



EDWARDS CHURCH
An Open and Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ
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Pastor: Rev. Dr. Deborah Clark
Ministers: All the People of Edwards Church

THE STEEPLE

March 2019

No. 3

Dear Friends,

We live in a culture that increasingly separates people by age groups. Children (and adults) play sports with others in their own age group. Senior housing, while offering many benefits, can isolate older adults from other groups. As our society becomes more mobile, many grandparents find themselves far away from their grandchildren. We label the generations—Silents, Greatest, Boomers, Gen X, Gen Y, Millennials—and stereotype each other based on arbitrary age cut-offs.

In this context, churches, synagogues, mosques and temples play a unique role as intergenerational communities. At our best, we break down divisions, building relationships across generations, enabling connections between children, youth and adults of all ages. When we resist the societal inclination to separate generations, we discover the richness of gifts people of every age have to offer. We become surrogate grandparents and grandchildren, aunts and uncles and nieces and nephews to each other. We send each other cards and draw each other pictures. We tell stories and learn from each other.

This year, during Lent, we will honor the unique role our church is called to play as an intergenerational community. Our theme for the season is “Connecting Generations: Nurturing a Spirituality of Intergenerational Relationships.” We will celebrate the promises we make in our baptism and blessing ceremonies, to nurture one another on our faith journeys. We will experiment with “pew partners”—friends from different generations who sit together in church. We will tell stories in our daily devotional of intergenerational friendships. We will explore new ways to worship

together, reflecting on shared experiences such as sports, music and baking that give fresh insight into our faith. We will do an intergenerational mission project, putting together backpacks for Syrians who are refugees in their own country. We will even hold a trivia contest!

Through all these special opportunities, I invite you to reflect on the intergenerational relationships in your life. When you were a child, what adult took time to talk with you in coffee hour? Did you have a mentor as a teenager? Is there a wise elder who inspires you? What special connections do you have with children or youth, young adults or seniors?

I look forward to this creative opportunity to connect across generations!

Peace, Debbie

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL 2019

Connecting Generations: Nurturing a Spirituality of Intergenerational Relationships

Throughout the season of Lent, we will offer a daily devotional, through email, Facebook, our website and in print (copies will be available for pick-up each Sunday).

We need your creativity to make this happen! Please consider submitting a reflection in the form of a prayer, poem, paragraph, photograph, art work, or something we have not yet imagined. You might send a photo or drawing of people from different generations working or playing together. You might write a paragraph about a relationship or interaction with someone younger or older than you. The possibilities are endless!

Sign up in church or by contacting Debbie.

MARCH WORSHIP

Sunday, March 3 *Holy Communion; Transfiguration*

Sunday: Luke 9:28-43

We will welcome Fran Graveson to our pulpit. Fran is pastoral intern at Open Spirit this year, where she has focused on building our Multi-Faith Collaborative project.

Wednesday, March 6 *Ash Wednesday*

11:00am: Join us in the sanctuary for a simple, reflective service as we enter into the season of Lent. Followed by a simple, joyous soup lunch in Susan P. Dickerman Hall.

7:00 pm: Our confirmands and mentors will share in leading an evening Ash Wednesday service at Plymouth Church, involving prayer stations.

Sunday, March 10 *First Sunday in Lent;*

Intergenerational Worship: Ephesians 4:1-5

We will commission our Lenten “pew partners” as we honor the promises we make to one another in our baptism and blessing ceremonies. This intergenerational service will include lots of participation from our children and youth, and a reaffirmation of our baptisms.

Sunday, March 17 *Second Sunday in Lent*

Hebrews 12:1-2

10:00am: We will share stories of children, youth and adults who play and coach sports, and reflect on the spiritual wisdom that emerges.

5:30pm: Our Seeds of Grace service will honor the legacy of St. Patrick.

Sunday, March 24 *Third Sunday in Lent*

We welcome Lino Covarrubias, chief operating officer of Jewish Family Service, who will reflect on our partnership supporting refugees.

Sunday, March 31 *Fourth Sunday in Lent:* Psalm 92

We will share stories of children, youth and adults who love music, and highlight the spiritual wisdom that emerges. Following worship, we will fill backpacks for Syrian refugees in intergenerational teams!

