

Cross Currents



September 2016 • Open Hearts & Open Minds & Open Doors

From Pastor Andrea

Dear Church Family,

With sorrow and calling on the nearness of God, and after much thought, discernment, and prayer, I have decided to retire from the Haydenville Congregational Church.

I am feeling sorrow because now in my 12th year, I have served this Church with a joyful and grateful heart and grown to love you dearly and deeply. I know my leaving will be emotional—for me and for you. But I also know that God will be present to us all. We will be led, comforted, and guided.

My plans are to devote myself to work on the task of raising awareness about climate change issues within houses of worship. I trust that doors will open and I will find ways to focus my energy and provide some leadership on this pressing global issue within communities of faith.

Serving the Haydenville Church these past many years has been the greatest honor, pleasure, and joy of my life. We have grown in so many ways together, you have taught me much, forgiven my many mistakes, and been wonderful companions on our ever-deepening spiritual journeys.

I have served you with my whole heart. And you have, in return, extended so much love, understanding, patience, and compassion to me. I will forever be grateful.

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visit us online at: haydenvillechurch.org

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Do not have fears or anxiety about the transition that lies ahead. The Council of Deacons and the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the Rev. Jill Graham, our Associate Conference Minister, will form a Search Committee and will guide the Church through this time of change.

I will continue to serve as your Senior Pastor through the end of 2016. My final Sunday will be January 1, 2017.

In the coming months, I look forward to meeting with you individually and collectively to say good-bye. We are a Church committed to good good-byes and we will weep, pray, and talk together as the fall turns to winter.

With loving blessings,



Yes We Can!

Now Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah and the Lord showed Moses the Promised Land on the other side of the Jordan River. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Send out scouts to see what is up ahead of you. Send out scouts to see the obstacles and the barriers that you will have to face when you cross over." And Moses sent out scouts to investigate. And they saw for themselves what was up ahead. And when they returned they brought back two reports to Moses: a majority and a minority report.

The majority report emphasized the enormity of the obstacles. The obstacles on the other side were enormous. "We can't do it," the scouts concluded. "We don't have the strength. We don't have the resources. The barriers up ahead make us feel small. The challenges are so great they make us feel small like grasshoppers." But then Caleb stepped forward to deliver the minority report.

He too mentioned the problems up ahead. He noted that it would be extremely difficult to overcome the huge obstacles before them. He noted that going forward into the future would not be easy. He said that if they were to do it they would have to make a huge leap of faith without really knowing for sure where they would land.

But then Caleb said to them, "We can do it, yes we can! Not by ourselves, not by our power alone. No. But we can do it because our God is able. Our God is able to fill every

valley and bring low every mountain, able to make straight the crooked path, and the rough ways to make smooth, able to make a roadway into the future for us. Our God is able, able to make a way even where there seems to be no way; our God is able to make a way. With God at our side we will be able too. We shall overcome."

Pastor Andrea has been like our Caleb these past 12 years. With every step she has shown you the way to go forward. Together, under her remarkable leadership, you have had to face challenges that were big ones. You had to work together in ways that put enormous responsibilities upon your shoulders. Together, you had to figure out how to do things that you didn't have to do before. You found yourself on your own, making decisions that were new and unfamiliar. But all along you have been the body of Christ with every member of the body working together for the good of the whole. And all along, like Caleb, you kept saying to each other, "Yes we can! Yes we can." Yes we can assume the full responsibilities for this dynamic, progressive and fully inclusive ministry Pastor Andrea has called us to do.

And you did it. You did it with great love and compassion. You did it with great sensitivity to the needs of others. You took the leap of faith with enormous courage. And you did it in the spirit of Caleb that with God at your side you could all carry the full ministry of the Haydenville Congregational Church forward no matter what! So keep on keeping on and every day say in Caleb's words: "Yes we can, Yes we can," no matter what the challenges up ahead, we will find a way to enter into God's New Day together.

