47 years, but I don't believe she died because she was a sinner. I believe that God's gift to us of her life came with its risks.

At the same time, I believe that no matter what happens to us, God's love will always be near. Here is what God says in the words of an Iona Community hymn: "When you walk through the waters, I'll be with you, you will never sink beneath the waves. When the fire is burning all around you, you will never be consumed by the flames. When the fear of loneliness is looming, remember I am always at your side. Don't be afraid, my love is stronger and I promise, promise always to be near." And that is the power of God's power. It is not the power of power but the power of love. It is the power to heal. It is the power to give new life. It is the power to lift up, to be resurrected, to begin again and know, in Julian of Norwich's words, "ALL MANNER OF THINGS SHALL BE WELL."

- Rev. Peter Ives, Theologian-in-Residence

April Birthdays!

- | | |
|----|-------------------------|
| 2 | Michael Estes |
| 4 | Johanna Newcomb-Gerken |
| | Alexandra Russell |
| 5 | Karen Guiel |
| 6 | Sasha Klare-Ayvazian |
| 7 | Deb Luekens |
| 10 | Barbara Dreyer |
| 11 | Beth Howland |
| | Danny Hathaway |
| 12 | Darien Gardner |
| 15 | Will Demarais |
| 18 | Elianna Chappuis |
| 19 | Lisa Ellingsen |
| 22 | Norma Kellogg |
| 27 | Carol Prior |
| 29 | Mary Meg Elias-Gillette |



Did Jesus Garden?

How odd one's mind is; at one moment it is cruising along, planning the evening meal (I *think* I have ricotta cheese in the fridge), rearranging the living room, thinking about a friend in trouble, and maybe even alighting briefly on our life's friend and companion—that being Jesus and not the dog—and suddenly the mind tosses up a strange question: *Did Jesus garden?*

Let's think about this together. I am envisioning a small plot outside their house in Nazareth. The weather and the soil being what they were, I don't suppose it was heavy dirt, terribly friable, or full of compost. But perhaps Mary, being the savvy lady she was, saved her egg shells, scraps of food, and dug them into the garden soil, for surely Our Mother had a garden plot somewhere nearby.

I imagine her setting out jugs of water and asking Jesus, as a boy, to please take them outside and water the olive trees and the vegetables struggling to grow. Perhaps she set him to weeding, and he got a little cranky at this hot and pesky job. But when the fruit came in—when the olives were picked—I imagine Jesus munching on the good, nutritious (and assuredly organic) food, giving a nod to his mother.

Of course Jesus lived in an agrarian society, but even so, the idea that Jesus had some prior experience in growing things becomes clearer when you look at His parables: the fig tree, which he blasts for not being fruitful; the vineyard which God sends his son to tend; the parable of the sower and the weeds among the wheat; the mustard seed; and in the end, His tomb, given by Joseph of Arimathea, happens to be in a garden. Though it is hard to imagine Gethsemane as a garden in any sense of the word.

But it held death and rebirth. Isn't that what gardening is all about? I start out the spring full of bright ideas and firm resolutions, grubbing about in the dirt, setting in warm circles my tiny broccoli plants, lettuce transplants, leeks, onions, and other wonders. Things go well for awhile. I stride about the deck, rubbing my hands and perhaps having a celebratory glass of wine. Or two. I might toast the garden. Then disaster ensues. Deer find my plants and chomp on them. Cute bunnies nibble their way through the new carrots, despite my fence. And voles, the Devil's spawn, burrow under my new potatoes and eat every spud from within, leaving a fragile shell. If *that* isn't a parable about evil, I don't know what is!

I think each time we plant, weed, care and nurture, and sometimes harvest, we are enacting the Passion in a small and intimate way. Our hearts are full of hope. Things look

really good for awhile. But soon hope is dashed. Yet we regroup and manage to salvage some goodness from the ruins—a few carrots, some bent onions, a meal of broccoli stalks. Because we believe in a God of Hope, a God of Possibility that is surely what gardening is all about.

So, yes: Jesus was a gardener - on a larger scale, in a bigger garden, with far larger stakes than my tiny plot. But when I stick my fingers in the soil and hope, as I always do, I think I am partaking of God's plan.

- Annie Turner

Garden for Good!

