



EDWARDS CHURCH

An Open and Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ

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THE STEEPLE

November 2018

No. 10

Dear friends,

A few weeks ago, our Stewardship Team gathered for our first meeting. Amy Hendrick, Scott Cleveland, Sandy Thompson, Joann Sewell, Nicola Seaholm and I ate gazpacho as we talked about what inspires us to give to Edwards Church. We talked about trust and transparency: we have input into how the church uses our gifts, and we trust one another to care for our resources faithfully. We talked about the ways our church makes a difference in our lives. We shared our gratitude for the opportunities the church gives us to make a difference in our world.

Scott brought up our recent decision to restore the parsonage to be used, in partnership with Jewish Family Service, as housing for a family of refugees from Syria. "Our campus," he said, "is a place of refuge." We lifted up other ways we offer refuge: through the Vet Center and our Veterans Yoga, by hosting AA meetings, by creating gardens where people can reconnect with the natural world and experience beauty.

The word "oasis" came up. We began to reflect on ways we experience our church community, as well as our campus, as an oasis. When we are parched by what seems like a desert journey through life, we come here to drink from a deep well of hope. When we feel beaten down by a viciously competitive world, we come here to be with people who support us. We are nourished by music and prayer, by Bible Study and potluck suppers, by worship and coffee hour.

Our conversation led us to the first half of our Stewardship theme: "An Oasis of Hope."

We knew, though, that our theme was not complete. The word "oasis" stirs images of palm trees and green grass surrounded by desert, with a

sharp delineation between each. Our "Oasis of Hope" is not separate from the world around us; it is not an escape from life. It is not just for ourselves. The well of hope at the heart of this oasis is a gift from God, which has been entrusted to us to benefit all our neighbors. We are called to care for this gift, and we are called to spread the gift of hope beyond our own community. We are called to water the desert, to plant seeds of possibility, to expand the vision of hope beyond our campus.

And so we added a second phrase, to complete our Stewardship theme: "*An Oasis of Hope: Expanding the Vision.*"

On Sunday, November 4, we will kick off our Stewardship season. In worship, we will hear reflections from Heather Gonzalez. We will celebrate All Saints Day. We will complement our sermon with visual images of oases and hope, and we will share in Holy Communion. Following worship, our Congregational Meeting will include a presentation by the Stewardship Team.

On Sunday, November 11, we will have a special presentation by our children, and we will hear from Frank Carney. There will be more visual images, this time of the ways we offer hope to our world. That week, you will receive a mailing from the Stewardship Team, with information, inspiration and a pledge card.

On Sunday, November 18, we will invite you to bring your pledge card to church and join us in a joyous celebration of Thanksgiving, as we dedicate our pledges.

I hope you will join us in this inspiring and joyful time of gratitude and generosity.

Peace,
Debbie

NOVEMBER WORSHIP

November 4, 10:00am, Communion Sunday— All Saints Day!

An Oasis of Hope: Expanding the Vision—Part I

We will honor the Saints of our churches, past and present, in our service. Heather Gonzalez will offer a Stewardship Moment.

November 11, 10:00am

An Oasis of Hope: Expanding the Vision—Part II

Frank Carney will offer a Stewardship Moment. Our children will sing the Lord's Prayer.

November 18, 10:00am, Thanksgiving Sunday

We will dedicate our pledges and gifts.

November 18, 5:30pm, Seeds Of Grace Worship

Join us in Susan P. Dickerman Hall for Dinner Church, as we reflect on Thanksgiving then and now.

November 20, 7:00pm, Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

This year our Interfaith, Intergenerational Thanksgiving Service will be held at Temple Beth Am, 300 Pleasant Street.

November 25, 10:00am

Reign of Christ Sunday

QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, November 4 at 11:30am

We will gather during coffee hour on November 4 for a Congregational Meeting. Come hear from the Stewardship Committee and learn about how your gifts to our church come together to enable us to be a strong and faithful community. The Associate Pastor Search Committee will also seek ideas and feedback for preparation of our church profile.

BIBLE STUDY

Our Wednesday evening Bible Study groups is continuing our study of the gospel according to Luke. We will meet Wednesdays, November 14 and 28 at 5:15 pm, with soup at 4:45 pm.

