



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

November 2019

No. 10

Dear friends,

A few weeks ago, in worship, Karen Nell told our young people the story of Jesus changing water into wine. One girl asked, "Was it magic?"

"No," Karen Nell replied. "It's not magic. It's a miracle—God working through Jesus with the power of love."

And then she turned their attention from the biblical story to the wagonload of diapers in the back of the sanctuary. As the kids brought the diapers up front to dedicate them for A Place to Turn, Karen Nell named the overflowing wagon as a miracle: "This is a miracle of God working through us with the power of love." I love that definition of miracle.

This fall, our Stewardship Team is Paul Blow, Peggy Harrison, and Norma Hart. As we talked at our first meeting about what our church means to us and why we give, some words kept emerging: miracle, commitment, hope. We selected our theme, *Committing to Hope: The Miracle of Giving*.

The theme reflects our sense of awe at the generosity of our congregation. There is so much in our world that tears people apart, so much that can prompt us to withdraw in fear, so much that can lead to despair. For me, it feels like a miracle every time we gather on Sunday morning to sing and pray and speak words of hope. It feels like a miracle that we each give of our time, talent and treasure and trust one another to do the same. It is certainly a miracle that this relatively small church can offer so much to enrich the wider community. It is God working through us with the power of love.

Our theme also acknowledges the hard work that is involved in this miracle of giving. We tend to think of hope as a feeling, but it is so much more. It is a choice--a choice to look for signs of hope when they

may be hidden beneath layers of despair. It is a choice to act in hope even when we don't feel hopeful. It is a choice to become hope for one another, to be a community that holds hope for those who cannot find it.

Hope is a choice. It is also a practice. The more we practice looking for hope, the better we become at finding it. The more we practice acting in hope, the more natural it will feel. When we commit to that practice, our lives are enriched and we become part of the miracle of giving.

During the month of November, we will reflect on this theme, *Committing to Hope: The Miracle of Giving*, in a variety of ways. On Nov. 3, our Stewardship Team will lead a conversation and offer a slide show at our Congregational Meeting. On November 10 and 17, our worship services will center on our theme, with testimonies from Matt Walker and Clair Ball. You will receive a mailing with inspiration, information, and a pledge card. We invite you to mail or bring the pledge card in time for our Dedication Sunday, on November 24.

We hope you will be part of the Miracle of Giving which is our church.

Peace,
Debbie

QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, November 3 at 11:30am

We will gather during coffee hour 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.

NOVEMBER WORSHIP

NOVEMBER 3, 10:00am,

Intergenerational Communion Sunday; All Saints Day!

We will gather as an intergenerational community to honor the saints of our church and our lives. We will give thanks for Dawn Sorensen, who has served as our interim director of Christian Education.

NOVEMBER 10, 10:00am

“Committing to Hope: The Miracle of Giving,” Part I; Karen Nell preaching. Matt Walker will offer a Stewardship Moment.

NOVEMBER 17, 10:00am

Reception of New Members

“Committing to Hope: The Miracle of Giving,” Part II; Debbie preaching. Clair Ball will offer a Stewardship Moment.

NOVEMBER 17, 5:30pm

Seeds of Grace Worship in Susan P. Dickerman Hall
Join us for soup at 5:00! “How do we give thanks?”

NOVEMBER 24, 10:00am

Thanksgiving Sunday; Dedication Sunday

NOVEMBER 26, 7:00pm

Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

This year our Interfaith, Intergenerational Thanksgiving Service will be held at First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church.

BIBLE STUDY

Our Wednesday evening Bible Study groups is continuing our study of the Acts of the Apostles. We will meet Wednesday, November 13 at 5:00 p.m. in the church office, with soup at 4:30. There will be no meeting on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving.

MEN'S GROUP

Saturday, November 2 at 8:00am

All men of the church (and your friends whatever their church background) are invited to gather for coffee and great conversation in Susan P. Dickerman Hall.

SEEDS OF GRACE WORSHIP

*Sunday, November 17 in Susan P. Dickerman Hall
5:00pm for a simple supper, 5:30pm for worship.*

Come join the Seeds of Grace worship team on an autumn evening for a warm meal, deep reflection and creative worship as we are spiritually fed through

song and prayer, sharing and silence. November's theme is “How do we give thanks?” We hope to see you there!