Join Pat James and the Grow Food Northampton Giving Garden Team in Florence to help grow, harvest and deliver fresh, organic produce for food-insecure people in the Pioneer Valley. Starting in May, volunteers will plant and tend our half-acre organic garden, harvest produce, and help deliver it to soup kitchens, community pantries and the Survival Center. No gardening experience necessary, just a desire to make good food available to everyone. For beginning gardeners this is a wonderful opportunity to learn how to grow your own healthy fresh produce. For non-gardeners, we also need folks to pick up produce at the Garden and deliver it to our recipients. We are interested in working with individuals who can come once, or who would like to become part of the Team and work with us on a regular basis. There will be opportunities

to work
in the
Giving
Garden
most
days and
many
evenings.
The team
will meet
most



Giving Garden volunteers at work.

Saturdays, beginning with a free Yoga Stretch in the garden, and followed by an hour or two of gardening. Kids supervised by adults are especially welcome. If you are interested email Pat at pat@growfoodnorthampton.com, or call 413-320-4799 X103, or talk to me at church.

- Pat James

Series on Understanding Islam and Supporting Muslims Continues

The Haydenville Congregational Church series on Understanding Islam continues in April, May and June with these events.

Sunday, April 10 • 10 am

Special worship service with a reading from the Koran and guest preacher Dr. Mohammad Ali Hazratji, a neurologist, former president of the Islamic Center of Western Mass and Hampshire Mosque, and active with Islam and interfaith activities in the Pioneer Valley.

Saturday, May 14 • 10 am to noon

The Roots and Nature of Islamophobia, a discussion led by Karen Pfeifer, professor emerita of economics at Smith College, whose focus is economic development and social change in the Middle East.

Saturday, June 4 • 10 am to noon

Being Allies: Combating Anti-Muslim Rhetoric and Violence. What Can Be Done?

The programs are all open to the public and will be held at the Church.

A copy of the Koran and a collection of books and reference materials on Islam are on a table in the Church Library area. More information and links to web sites are on haydenvillechurch.org.



photos by Jim Foudy and Pat James

Sweep of the Bible

Bible Study for those who want an overview of what the Bible covers from Genesis to Revelation. Think of this as Bible 101. You will learn the who/where/how/when of the Bible in five sessions and have fun in the process.

Interesting! Painless! 5:00 to 6:15 pm on April 20, 27 and May 4, 11, and 18. Teacher: Pastor Andrea. Please pre-register for this class: revandrea@comcast.net

Each year it is a surprise
that the world can turn green again.
It is the grandest surprise in life,
the birds coming back from the south to my open
arms, which they fly past, aiming at the feeders.
- from Winter, Spring by Jim Harrison

On March 8, as part of our "Exploring Islam" series, the Abrahamic Traditions were explored by a panel with representatives from different faiths. Participants were, from right to left, Naz Mohamed, a member of the Hampshire Mosque board who is active in Amherst and area interfaith programs; Norbert Goldfield, a member of Congregation B'Nai Israel, who is active in national and local Jewish organizations, and Peter Ives, Theologian-in-Residence at HCC.

No Improvement

"You have made us a little lower than God, and crowned us with glory and honor." - Psalm 8:4-5

I get spam. You get spam. We all get spam. Unsolicited ads trumpeting fat-blockers, colon-flushers, stock tips too good to be true. I've stationed four squadrons of spam-blocking dragons at my e-gates, but the stuff still gets through.

Recently I was informed that a beautiful Russian woman was "still waiting to meet me." *Still?* Gosh, just how long has poor Svetlana been out there, pining? And then there's a persistent person named Octavia Presely who spams me daily with an offer of pills to enlarge a body part I don't possess. And that prince in Nigeria who will make me rich if I send him my credit card information.

The people who are out to make a fast buck in cyberspace regard me as the most pathetic of human beings. They look at my life and weep. My hair could be thicker. My colon could be cleaner. My bank account could be fatter. My body could be thinner. My girlfriend could be Russian. What *isn't* wrong with me?

Everything isn't wrong with me. Or with you, either. We aren't in need of improvement. Not in things that count, anyway. Don't you know? We're who The Holy was thinking about while fashioning moons and suns and swirling stars. Crowned with glory, we are. Processions of angels go ahead of us, crying, "Make way for the image of God!"

Take that, spammers!

Believe that, everyone!

Prayer

"A little less than God." If I'm not content with that, I may never be content with anything. So help me love who you made me to be. Amen.