VETERANS APPRECIATION SUPPER

Sunday, November 11 at 5:00pm

Together with our friends at Plymouth, we are hosting a free supper for area veterans and their

families on Sunday, November 11 at 5:00pm. This year the supper will be held at Plymouth Church (87 Edgell Road). We need lots of volunteers to help cook and set up (3-5 pm), greet and serve (5-7 pm), and clean up (7-8:30 pm). We also need many folks to bring finger-food desserts. Please sign up at church or by calling the office.

And don't forget to invite your friends and relatives who are veterans! (We need RSVPs by Monday, November 5.)

VETERANS DAY SLIDE SHOW

Send photos by Monday, November 5

If you would like to share a picture of yourself in uniform or honor a loved one who has served in the military, please send a photo and caption to nicola@edwardschurch.org. If you only have a hard copy, Nicola will be happy to scan it for you and will take great care of your photo. You can hand it to her at church or stop by the office. The slide show will be on display during coffee hour on Sunday, November 11.

PARSONAGE RENOVATION UPDATE

If you come onto campus during the week, you may see lots of activity around our parsonage. Our contractor is making good progress and expects to have a beautiful, newly renovated house ready by the end of 2018. We are partnering with Jewish Family Services to provide housing to a family of Syrian refugees who have been in our country for eighteen months. They have four young children and are very excited to move in around the first of the year.

SOLAR PANEL UPDATES

We continue to move forward with our plan to add new solar panels to our buildings, in order to provide renewable energy for ourselves and for the grid. As of October 22, we are reviewing the contract with Team Solar, and will move forward from there.

SINGING IN SOLIDARITY

WITH OUR IMMIGRANT NEIGHBORS

Sunday, November 11, 4:00-6:00pm

Edwards Church's Board of Wider Missions is a co-sponsor of this multi-faith, multi-cultural concert featuring groups from area churches and synagogues. The concert will be held at Greater Framingham Community Church (44 Franklin Street). There is no entry fee; come make a donation to the Neighbor's Fund, which helps immigrant neighbors in crisis.

MEN'S GROUP

All men of the church (and your friends whatever their church background) are invited to gather for coffee and great conversation on the first Saturday of the month, November 3, from 8:00-10:00am in Susan P. Dickerman Hall.

CELEBRATING AN INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING

Join neighbors and friends from many faith traditions in a lively, music-filled intergenerational Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on Tuesday, November 20 at 7:00pm at Temple Beth Am (300 Pleasant Street in Framingham). Music will include a bell choir and lots of singing. There will be a special message and art project for young people, and reflections on gratitude from different faith traditions. Invite your neighbors and friends!

FROM THE CHOIR DIRECTOR

We've had a wonderfully musical kick-off to our year with services led on our newly restored (and sounding amazing!) organ and our historic Steinway grand piano, music by On the Fence at our outdoor service, and guest instrumentalists, Jenny Baylor and Ellie Leigh-Manuell. There are so many blessings here, it is fitting and appropriate that we bridge the musical kick-off and stewardship season with a celebration of these gifts at our fall concert, Saturday afternoon, November 3 at 6:00pm.

The concert will feature organ music by Cheryl Elkins, piano music by Susan Minor, On the Fence, our bluegrass band, our choir, and the combo of Willie Sordillo and Doug Rich (sax and bass). Please join us and invite a friend! The free will offering will go toward disaster relief through the UCC.

Rick Seaholm

CHRISTIAN EXPLORERS CORNER

We had a great turn-out at our Family Fun Night and Spaghetti Dinner, with approximately thirty people and one dog in attendance. There was great food, lots of fun, and great conversation where we got to know each other a little bit better. Thanks to everyone who joined us.

Coming up in November, the Christian Explorers will be working with the theme of "Jesus Creates a Family." Kids and youth will look at the calling of the disciples, and will find how calls to discipleship did not occur in holy places. Our curriculum will help to illustrate how God works in all areas of human life. In

the midst of our daily work, wherever we are, God calls to us.