- Rev. Peter Ives, Theologian-in-Residence

Fall Book Group

Pastor Andrea will be leading a four-week Book Group this fall to discuss the books *Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande and *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi. Feel free to come even if you have already read only one of the books, or even if you just want to hear others discuss these powerful books that reflect on end-of-life issues, health care concerns, and making one's wishes known as the end approaches. The Book Group will meet four consecutive Wednesdays from 5:30 until 7:00 pm. All are welcome. Please pre-register to let Pastor Andrea know you are coming. Book Group dates: October 5, 12, 19, 26.

Press Lightly

As part of my “I-am-in-the-recovery-stage-now” bit, (after a festive bout with cancer and chemo), I am rereading most of my Heather King books, including *Stripped* (about her battle with breast cancer and so much more); *Redeemed* (her journey towards faith); and *Stumble*, (conversion to Catholicism). As a recovering alcoholic, ex-barfly and Catholic convert, her insights continue to resonate about relationships, our fundamental brokenness, her need for healing, deep faith life, commitment to obedience and discipleship in the Catholic Church, and much more.

At the same time I was rereading Heather on Kindle, I was struggling to change the color of the highlights. Now, those of you recovering from 5 months of chemo with some, shall we say delicately, “cognitive decline,” know that accomplishing ANYTHING is a real miracle. To be able to cook! To cut up fruit to make a fruit salad (all the while burning the shredded coconut and pumpkin seeds...)! To walk 20-30 laps on my ship’s deck outside, listening to the warblers and the Baltimore oriole! Bliss, utter bliss. One’s standards for accomplishing tasks during the day change radically.

But the darned highlights on my Kindle stubbornly refused to change from urine yellow (see Roz Chast’s brilliant book, *Things I Hate From A-Z* in which yellow is one of the despised items) to something less horrid, less like a body fluid and closer to a burnt orange or a sky blue. I poked at the page icon at the top of the Kindle; I pressed the square with an arrow going upwards; I went to Library and fumbled around there with no good result. Finally, when looking at yet another yellow paragraph, I lightly touched the highlight and behold! Up came the variations in color! It was hiding right before my eyes, only I hadn’t known to look or touch there.

So, this gives me furiously to think, as Hercule Poirot used to say. How often does this happen to us in our prayer life with God? How often do we think, “If only I do it *right* I will feel God’s blessed presence? If I kneel for so many minutes per day; if I say the Divine Office; if I do the Examen at night—all will be well,” as if God’s presence depended upon our spiritual efforts.

I assume all of these practices “work” at various times, but at other times, what we just need to do is—*press lightly!* Stop exerting so much energy, stop trying so hard.

Find the heart-place where the words sift through the pulsing muscle to rest at the center of your being; find the words which open you to God’s mercy and grace and—breathe, touch softly. Just under the surface of the words lies infinite meaning and warm presence. And, in a color you like.

- Annie Turner

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 |



Looking Way Way Way Ahead!

Hot Chocolate Run! Because so many church members are involved in the Annual Hot Chocolate Run that raises money for Safe Passage—so many of you run and volunteer!—our Church will be throwing all our support behind the Run this year and not meeting for worship at 10:00 on December 4th. Instead we will have a lovely Evensong-style worship at 4:00 pm that day, with music, readings, lighting the Advent Wreath, and Communion. So you can be part of the Hot Chocolate Run this year without worrying about the conflict with our morning worship service!

Christmas Day! Our big Christmas Eve worship service will be held, just like it always is, on December 24th at 7:00 pm. However, because Christmas falls on a Sunday this year, we will be holding our worship service on December 25th in the Dining Room and there will be light breakfast foods available when you arrive. We will be reading a Christmas story and singing carols and children are welcome to come in pajamas! Our service will be a little unusual, festive, and delicious! Come one, come all!

I'm Tired of Closets

I'm tired of hiding parts of myself. I've come out to so many people as so many things over the years that I know exactly how stifling closets can be. I know what it's like to look at smiling faces and wonder, "if you knew my truth, would you still be smiling at me?"