- Mary Luti is Interim Senior Pastor, Wellesley Village Church. She is a long-time seminary educator and pastor, author of Teresa of Avila's Way, and founding member of The Daughters of Abraham, a national network of interfaith women's book groups.

Instant Choir

Want to join the choir for one morning? Come to practice at 9:00 am on **April 10** and sing with us in worship at 10:00. No experience necessary! No commitment required!

- Jeff Olmsted, Minister of Music

No Pious Meetings in the Liquor Store

"Your holy celebrations — even your most pious meetings — all are frauds! I want nothing more to do with them. I hate them all ... Quit your evil ways. Learn to do good, to be fair, and to help the poor, the fatherless, and widows." - Isaiah 1:13;17

I took Isaiah's advice and skipped church on vacation. In lieu of worship I swam and rode bikes with my family. I also took a few trips to the country liquor store.

It's the same place I bought candy as a child. Back then the proprietor seemed old. Now she's ancient. The store is unchanged. There is the same photo of her dead husband hanging on the wall. The same tired shelves of tinned meat and sugar cereal. The same plastic bottles of off-brand gin. Some of these items might be exactly the same.

The place is covered in dust. There isn't a thing you can't find cheaper at a nearby Walmart. The owner isn't friendly. Or maybe she just doesn't see her customers. She won't wear glasses. She doesn't take credit cards. Cash only.

I thought, "What a God-forsaken place." Then a grungy man bought a six-pack. The owner tried to read the register with a magnifying glass. She said, "I can't read that. I can't see it. How much do you owe me?"

I live in Chicago. I couldn't believe this old woman's naivete. "How much do you owe me?" The register read \$6.80. The customer said, "\$9.00 Janice. Thanks." He set a ten-dollar bill on the counter, picked up his beer and walked out. A woman bought a gallon of milk and a box of cereal. Same drill. "I can't read that. How much do you owe me?" The register read \$7.80. The customer said, "\$11.00. Thanks so much."

I don't know the whole story. I do know there weren't any pious meetings happening in that liquor store. Just a widow and some help and an upside down economy. Just the kind of praise God is looking for.

Prayer

O God, teach us how to praise you with the way we use our money. Amen.

- Matt Fitzgerald is the Senior Pastor of St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Chicago. He is the host of "[Preachers on Preaching](#)," a weekly podcast sponsored by The Christian Century.

Calendar for April

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

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Thank you "Bread & Blessings" for
providing the coffee hour goodies
during April.
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Date	Time	Event	Location
Sat. April 2	1:30 - 3:15 pm	Youth Fellowship Ice Skating	Mullins Center
Sun. April 3	10:00 am	Worship Service with Communion	Sanctuary
	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Band Rehearsal	Sanctuary
	6:00 - 7:30 pm	Youth Fellowship	Children's Church
Tues. April 5	7:00 - 8:30 pm	Visioning Committee Meeting	Dining Room
Wed. April 6	12:45 - 2:30 pm	Book Study Group with Peter Ives	Dining Room
	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Thurs. April 7	9:30 am	Café Office Hours @ Pine Street Café	Florence
	2:00 pm	Writer's Group	Children's Church
	6:30 pm	Diaconate Meeting	Dining Room
Fri. April 8	12:30 pm	HCC Writers' Group	Dining Room
Sat. April 9	10:00 - 12:00 noon	La La Sisterhood Spring Potluck Brunch, see page 8	Dining Room
Sun. April 10	10:00 am	Worship Service with Instant Choir, see page 6	Sanctuary
	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Band Rehearsal	Sanctuary
Tues. April 12	7:00 pm	Men's Fellowship Meeting	Dining Room
Wed. April 13	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Thurs. April 14	9:30 am	Café Office Hours @ Pine Street Café	Florence
	2:00 pm	Writers' Group	Children's Church
	5:30 pm	Trustee Meeting	Dining Room
	6:00 pm	Family Ministry Meeting	Children's Church
Sun. April 17	10:00 am	Worship Service	Sanctuary
	12:00 noon	Council Meeting	Sanctuary
	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Band Rehearsal	Sanctuary
	6:00 pm	Youth Fellowship	Children's Church
Mon. April 18	6:00 pm	Peace and Justice Meeting	TBD
Wed. April 20	5:00 pm	Bible Study (Pre-Register), see page 5	Dining Room