On November 3, your family will not want to miss the Edwards Church Concert that will feature music for organ and piano, as well as a bluegrass band and a jazz duo. Kids and adults will enjoy this festive event!

I've often thought that joyful singing is a marker of good health for any group or organization. On November 11, our youngest kids will sing a version of the Lord's Prayer for us during worship. This will be complete with joyful percussion! It should be a happy celebration for us all.

Many Blessings,
Dawn Sorensen
Interim Director of Christian Education

Christmas Wreath Sale

Help our youth raise funds to attend Youth @ Synod this June in Milwaukee! Support our youth by purchasing a twelve-inch wreath with a classic red or cranberry bow. Consider spreading the holiday cheer and order an extra wreath for your friends! This year, we have expanded our sales to include Plymouth Church as well. Proceeds benefit the Edwards Church and Plymouth Church Youth @ Synod Fundraising Efforts. Orders will be taken during coffee hour on November 11, 18, and 25. You can pick up your wreath following worship on December 2. The donation is \$15 per wreath.

Cookie Swap and Christmas Party

Sat. December 15 at 6:00pm in Sue Dickerman Hall

We'll get together, share food and fellowship, and swap cookies for all of your holiday get-togethers. This would be a great time to invite a friend. If you need a special cookie recipe to begin a family tradition, or a recipe that's easy and quick, see me and I can help you out with that. Remember that kids love to help out in the kitchen, especially when they can be quality control testers!

ASSOCIATE PASTOR SEARCH UPDATE

On August 21, at our Congregational Meeting, we voted to move forward with a search process to call a new associate pastor for faith formation and outreach. The diaconate was asked to nominate a search committee. This committee consists of six members: Cindy Sweeney (co-chair), Ruth Carney (co-chair), Noah Cichowlas (chaplain), Victoria Sorensen (recording secretary), Jeff Stewart-Morales (corresponding secretary), and Chris Leigh-Manuell (hospitality). The committee is meeting twice a month

this fall to prepare our church profiles, and hopes to be interviewing candidates soon thereafter.

On Sunday, November 4, during our Congregational Meeting, the committee will invite input for preparing the church profile.

BEAUTIFYING OUR CAMPUS

Sunday, November 25 after church

Come work off your Thanksgiving Dinner with a few hours of yard work and/or indoor cleaning! We will spruce up our campus, indoors and out, and then we will celebrate with pizza!

WIDER MISSION NEWS AND EVENTS

Seeds of Grace Grants Awarded in 2018!

The Board of Wider Mission is thrilled to announce that we have awarded grants totaling \$39,900.00 from our new Seeds of Grace grant program. Grants went to the following organizations:

- A Place to Turn to purchase “Good and Cheap” cookbooks designed to help people with low incomes make healthy, affordable meals;
- African Community Education Program which matches immigrant youth with mentors in Worcester;
- Greater Framingham Community Church in Framingham for their MLK Empowering Youth Conference and Vacation Bible School;
- Just Peace Players for printing plays and traveling to special events;
- Metrowest Free Medical Program which provides free medical care in our community;
- Metrowest Workers Center (Casa), which empowers and supports local immigrants;
- Open Spirit, our own multi-faith outreach program; and
- Worcester Fellowship, which provides spiritual support and care, hot food, socks, and underwear to homeless people.

This is the first year of our grant program. We are pleased that so many organizations applied and sad that we couldn't fund them all. Each project has direct connections with members of Edwards Church and offers opportunities for all church members to participate in their ministries!

Contact our board to learn more, and remember to invite organizations you know and love to apply next spring!

Presents for Pathways

Wider Missions has once again decided to provide Christmas gifts to the residents of Pathways Family Shelter. We will be in contact with Pathways to find out what gifts would be most helpful.

The gift tags will include name, size, and color choices for your selection. This is a wonderful opportunity to help out Pathways and its residents and to strengthen our relationship with them.

Please select a tag from the Wider Missions bulletin board on Sunday, November 18 and 25. Purchase your gift and return it to the Narthex ON OR BEFORE Sunday, December 9. Please DO NOT WRAP the gifts. But Pathways would greatly appreciate gift boxes and spare wrapping paper.