Church was a place where I often felt I had to be in the closet. I was too masculine, too queer, too trans for so many communities. I know what it's like to sit in the pew and wonder, "if you knew my truth, would you still let me through your doors?"

Haydenville, you let me through your doors. You let me on your committees, behind your pulpit, with your children, in your pride parades, on your website, the list goes on and on. I know I'm not too trans for you. But I still worry that I might be too queer for you.

So I want to tell you a story. I want to tell you a story about boundless, unlimited, unconventional love.

Boundless, unlimited, unconventional love is something I feel strongly called to as a Christian. That's how I would describe God's love for us. That's how I would describe Jesus's love for the outcasts and the misfits.

And that's how I would describe my love for the people in my life.

I've worked through and against a lot of social messages in my day. About who I could love, and how I could love, and who I had to be. I learned that women can love women, and men can love men. I learned that there are people who are not women or men. I learned that there are millions of flavors of love between people and that all of them come from God.

I know you're all on board with me here. But I'm going to get a little more queer on you.

You see, most people in our society view romantic love, sexual intimacy, and life partnership as something between two people. I'm worried that even our radical and progressive church might feel the same. While we embrace marriage between any two people who love each other, regardless of gender, the operative number is still two. Monogamy is the status quo.

So let me open up this creaking closet door and tell you that I have two life partners. Two apples of my eye. Two "better halves," although I'm pretty sure the math gets kind of messed up in that expression.

One of them is cmoore, who many of you know and love. We've been together for nearly 15 years and have grown

up and grown together in 1000 ways. We love each other deeply.

The other is a newer, but not lesser love. Their name is Aubri, and we've been together for over a year. They are smart and loving and kind, and have taught me much about myself, and the nature of love, and the world.

What does this mean? Well, logically it means my life is full of love. It means that sometimes I go on vacation with one or the other of them, and sometimes the three of us go on vacation together. It means there are more schedules to coordinate but also more hands to pitch in. It means that my family looks different from most other people's families, and that's totally okay.

Some may call us polyamorous. That's a term that's been gaining visibility in the media lately. It refers to people who engage in multiple loving relationships with open and honest communication between all parties. While I certainly identify as polyamorous, or poly, for short, I prefer the even more radical concept of relationship anarchy, which allows for the freedom for every relationship to take its own form, and does not prioritize one type of relationship over another. It recognizes that all types of love and relationships are important and valuable.

We know this concept. Our welcome talks about "friends who call one another family." We know that the love of a parent for a child can't be pitted against the love of a partner for another partner. They're all beautiful. They're all essential. They're all important.

I think Jesus was a relationship anarchist. I think he was a relationship anarchist when he called those fishermen away from their nets. I think he was a relationship anarchist when he valued women and children in a society that considered them worthless. I think he was a relationship anarchist when he said "*here are my mother and brothers,*" redefining family as those who choose each other. Jesus knew that families and relationships take all formats. And he knew that God resides in love.

So when you see me at church, please, ask me about both my partners.

Let me out of the closet. Let me come through your doors.

In love and solidarity,

- Toby Davis

"Live in the sunshine, swim in
the sea, drink the wild air."

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Exploring Membership Classes: New Series Begins

Would you like to make your relationship with the Haydenville Congregational Church more formal? Would you even like to talk about what that means? Would you like to meet with others and talk about your spiritual journey and what brought you to the Church in the first place? Come to our circle as we "explore" what it means to join a Church and answer questions like: What might I feel and receive if I join? What is expected of me? And the really important one: Why join?!

Pastor Chris and Pastor Andrea lead the four-week series. At the end of the four sessions, individuals decide if they want to/are ready to join the Church or not. It is truly "exploring" membership! There is no pressure to join!

The four classes will be held after Church, upstairs either in Pastor Andrea's office or in Children's Church (depending on the size of the group). The dates are: September 25, October 2, October 9, and October 16. Those interested in joining will formally join the Church on October 30. Questions? See Pastor Chris or Pastor Andrea. Interested in coming to the series? Please let Pastor Chris or Pastor Andrea know.

Two Special Thank You's!