Date	Time	Event	Location
Wed. April 20	6:00 pm	Investment Committee Meeting	Children's Church
	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Thurs. April 21	9:30 am	Café Office Hours @ Pine Street Café	Florence
	2:00 pm	Writers' Group	Children's Church
	6:00 - 7:30 pm	Journey Support Group	Children's Church
	7:00 pm	Evensong	Sanctuary
Fri. April 22	12:30 pm	HCC Writers' Group	Dining Room
Sun. April 24	10:00 am	Worship Service	Sanctuary
	12:00 noon	Visioning Workshop, see page 11	Sanctuary
	1:00 - 4:00 pm	Hampshire Association Meeting, see below	Huntington, MA
	5:00 pm	Bible Study (Pre-Register), see page 5	Dining Room
Wed. April 27	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
	9:30 am	Café Office Hours @ Pine Street Café	Florence
Thurs. April 28	2:00 pm	Writers' Group	Children's Church

Hampshire Association Annual Meeting

**Stanton Hall, Main St. (Rte. 20), Huntington, MA
April 24 • 1:00 - 4:00 pm, rain or shine**

A celebration of our "Hilltown churches." A meal, a meeting, a worship service, speakers and some entertainment too, all in a beautiful setting.

Church Picnic

Sunday, June 26th after church
at Velma and Laura Garcia's house
80 South Street, Williamsburg
More details to come

Save the date!



LaLa Sisterhood

LaLa Sisterhood: Any group of three or more women whose hearts and souls are joined together by laughter and tears shared through the glorious journey of life. (Borrowed from Rebecca Wells, *Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood*)

We are not quite sure what all the divine secrets of the LaLa Sisterhood are, but let's find out! Join the LaLa Sisterhood Spring Potluck Brunch. All members and friends of the church who identify as women are invited! Enjoy delicious food, sparkling conversation, some laughter and tears, and maybe a few divine secrets! Saturday, April 9, 10 am - noon.

- Pat James

The Evensong Service

April 21 • 7:00 pm

Join us for "A service filled with music, inspirational readings and stories, and blessed quietness."

This Month In Children's, Youth & Family Ministries

This month in Children's, Youth, and Family Ministries

April 3: (All ages) Lesson led by Yohah Ralph; Youth Fellowship at 6:00 pm

April 10: (All ages) Thomas's Faith

April 17: (All ages) Post-Resurrection Stories; Youth Fellowship at 6:00 pm

April 24: (All ages) Post-Resurrection Stories

Youth Fellowship will continue to meet on our regular pattern of the **1st and 3rd Sundays of the month from 6:00 to 7:30 pm** at the Church. All youth in 6th through 12th grade are invited to attend. We have been invited to join the youth groups of First Churches of Northampton and St. John's Episcopal Church on **Saturday, April 2nd, at 1:30-3:15 pm for ice skating at The Mullins Center!** Please let Pastor Chris know if you'd like to attend, and keep a look out for other activities and service opportunities in the spring!

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 silverlakect.org.

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

Social Justice Rotation Wrap-Up and Follow-Up: Education and Service Opportunities with Young Children

• Our two-month Social Justice rotation in Children's Church has now wrapped up - - but the education and service continue! The kids learned about peace and nonviolence, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Civil Rights, food access and food security, homelessness and community, LGBTQ and gender identity issues, environmental justice, and ability/disability. We are extremely grateful to Rev. Matilda Cantwell, Dawn Orluske, Jen Matias, Rev. Stephanie Smith, Sam Icklan, Steffi Davis, and Doug Renick for leading these lessons!

One of the goals of these lessons was to brainstorm about conversations and actions children could undertake with their adults. Pastor Chris and the Children's and Family Ministries Committee are compiling a resource for families with young children which will include possible social justice discussion topics, direct service ideas (working directly with the people involved), and remote service ideas (collection of money or items, meal prep without serving, cards and letters). These service opportunities could be done by one family or in a group.

Do you have experiences with or ideas for service opportunities? How about approaches for discussing social justice issues? Would you like to help us compile this list? Contact Pastor Chris!

Rev. Chris Mereschuk, Associate Pastor and Director of Children's, Youth, and Family Ministries
Andrew Geery, Chair of the Children's and Family Ministries Committee

And

"In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed." - Mark 1:35

At her denomination's annual meeting, a social justice activist listened impatiently to a keynote address about spirituality. She was heard to mutter, "The world's in flames, and the bliss-ninnies are doing guided meditations."