VETERANS APPRECIATION SUPPER

Sunday, November 10 at 5:00pm at Plymouth Church

Together with our friends at Plymouth Church, we are hosting a free supper for area veterans and their families. We need volunteers to help cook and set up (3:00-5:00 p.m.), greet and serve (5:00-7:00 p.m.), and clean up (7:00-8:30 p.m.). 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! (RSVP to 508-875-1364 by Monday, November 4.)

NEW PHOTO DIRECTORY

Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 4 and 5, 2:00-9:00pm

Do you ever look at someone in church and think, “I know I know that person, but I can't think of their name.” Imagine if you could sneak a peek on your phone (or a paper directory) and find the person's picture and remember their name! Soon you will be able to!

Lee Ann Friedman and Clair Ball are heading up an effort to create a paper and online photo directory (password protected). We are working with professional photographers from LifeTouch. You can sign up for a time slot, get your picture taken (with family members and pets too, if you like), and you will get a free 8x10 photo along with a free directory. You can choose to purchase more photos, but there will be no pressure to do so.

Sign up at edwardschurch.org or in church this Sunday so you can be included! The more people who participate, the more helpful our directory will be, and the more able we will be to build connection and community!

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Sunday, November 17 during worship

During our worship service on November 17, we will joyously receive new members. If you are interested in joining Edwards Church, please speak with Debbie.

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. Please DO NOT WRAP the gifts. But Pathways would greatly appreciate gift boxes and spare wrapping paper.

FROM THE ASSOCIATE PASTOR

“Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” –2 Corinthians 9:7

Dear friends,

There is an old folk tale about sharing, the story of “stone soup.” Three strangers enter a town where the towns folk are hungry and afraid, everyone keeping to themselves. The strangers set up a big pot in the town square, fill it with water and throw in three stones. Then they invite the hungry, frightened people to share what they have...a potato, some old onions, a carrot or two. Everyone brings something to share. Everyone gives of themselves and, as the smell of a wonderful soup begins to fill the air, everyone gets served. In other words, they serve *each other*. Everyone gives and everyone gets, and there’s more than enough for everyone.

We know this concept well in the church. The whole notion of the ‘stone soup’ and potluck suppers is almost synonymous with church, isn’t it? I looked up the history of potluck. The term started in the Middle Ages to describe an impromptu meal served to unexpected guests or travelers. Those who arrived unexpectedly for dinner would get “the luck of the pot,” that is, whatever food was left over or kept on the fire. And sometimes a potluck referred to a one-pot communal meal in which every cook brought something to add... just like in the story of “stone soup.” But it wasn’t until the depression here in America that the idea of a meal where everyone brings a prepared dish to share took hold.*

This November in our stewardship season, a big glass jar will appear in our chancel for the kids to learn more about the journey of faith through giving. We’ll be learning through doing that coming to church is about God’s love and that we are to share that love with others...an object lesson taught through the feeling the coins in their hands, the

sound of pennies dropping into a big glass jar, the spiritual discipline of doing this every time you come to church. We see the jar fill up week after week, and learn that if everyone shares, there’s more in the jar than any one of us could give alone. Everyone gives, everyone gets, and we have more than enough to serve others in Jesus’ name.

And *everyone* is invited to contribute to the big glass jar. When it’s your birthday, please come up and share the number of pennies that match your age, honoring the measure of your days and joining the children in celebrating your birthday with a gift that will touch other’s lives!

See you on Sunday,
Karen Nell

*<http://www.foodservicenews.net/November-2015/Culinary-Curiosities-Whats-the-History-of-the-Potluck/>

FROM THE CHOIR DIRECTOR

So Many Blessings!

When I selected the anthems for November, I decided that I would go with recent favorites, given October had its share of unfamiliar pieces. And I was surprised by what I found: our three stewardship anthems include the word “blessings” in the title. How appropriate for our congregation! As we focus on the gifts we offer Edwards Church as part of our stewardship campaign, I can’t help but think about the blessings of music. I’m so grateful for our accompanists, our bluegrass band, and other willing instrumentalists. And our choir can’t be forgotten in that list. This group of volunteers amazes me on a weekly basis with its generosity of time and talent. As we listen to “Blessings,” “Blessings Abound,” and “Bountiful Blessings” what blessings of Edwards Church will be on your mind?