A HUGE thanks to Al Neal for his gift of a book to our Church Library. The book, *Email From Heaven 3.0* by Leonard J. Capobianco, is now available in the library for you to check out and enjoy.

And a heartfelt thanks to the anonymous donor who paid for eight large tables and sixty chairs from Northampton Rental delivered to Velma and Laura Garcia's backyard for the All Church Picnic! Dear Donor, you saved us so much work, sweat and tears. Thank you, thank you!

Office hours for Ferdene Chin-Yee, our Church Bookkeeper/Office Administrator, are from 9:00 am - 2:00 pm, Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

What if There are Two Kinds of Christians and We're Both Wrong?

"He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood and his name is called the Word of God ... from his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations."

- Revelation 1:7

There are two kinds of people: those who divide the world into two kinds of people and those who think that's far too simple. But even if you're in the second category, you have to admit that the second coming turns us into two kinds of Christian: gullible literalists and sophisticated liberals.

"The Bible said it. I believe it. That settles it."

"Jesus is coming back with a sword in his mouth? Please."

One promise. Two camps. What if we're both wrong?

Many literalists believe that Jesus will come back angry. So they're looking in the wrong place, waiting on a revenge fantasy. Meanwhile, as a good liberal, I'm convinced that God must correspond to whatever modernity deems possible. So I'm not looking at all.

They stare at heaven. I've got my eyes closed. Meanwhile, Jesus could return and we'd both miss him. Wait, here's something scarier than a mouth-sword: what if he already did?

It could have happened this morning. I was visiting a parishioner coming out of traumatic, invasive surgery. She's facing months of hard recovery. At the end of our visit I asked her what she wanted to pray for. Healing? A quick recovery? Patience? Strength?

She said, "Those children. The refugees from Syria. I want to pray for them."

I swear, those were more than the words of a kind church woman. It might have been the voice of Christ himself. I shouldn't have rushed through that prayer. I shouldn't have hurried back to my office and my stupid email.

I should have sat in that hospital room for hours, right on the edge of my chair, eyes wide open. Heart torn open.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, give us eyes to see you. Amen.

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

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. Head Teachers deliver the lesson for the day (prepared and provided by Pastor Chris), while Support Teachers assist in engaging the children and supporting the Head 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 volunteers to work with our youth during service and fellowship activities, be it rock climbing, river clean ups, sledding, a lock-in, or volunteering.

All volunteers are required to complete a registration form (or renew last year's form) and complete a satisfactory CORI check in accordance with our Safe Church policy. We will also hold a volunteer info session early in the program year. Please contact Pastor Chris for more information or to volunteer, and thanks!



There is a story behind the cake. Mariel had just had her birthday. I went to a bakery before church thinking of buying her a cake, possibly a mini version. The one I bought had been ordered by someone but never picked up. As soon as I saw the cake it was screaming "Mariel" and since the church would be the perfect place to bring a cake for a celebration... I had to get it!

- Sue Brow

Dearest Andrea,

Thank you so much for arranging for me to photograph the Noah's Ark in Children's Church. It was a great experience all round, and wonderful to see the inside of your church - I had never been in it when it was empty of people, and it has such a sweet, beautifully welcoming interior I also got to see the sanctuary and it was amazing, so artistically beautiful in a profound sense. I haven't been able to find the right word yet for the aesthetic experience, which was very rich and multifaceted but had a spirit behind it - maybe the word is joyful? I wanted to sit everywhere There was the sense of caring human energy everywhere.

Our synagogue has been struggling with how to be more welcoming and I think your church is a stellar example of how a building can feel deeply inviting and comfortable. I was taking mental notes - I don't know if I will be able to translate the beautiful artistic spirit of your church into things our congregation can do, but it was inspiring to be there

Many thanks again -

Sandra Matthews
Professional photographer

Doug Renick Dances in Canada

Doug was in Ottawa, Canada, dancing in the Dark Horse Dance Projects program on July 21st and 22nd. See the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/darkhorsedanceprojects/?fref=photo>. Doug is a former member of the Dance Generators. His performance in Canada was a duet with Maureen Shea, choreographer and former Artistic Director of the DGs. They performed a 12-minute piece including solo improvisations on a long walk in the woods and pieces on and among raw eggs, which is quite messy, usually. Doug and Carol's daughters came from Chicago and St. George, VT to join Carol and Doug for the performance and take a peek at Ottawa!