In her view, the spirituality types were several singing bowls removed from the real world, clueless about root causes and systemic solutions. You want to pray? Do justice. That's real prayer. Want to linger over Scripture? Take Matthew 25. Then get to work. Enough with the navel-gazing.

Meanwhile, the keynoter was wondering why the social justice types always seem so grumpy, so touchy. They have an air of fatigued arrogance about them, she thought, as if everything hinges on them—world peace, an end to hunger. They can't sit still for a nanosecond because maybe, just maybe, the next action or petition will be the thing that finally fixes everything.

Jesus puts his body on the line all day. In the wee hours he prays. He never separates inseparables. For him, the kingdom comes by wonder *and* strategy, protest *and* ecstasy, imagination *and* politics, beauty *and* programs, service *and* solitude, rallies *and* gratitude, resolutions *and* praise.

It's not about the soul's silence versus the noise of the street, the sanctuary versus the subcommittee. It's not even about finding a balance or making equal time. It's about yielding our whole selves—every gift and skill, picketing or praying—to the Living One, in the sure and certain hope that, with us *and* without us, the kingdom comes, pure gift beyond our dreams.

Prayer

In prayer and action, O God, we hope in you. In you alone.

- Mary Luti is Interim Senior Pastor, Wellesley Village Church. She is a long-time seminary educator and pastor, author of Teresa of Avila's Way, and founding member of The Daughters of Abraham, a national network of interfaith women's book groups.

From the Deacons Bench

IF I CAN'T DANCE, I DON'T WANT TO BE PART OF YOUR REVOLUTION -Emma Goldman

We may be unlikely dance partners (and sisters), born almost 15 years apart, to different parents, in different parts of the country. One of us is a Minnesota-born WASP. One of us was born in the Philippines. Like all sisters, we love each other completely, argue a little, tease each other mercilessly, give each other our old clothes, and share secrets about our wives. And like all dance partners, we sometimes step on each other's toes (hence some of the teasing...).

The most recent iteration of our partnership is becoming co-chairs of Deacons. It's a big job for anyone, and we're finding out it's even a big job for two. One of the differences in our partnership is that I, Pat James, came into this relationship thinking we'd halve the work. My dance partner, Jen Matias, came into it thinking we could get twice as much done.

We're meeting somewhere in the middle. Witness our recent facilitation of the Peace and Justice Community Café: We had fun planning it and leading it, and even did a little impromptu dance to get things going. And possibly we fostered a little revolution besides.

For anyone who is in, or is considering, a leadership role at Church, or anywhere else, try to get a dance partner. As our church family grows, there is more that must be done – more programs to plan, more people to support, more money to raise, and more social justice to work for. No one says you have to do the job of leadership alone. It's more fun if you dance. And you might get some new outfits out of the deal.

- Pat James, Deacon Co-chair

The Newly Printed Church Directory is Now Available

Find your copy of the new Directory in the Church Dining room. If you are not able to stop by to pick it up please notify Margie Serkin, our Office Administrator, and she will send you your copy. office@haydenvillechurch.org

Every effort was made to make our directory error-free but if you find a correction please let Margie know. Thanks.

HCC Activities are Sometimes Photographed

Worship services, church events, and HCC activities in the community are sometimes photographed and videotaped to document the vibrant life of our church. If you do not wish to be included, or do not wish to have your photo appearing in church publications or on our web site, please tell one of the pastors.

As a part of annual registration for children and youth programs, parents and guardians are asked to sign a photo release for their children. These releases are held by the Director of Children's, Youth, and Family Ministries, who will communicate any photo release restrictions to the webmaster and publications editor. Your permission for photo releases can be modified or revoked at any time by contacting one of the pastors.

Elbow Room Coffee Youth Fundraiser!

Check out our new supplier! Support the Youth Fellowship and a great local business while you drink your coffee! Thanks to the suggestion of a few folks, we are going to purchase our fundraising coffee through the Williamsburg-based Elbow Room Café and Roasters. This woman-owned business is super local and uses fair trade and organic beans. You can order your coffee in 12oz foil bags for \$12, with your choice of regular or decaf, medium or dark roast, ground or whole bean. We'll be taking orders on **April 3rd and 10th** during Coffee Hour. Payment (check or cash) at the time of ordering is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your support!