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, March 2, from 8:00–10:00am in Sue Dickerman Hall.

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER

Tuesday, March 5, 5:30-7:00pm in Edwards Hall

Please join us for an all-you-can-eat pancake supper for all ages! Bring your favorite fruit topping, bacon, or sausage to share. We hope to see you there!

INTERGENERATIONAL MISSION PROJECT

Backpacks for Syrian Refugees

On Sunday, March 31, we will participate in an intergenerational, interfaith mission project. During the month of March, you are invited to take a tag from our mission board and bring in requested school supplies. On March 31 during coffee hour, we will form intergenerational teams to pack the supplies into backpacks. The backpacks will go to Syrian refugees who are displaced in their own nation.

This project is sponsored by Jewish Family Service and the Multi-Faith Alliance, which is filling a larger container to be shipped to Syria.

INTERGENERATIONAL TRIVIA GAME

Saturday, April 6 at 3:00pm

Rick Seaholm, our commissioned minister of music and trivia specialist, will host our game, which will feature intergenerational teams competing for a grand prize! Rick is preparing questions that will draw upon the wisdom of people from every age group—so your team needs you! Watch for a sign-up sheet and start studying!

BIBLE STUDY

The Wednesday evening Bible Study will meet on March 13 and 27 to continue our study of the Gospel According to Luke. We will gather at 4:45pm for a light supper, and at 5:15 for study. All are welcome!

STEEPLE INFORMATION

Steeple articles are due by 9:00am on Wednesday, March 20. Please email them to nicola@edwardschurch.org. The *Steeple* will be mailed on Wednesday, March 27 at 10:30am in the church office.

CHANCEL COMMITTEE

Place your order on Sundays March 3 and March 11
There will be a sign-up sheet for Easter flowers on the glass case on the way to coffee hour. You can order Easter lilies, daffodils, hyacinths, or tulips at \$7.00 per plant. You can dedicate them in honor or in memory of someone. The flowers will be displayed on Easter Sunday April 19.

Cindy Booth for the Chancel Committee

FROM THE CHOIR DIRECTOR

As we begin to observe Lent with our focus on relationships across the generations, the choir will do its part with our anthems in March. We'll first hear an adaptation of the song we all learned as children, "Yes, My Jesus Loves Me" and complement that two weeks later with the immensely popular "You Raise Me Up" (which celebrates the reliance on God as parent with imagery evocative of an earthly parent-child relationship) in a new setting which juxtaposes it with the familiar Finlandia tune "Be Still My Soul". In between those weeks we'll pause from the theme for the traditional Gaelic Blessing on St. Patrick's Day. And we'll return to the generations focus in early April!

Rick Seaholm, Commissioned Minister of Music

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

Sunday, March 31

The Board of Wider Mission will be taking a special collection for One Great Hour of Sharing. When you participate in the offering you become a partner in the refugee, disaster relief, and community development efforts of the United Church of Christ. Envelopes will be included in the March 31 bulletin and checks can be written out to Edwards Church, with OGHS in the memo line. Please give generously as you are able, and thank you in advance for your donations.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CORNER

The coming month is packed full of fun and interesting intergenerational activities as we celebrate our theme for Lent of Connecting Generations: Nurturing a Spirituality of Intergenerational Relationships. To kick things off, we have the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper, and two Ash Wednesday services. The 7:00pm Ash Wednesday service at Plymouth Church will be led by our confirmands.

We will be experimenting with a new idea this year called Pew Partners. These partners will be a pair of church members, a young child and an adult mentor who will sit together during worship. Pew Partners will learn and teach about church, about what happens in worship, and hopefully they will become "church buddies," as a way of building strong church community relationships.

Other exciting things that are coming up during Lent are youth co-liturgists and rearranging our worship program so that children can be

present for the anthem. It promises to be a great way to experiment with our commitment to inclusion for all, no matter young or old, no matter where you are on your faith journey.

Blessings,

Dawn Sorensen, Interim Director of CE

KERMIT'S KORNER

Here are some things you can do to go "green" as winter turns to spring...