Occupy the Choir Loft!

St. Augustine said: "whoever sings, prays twice." The choir is always open to new members. Talk to Jeff if you are interested.

Calendar for September

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

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

Date	Time	Event	Location
Thurs. Sept. 1	9:30 am	Café Office Hours	TBD
	6:30 pm	Diaconate Meeting	Dining Room
Sun. Sept. 4	10:00 am	Worship Service with Communion, Instant Choir!	Sanctuary
Wed. Sept. 7	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Thurs. Sept. 8	9:30 am	Café Office Hours	TBD
	5:30 pm	Trustee Meeting	Dining Room
Sun. Sept. 11	10:00 am	Worship Service - Rally Day (see page 10), Instant Choir!	Sanctuary
	12:00 noon	Council Meeting	Sanctuary
Tues. Sept. 13	7:00 pm	Men's Fellowship Meeting	Dining Room
Wed. Sept. 14	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Thurs. Sept. 15	9:30 am	Café Office Hours	TBD
Sun. Sept. 18	10:00 am	Worship Service	Sanctuary
	11:30 am	Children's Church Family Meeting	Sanctuary
Mon. Sept. 19	6:00 pm	Peace and Justice Meeting	Dining Room
Wed. Sept. 21	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Thurs. Sept. 22	9:30 am	Café Office Hours	TBD
	6:00 pm	Peace & Justice Soup & Salad: Activist George Lakey will read and sign his new book <i>Viking Economics: How the Scandinavians Got it Right and How We Can Too.</i>	Dining Room
	6:00 pm	Journey Support Group	Sanctuary
Sun. Sept. 25	10:00 am	Worship Service	Sanctuary
	11:30 am	Exploring Membership Class #1	Pastor Andrea's Office
Wed. Sept. 28	7:00 pm	Choir Practice	Sanctuary
Thurs. Sept. 29	9:30 am	Café Office Hours	TBD

Church Picnic

The church picnic after services Sunday, June 26 was by all accounts one of the best ever. Pastor Andrea officially declared it "AMAZING!"

An estimated 125 people gathered in the spacious yard of Laura and Velma Garcia for good food, lively conversation and fun. Some neighbors even wandered over. There was a blow-up pool and water games for kids – and adults who needed to cool down – and a volleyball net set up. Big thanks to Laura and Velma for lending their yard and home for the event.

Linda Ziegenbein and Andrew Geery did a great job organizing the picnic, getting the burgers and dogs, and dividing up work among a host of volunteers. An anonymous church family very generously paid the cost of renting tables, chairs and a large grill from Northampton Rental. They delivered to the house, which eliminated a lot of backbreaking labor.

Several folks brought pop-up tents. Mary Colwell and Charlene Elvers, whose grandchild was baptized that Sunday, contributed several tents, food and a cake. The picnic doubled as a reception for many of the family members on hand for the baptism. That made the afternoon even more special.

And thanks to a hard-working clean up crew, Laura and Velma had their house and yard back in order by 4 pm.

Men's Fellowship

The Men's Fellowship meets the second Tuesday of the month at the church for conversation and Christian fellowship. The next meeting is Tuesday, Sept. 13 at 7 pm.

The meetings are informal and open to any male-identified member of the church. The conversations range from the personal to the political and everything in between. It is a chance to share life experiences and discuss spirituality and how to apply the lessons of Christ in our own lives and to the issues facing the world today.

– Jim Foudy

Our lives begin to die the day we are silent about the things that matter.

- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King

Coming Out White

This fall, as a faith community, we will deepen our commitment to racial justice. A critical part of that effort is to foster a deeper understanding of the meaning of whiteness and white privilege. **Coming out White** is a six-week reading and discussion group on the meaning, power, and responsibility of white people to dismantle racism.

Sponsored by Deacons and offered in cooperation with the Peace and Justice Committee, this group is for white people who are distressed about racism in the US - and in our own hearts and minds – and who would like to begin working for racial justice. Step one is to understand the meaning, power, and responsibilities of our own whiteness. We will examine how we, as good-hearted, well-intentioned Christians, may still participate in, and benefit from, ongoing oppression of people of color. Through reading, discussion, and direct learning activities we will create a challenging and supportive space to understand whiteness, unlearn racism, and become more powerful advocates for racial justice. Most of our readings will be from the book *White Privilege: Essential readings on the other side of racism*, by Paula Rothenberg. If you're interested contact Pat James or Ruth Jacobson-Hardy. Date and times TBA.

- Pat James

If there's something wrong, speak up!

- Pete Seeger

Black Lives Matter Series to be Planned

The Peace and Justice Committee is planning to coordinate a series focusing on Black Lives Matter in the Fall that would be similar to the wonderful series that we had about Islamophobia. We are looking for YOU if you would be interested in this idea and might be willing to be on a planning committee. Please contact Karen Browne-Courage at joyfulreunion@gmail.com or at 413 320-6459 if you would be interested in exploring this.

A Message From Chip Roughton:

Dear Church Family,

The older I get, the more comfortable I am with paradox. I've learned to trust the Mystery that can't be solved or doesn't always make sense. And after many years of thought, study, and prayer, I've hit upon a paradox that doesn't make a lot of sense on the face of it but which I'm compelled to trust: I feel that God is calling me to leave The Christian Church. Sadly, I feel the time has also come for me to leave our beloved Haydenville Congregational Church.

It is not that I am converting to another religion or even looking for a different church to attend. I simply want to spend time with God outside the structure of organized religion. I want my communion with God to be authentic, and try though I might, with The Church in my life I am constantly filtering my experience through the many preconceived notions (both "good" and "bad") that I have acquired through a lifetime of Christianity. What I've ended up with, I think, is a secondhand faith. What I'm hoping to do in my sojourn outside of Church is to have a real experience of God in my life.

Of course, I don't mean to imply that one can't have genuine communion with God inside a church or religion. Obviously that is not the case. It's just that I can't seem to do that. I have bristled against this disconnect my entire churchgoing life. All those years in the pew have felt like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. Stepping outside of that is scary and somewhat counterintuitive, but for me, for now, that is what I need to do.

And so it is bittersweet for me to say goodbye to you and our beloved Haydenville—truly the most excellent example of church I have ever encountered. I will miss you dearly (I already do). If you're the praying sort, please keep me in your prayers—this is uncharted territory for me and I'll take all the support I can get. Know that I keep you and the church in my prayers, such that they are. When we cross paths in town, I hope you'll stop and chat. Until then, thank you for your love and understanding. May you continue to be the hands, feet, mouth, and face of God in and to our community.

With much love and most sincerely,

Chip

(Please know that I made my decision to leave and wrote this goodbye before receiving Pastor Andrea's news. We

both felt it was important to be clear that my leaving is not in response to hers. I know you will continue to support her, pray for her, grieve the church's loss, look forward to what's next, and love her up throughout the rest of the year, as will I.)

From the Deacons' Bench

I am a self-avowed white person, and admitted person of non-color. I came out as a white person in my forties. People were surprised, not that I was white, but that I was coming out. Why was I talking about it? Why did it matter that I was acknowledging the obvious? It mattered because my whiteness had been invisible to me, so before I came out, I didn't have to think about the myriad ways I benefitted from my whiteness. It meant I'd always seen people who look like me on TV, movies, books, in power, in leadership, in charge. The "flesh tone" crayons matched my skin.

I'm still coming out. Reminding myself of my whiteness, the privilege that goes with it, the racism inherent in growing up white in the US, is a daily process. Nonetheless, I often forget to remember that I'm driving, shopping, eating out, meeting friends, worshipping, hiking, or working as a white person.