Gifts that Give: A Holiday Fair Of Hope

Saturday, December 8, 1:00-4:00pm

Wondering what to get for your Aunt Flora who has everything? Tired of buying gifts that don't seem to mean anything? Want to make a positive difference in the world? Want to give gifts that bring joy? Then come to the Gifts that Give Holiday Fair.

You will be able to purchase gifts that help make the world a better place: a blanket for Church World Service; fair trade chocolate and coffee; handicrafts from artists around the world; bees for Heifer Project; scarves to support A Place to Turn; homemade cards to support a local LGBTQ group; and more...

Please be sure to join us for all or part of the afternoon!

KERMIT'S KORNER

A “Taste Of Compassion” For The Holidays A Vegan Luncheon and Recipe Sharing

Sat., Nov. 10, 1:00-2:00pm in Sue Dickerman Hall

Save the planet—eat more plants! With the growing awareness of the value of plant-based eating, we invite you to taste an exciting array of creative and delicious vegan dishes. Perhaps your holiday table needs some fresh ideas—come talk to the chefs and add some new recipes to your repertoire. Share what we already have or bring a dish if you are inspired! Gluten-free options will be available.

To volunteer to help with set-up or clean-up, or bring a vegan dish to share, please contact Mary Memmott (memmottm@gmail.com). This event is co-sponsored by our Green Team, Open Spirit, and Transition Framingham. Suggested donation of \$5.

Mary Memmott for the Green Team

OUR LITTLE WOODEN BANKS

We had four donations in October for \$26.62, giving us a total now of \$1173.96 in our Wooden Banks Fund. This fund is used for needs of our church which are not included in our annual budget. Please share with me or Fran Bogle any ideas you may have for putting this money to good use. See me if you would like to have one of our new little church banks. Contributions may be placed in the model wooden church on the table in the hallway between the sanctuary and the Susan Dickerman Hall. Many thanks to our very faithful contributors. Say a little prayer with each penny you add to your bank. Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

God bless you all, Norma Hart

COMMUNITY OF SAINT LUKE MISTLETOE MARKET

Sat., Nov. 17, 11:00am-3:00pm in Edwards Hall

This Community of Saint Luke fundraiser supports many activities with the poor and needy, those who are homeless, and immigrants; as well as our outreach to other communities with scripture reflections and interfaith work.

Join us for this very special event, featuring home product companies, Pure Haven, Tupperware, Party Lite, LulaRoe, Windy Vine, Usborne Books, Caroline Crafts Made with Love; plus a variety of other arts and crafts. Online shopping is available; if you can't come but would like to shop, please email Father Don Pachuta (frdon@stlukema.com).

DECEMBER STEEPLE

Articles for the December *Steeple* are due on Wednesday, November 21. The mailing will be held on November 28 at 10:30am in Jonathan House.

COMING UP THIS MONTH AT OPEN SPIRIT

Stories of Passion & Compassion Sylvia Ruth Gutmann

Sunday, November 4 at 3:00pm in Edwards Hall

As part of our speaker series Inspiring Courage: Stories of Passion and Compassion, Sylvia will share her courageous story of overcoming the tragedy of her childhood and finding an identity that was lost, leading to a life of advocacy and educating. Sylvia will also discuss her book, *A Life Rebuilt: The Remarkable Transformation of a War Orphan*. The discussion will be followed by a book signing. Suggested donation of \$15.

Earth Etudes for Elul

Spiritual Reflections for the Season

Sunday, November 18 at 3:00pm in Edwards Hall

Join Rabbi Katy Allen for a celebration of her newly published book, *Earth Etudes for Elul: Spiritual Reflections for the Season*, a series of reflections on personal change in relation to the Earth by a variety of writers. Several contributors to the book will be on hand to share their "etudes" as a stimulus to discussion about what it takes to return to G'd and to our best selves in a time of climate disruption.

Edwards Church UCC
39 Edwards St
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A Celebration of Music at Edwards Church

*Saturday, November 3 at 6:00pm
Reception to follow*

Join us for an exciting night of music

as we celebrate the restoration of our historic organ!

Featuring Cheryl Elkins, Susan Minor, On the Fence,
the Ballad Project, and the Edwards Church Choir