- Check out the Framingham Seed Library (at both Framingham library branches) and pick out free seeds to start for your own garden or even just a window box. The Seed Libraries open Saturday, March 2.
- Sign up for compost pick-up for your household. Black Earth Compost is now offering weekly compost pick-up in Framingham for a reasonable fee. Contact the church office for more information.
- Or join the Edwards Church Green Team! Our next meeting is Monday, March 25 at 7:30pm. Help our own congregation lower its carbon footprint and raise awareness for creation care. Email memmottm@gmail.com for details.

Mary Memmott for the Green Team

FAMILY HOMELESSNESS ANNUAL FORUM

Sunday, March 24 at 2:00pm

Trinitarian Congregational Church in Concord

Join the Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness for their fourteenth annual forum. In Massachusetts, 200,000 families spend more than 50% of their income on housing. One event can propel them on a course toward eviction. Come hear stories of three mothers who experienced homelessness with their families. Reverend June Cooper from City Mission-Boston and Kelly Turley, associate director of Mass Coalition for the Homeless, will lead the charge. Our legislators will be there to hear us. The forum is free of charge. Learn more at endfamilyhomelessness.net.

LITTLE WOODEN BANKS

Three additional expenditures, not previously reported, were paid from the Wooden Banks Fund in 2018. In June \$61.68 was paid toward the Brazilian special luncheon. \$374.46 was paid in August toward our new bike rack, and in November \$117.75 was paid toward our Greek luncheon. With these adjustments plus \$10.65 from two donations made in

February, our total now in the fund is \$673.98. As you know this fund will be used for needs of our church which are not included in our annual budget. 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 faithful contributors! Say a little prayer with each penny you add to your bank.

God bless you all, Norma Hart

OPEN SPIRIT HIGHLIGHTS

Inspiring Courage:

Stories of Passion and Compassion

Rashin Fahandej, Artist and Film Maker

Sunday, March 3 at 3:00pm in Edwards Hall

Join us for an afternoon of art and discussion, the second in our Multi-Faith Collaborative's Inspiring Courage series. Rashin Fahandej is a member of the Baha'i community in Framingham, an immigrant from Iran, and an artist and film maker. Her work centers on personal histories, marginalized voices, and the role of media, technology and public collaboration in generating social change. *A Father's Lullaby* considers the absence of fathers in communities of color as a direct result of mass incarceration, its life-long impact on children, and its weight on women and lower-income families.

The Interfaith Lord's Prayer Experience

Sunday, March 31 at 5:00pm

Each Sunday in worship, we join together in the prayer Jesus taught his disciples, commonly called the Lord's Prayer. It has become a Christian prayer; in its original context, it was a Jewish prayer, taught by a rabbi (Jesus) who was steeped in the prayer traditions of his faith community.

Yosef Kottler, a member of Congregation Beth El in Sudbury, has researched the roots of this prayer, drawing upon ancient manuscripts of Matthew's gospel which were written in Hebrew. He has created a joyous, meditative musical experience based on the words of this ancient prayer. His goal is to build connections between Jewish and Christian communities as we honor the shared roots of this prayer.

Yosef and his team are bringing The Interfaith Lord's Prayer Experience to Open Spirit on Sunday, March 31 at 5 pm. If you would like to sing in the

choir, please speak with Debbie. Everyone is encouraged to come and share in this moving experience of a familiar, holy prayer.

Framingham Community Farm Update

Though winter still holds a firm grasp here in Metrowest, planning is underway for the Framingham Community Farm 2019 growing season here on the Edward Church campus. We continue the effort to reduce food insecurity in our community by donating all produce from the gardens to support A Place To Turn in Natick. We hope for an abundant crop of peas, beans, butternut squash, chard, lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, and zucchini! Seeds for the full season have been donated through a program of the University of Rhode Island extension service, and some have already been planted! We eagerly await the warmer weather to ready the beds for the new season. Look for information about regular volunteer hours and activities to kick off the 2019 season in upcoming newsletters. For more information, you can always reach us at FraminghamCommunityFarm@gmail.com.

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Ash Wednesday

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