This forgetting is the essence of privilege in a culture where similar forgetting by our siblings of color can have dire, even fatal, results.

As you might expect, the work of coming out white can be painful, confusing, shameful, frustrating, and grief-filled. But it is work done together, in community, in faith, in love. It is deeply spiritual work that is fundamentally interconnected with every other issue of justice. It is work to heal humankind. At the core of environmental, economic, educational and political injustice is our failure to value all life without prejudice. Dismantling that prejudice is the most important work there is. I hope you'll join us.

- Pat James

Pioneer Valley Refugee Action Group

You'll recall that this spring we collected many welcome kit items for refugees, which we delivered on June 12 to Jewish Family Service in Springfield. These welcome kits were much appreciated. That was an initiative of the PViRAG (Pioneer Valley Interfaith Refugee Action Group) and P&JSC. There were also two furniture pick up and delivery days and the furniture was taken to an ASCENTRIA Care Alliance (formerly Lutheran Social Services) storage site in Westfield. No further furniture collection will occur until storage facilities are identified.

Now Catholic Charities has submitted an application to the US State Department to resettle fifty-one refugees in Northampton. Refugees will come from North Africa and Syria. Catholic Charities will know in mid-September whether they were awarded the contract. A steering committee for this project has been formed. The City of Northampton is on board and will be involved.

On August 8, a lead Catholic Charities person, Kathryn Buckley-Brawner, briefed PViRAG about the project. There was general agreement that PViRAG and its member congregations will support the resettlement of refugees in Northampton if the project gets the green light. We will probably not see refugees and their families before the end of the year, but preparations for their coming is starting now. To receive email updates about refugee resettlement in Northampton go to: http://eepurl.com/b_aWcD to sign up. Public conversations about the project will be held on Sept. 18, 6:30-8:30, JFK Middle School and Sept. 22, 2-4, Senior Center. Susannah Crolius is the Outreach and Development person for Catholic Charities for this project. Stay tuned.

- Doug Renick represents the HCC Peace and Justice Steering Committee on the PViRAG.

Rally Day

On September 11th we will launch the new year of Children's Church, warmly welcome visitors who may be "church shopping," and have a surprise Coffee Hour treat. It is a special day - a combination of worship service and family reunion. Not a Sunday to miss!

Dear Reverend Ayvazian & Friends,

On behalf of everyone at Jewish Family Service of Western MA I want to thank you for the incredible and much needed donations for our New American program. We were thrilled with the supplies and welcome kits. Some of them have gone almost immediately to newly-resettled refugees who have recently arrived from Syria, Bhutan and the Congo.

It means so much to us - and to our new friends from other lands - that the community cares and is a part of what we do to help people feel welcome in their new country and new home. **The donations help us to create a warm home that reflects the love and compassion of people like those in your community!**

Your assistance is beyond words. We are so grateful for these wonderful gifts to us and to our resettlement program.

Please pass on our gratitude and thanks to everyone. Perhaps one day soon some of our New Americans can thank you personally but until then please know that you have brought pleasure and put smiles on peoples' faces with the generosity of your group.

All the best and thank you again,

*Maxine J. Stein
President and CEO*

Instant Choir

Want to join the choir for one morning? Come to practice at 9:00 am on **September 4 and 11** and sing with us in worship at 10:00. No experience necessary! No commitment required!

- Jeff Olmsted, Minister of Music

Christian Love Monogamy, Polyamory and Covenant

Got questions? Got feelings? Got time to talk?
Pastors Andrea and Chris invite you to an evening discussion rooted in Biblical reflection and scriptural examples.

*October 4, 2016 at 7:00 pm • Church Dining Room
Haydenville Congregational Church*

Blessing of the Animals

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. This event will be cancelled in the event of rain. Contact Pastor Chris for more information. **Saturday, October 1st at 10:00 am**

Elbow Room Coffee Youth Fundraiser

Support the Youth Fellowship and a great local business while you drink your coffee! You can order your coffee in 12oz foil bags for \$12. We'll be taking orders on **September 4th and 11th** during Coffee Hour, with orders arriving by September 25th. Payment (check or cash) at the time of ordering is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your support!