It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it.

-- Eleanor Roosevelt

Children's Church Needs You!

We are always looking for new folks to join our Children's Church teacher roster or to volunteer their time, talents, or treasures in other ways. Teachers can work with our younger or older children as a Head Teacher or Support Teacher, committing to a couple of Sundays or an entire multi-week rotation. All volunteers are required to sign our Safe Church policy and have a satisfactory CORI check. Please contact Pastor Chris for more information!

Affirmation of Faith

With the whole church,
we affirm
that we are made in God's image,
befriended by Christ,
empowered by the Spirit.

With people everywhere
we affirm
God's goodness as the heart of humanity,
planted more deeply
than all that is wrong.

With all creation
we affirm
the miracle and wonder of life;
the unfolding purposes of God,
forever at work in ourselves and the world.

Our Mission, Our Vision: Conversation and Workshop

Sunday, April 24th following Worship • Pastor Chris will lead us in further conversation, dreaming, and scheming about our beloved community's present and future, focusing on our mission. What defines our community? Where do our passions lie? How do we shape a future that honors and nurtures our mission? So that folks with young children can attend, childcare with lunch will be provided. Let your voice be heard and be a part of the vision!

Church Leadership

Rev. Dr. Andrea Ayvazian Senior Pastor	Alice Barber Trustees, <i>Chair</i>	Bev Orluske Nancy Winninger Angel Hearts	Shirley Sicurello Welcome Ministry, <i>Chair</i>	Mary Gerken-Newcomb Haydenville Church Writers' Group, <i>Facilitator</i>	Deacons (<i>by Seniority</i>) Jen Matias Amy Andrew Pat James Paula Spencer Shirley Sicurello Carolyn DuBois Olivia Ilano Davis Tobias Davis Karen Browne-Courage Trish Lafreniere Cate Shaw Christine Foudy
Rev. Chris Mereschuk Associate Pastor; Director of Children's, Youth, and Family Ministries	Rev. Dr. Peter Ives Theologian-in-Residence	Doug Renick Peace and Justice Steering Committee, <i>Chair</i>	Sharon Grace Julie Salzman Head Ushers	Lay Delegates Ross Bassett Jan Varnon Bob Varnon	
Jeff Olmsted Minister of Music	Yohah Ralph Minister of Outreach, Advocacy and Pastoral Care	Maggie Solis Stewardship Committee, <i>Chair</i>	Jennifer Miller-Antill	Keepers of the Covenant Rev. Dr. Peter Ives Pat James Raquel Manzanares Jen Matias	Church Council Senior Pastor Moderator Vice Moderator Clerk Treasurer Trustees, <i>Chair</i> Diaconate, <i>Chair</i> Stewardship, <i>Chair</i> Music, <i>Chair</i> Peace & Justice, <i>Chair</i> Family Ministries, <i>Chair</i> A2A, <i>Chair</i>
Lynn Fogg Moderator	Kathy O'Connor Church Sexton	Carolyn DuBois Music Committee, <i>Chair</i>	Sue Carbin Church Scheduler scarbin1973@aol.com	Jim Foudy Men's Fellowship, <i>Chair</i> & Church Communications	
Sam Icklan Vice Moderator	Andrew Geery Children's and Family Ministries Committee, <i>Chair</i>	Linda Zeigenbein Interfaith Cot Shelter Meal, <i>Coordinator</i>	Bev Orluske Nancy Winninger Keepers of the Keys	Trustees (<i>by Seniority</i>) Alice Barber Karin McGowan Laura Garcia Jo Cannon, <i>Treasurer</i> . Sylvia Fappiano, <i>LA Rep.</i> Carol Shaw	
Lisa Hall Clerk	Jennifer Clarson Angel Take-out, <i>Coordinator</i>	Chip Roughton Scripture Reader, <i>Coordinator</i>	Jackie Cloonan Snow Angels, Green Angels, <i>Coordinator</i>	Laura Paul Librarian	
Jo Cannon Treasurer					
Margie Serkin Bookkeeper/Office Administrator	Nancy Winninger Angel Wings, <i>Coordinator</i>				
Pat James Jen Matias Diaconate, Co-Chairs	Jackie Cloonan Snow Angels, Green Angels, <i>Coordinator</i>				

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