This Month In Children's, Youth & Family Ministries

September 4th: Final Summer Playgroup (all ages)

September 11th: Rally Day and registration; Children's Church program resumes

September 18th: "Blessing of the Backpacks" (during worship); Children's Church lesson; "Family Meeting" following worship

September 25th: Children's Church lesson

Has your child "aged out" of our Sunday morning Children's Church? • Pastor Chris and the Children's and Family Ministries Committee are gauging interest in Sunday morning class sessions for young people beyond 5th grade. Please contact Pastor Chris ASAP if you or your young person fits in this category and would be interested in getting a group together.

Children's Church Registration on Rally Day & Family Meeting • Our Children's Church program will resume on Sunday September 11th with an opportunity to register your child. Registration is very important because it is an opportunity for Pastor Chris and the teachers to learn important things about your child (such

as allergies or necessary accommodations), as well as updating us on the best way to keep in contact with you. New registration forms will be available, but you may also "renew" last year's registration. All forms will also be posted on our website.

Blessing of the Backpacks • Sunday, September 18th during Worship

• 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 18th worship service. Kids, parents, teachers, and students of all ages are invited to bring along a representative object to be blessed.

Children's Church "Family Meeting" • September 18th after Worship in the Sanctuary

• The Children's and Family Ministries Committee is hosting a "Family Meeting" in the Sanctuary after worship on September 18th. We will share our curriculum calendar and go over some thoughts about our covenant, policies, and practices. All children and their corresponding adults are encouraged to attend.

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

Church Leadership

Rev. Dr. Andrea Ayvazian Senior Pastor	Rev. Dr. Peter Ives Theologian-in-Residence	Nancy Winninger Angel Wings, <i>Coordinator</i>	Chip Roughton Scripture Reader, <i>Coordinator</i>	Bev Orluske Nancy Winninger Keepers of the Keys	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	Yohah Ralph Minister of Outreach, Advocacy and Pastoral Care	Jackie Cloonan Snow Angels, Green Angels, <i>Coordinator</i>	Laura Paul Librarian	Mary Gerken-Newcomb Haydenville Church Writers' Group, <i>Facilitator</i>	
Jeff Olmsted Minister of Music	Kathy O'Connor Church Sexton	Bev Orluske Nancy Winninger Angel Hearts	Sharon Grace Julie Salzman Head Ushers	Ross Bassett Jan Varnon Bob Varnon Lay Delegates	
Lynn Fogg Moderator	Bookkeeper/ Administrative Assistant Ferdene Chin-Yee	Doug Renick Peace and Justice Steering Committee, <i>Chair</i>	Jennifer Miller-Antill Laurie Priest Head Greeters	Rev. Dr. Peter Ives Pat James Raquel Manzanares Jen Matias Keepers of the Covenant	Church Council Senior Pastor Moderator Vice Moderator Clerk Treasurer
Sam Icklan Vice Moderator	Jim Foudy Human Resources Coordinator	Carolyn DuBois Music Committee, <i>Chair</i>	Richard Spencer <i>CrossCurrents</i>	Trustees (<i>by Seniority</i>) Alice Barber Karin McGowan Laura Garcia Jo Cannon, <i>Treasurer</i> . Sylvia Fappiano, <i>LA Rep.</i> Carol Shaw	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>
Lisa Hall Clerk	Andrew Geery Children's and Family Ministries Committee, <i>Chair</i>	Sue Carbin Church Scheduler socabin1973@aol.com	Linda Zeigenbein Interfaith Cot Shelter Meal, <i>Coordinator</i>		
Jo Cannon Treasurer	Jennifer Clarson Angel Take-out, <i>Coordinator</i>				
Pat James Jen Matias Diaconate, Co-Chairs					
Alice Barber Trustees, <i>Chair</i>					

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