Rick Seaholm,
Commissioned Minister of Music

GIFTS THAT GIVE HOLIDAY FAIR

Saturday, December 7, 1:00-4:00pm in Edwards Hall

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; and scarves to support A Place to Turn.

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

THIRD ANNUAL SINGING IN SOLIDARITY WITH OUR IMMIGRANT NEIGHBORS

Sunday, November 17 at 4:00pm

Edwards Church's Board of Wider Mission 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.

KERMIT'S KORNER

Could You Be a "Compost Captain"?

Many churches list lay readers, ushers, altar servers, organists, etc. in their weekly bulletin. Edwards is the only church I know that also lists a "compost captain."

What is a compost captain? The compost captain is someone who wants to keep waste out of landfills by doing one simple job—helping to educate folks at coffee hour about what can go in the compost (food waste, paper napkins, compostable cups and bowls, paper—just no plastic), and then taking out the bag of compost at the end of coffee hour (or close to the end), and putting in a new green compostable bag.

The compost goes into one of the Black Earth Compost waste bins by the church office building (next to the dumpster). And that's it—couldn't be easier!

Someday in the near future the Green Team would love to see our campus go waste-free—and that big dumpster could go away. Is that possible? Absolutely. The trick is to be more mindful of what products we bring in and consider what we will do with the waste.

In the meantime at least our compostable waste can stay out of the dumpster so it can be made into compost for our gardens. This is a win for everyone, and the planting beds especially. All Black Earth Compost customers get a coupon for a free bag of organic compost in the spring—our tea bags and coffee grounds become actual fertilizer for the garden that we can use.

If you would like to sign up to be the compost captain, for a month or a week at a time, please contact Mary Memmott at memmottm@gmail.com or call

508-788-1286. The month of December is still open—you could see your name in the bulletin and know that you are making a difference!

OUR LITTLE WOODEN BANKS

In October we had two donations to our fund for a total of \$15.00. I will report any expenditures to you. This fund is 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. Many thanks to our faithful contributors! Say a little prayer with each penny you add to your bank.

God bless you all, Norma Hart

CHRISTMAS WREATH SALE

Help us raise funds to support youth ministries here at Edwards Church. You can purchase a twelve-inch wreath with a classic red or cranberry bow. Consider spreading the holiday cheer and order an extra wreath for your friends! We will take orders during coffee hour on November 17, 24, and December 1. Pick up your wreath following worship on December 8. The donation per wreath is TBD.

COMING UP AT OPEN SPIRIT

Repairing the World

A Conversation with Tom Krattenmaker

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

One of the "walls" in our culture today is suspicion between people who identify as religious and those who name themselves as spiritual but not religious, or secular humanist, or atheist. Join us as we hear from Tom Krattenmaker, secular humanist and *USA Today* contributing columnist, who is author of *Confessions of a Secular Jesus Follower: Finding Answers in Jesus for Those Who Don't Believe*. He will share with us the common ground he shares with "horizontal" aspects of religion. This is the first in the Multi-Faith Collaborative Speaker Series, "Repairing the World: A Series of Open-Spirited Conversations." Suggested donation of \$15.

Trauma-Sensitive Yoga for Women

November 6, 13, 20 at 11:30am in Edwards Hall

This healing Trauma Center Trauma-Sensitive Yoga (TCTSY) class series is for any woman who has experienced trauma, PTSD symptoms, or grief. These classes are a way for us to safely experiment with breathing, moving, strengthening, stretching, and resting. Students may opt in or out of any portion of the class at any time. There will be no physical hands-on adjustments. TCTSY complements and supports a

person's work in therapy. Participants will not have to talk to other participants, making this class more comfortable for those individuals who find it difficult to be in groups. No yoga experience necessary. This gentle yoga class is accessible to any woman regardless of physical ability and can be done from a chair. Please arrive ten minutes early, wear comfortable clothes and bring a water bottle. Led by Sue Stevens, E-RYT 500, TCTSY-F, YACEP. For more information or to register, please visit openspiritcenter.org. Cost: \$40 for 3 week session / \$15 drop-in.

Yoga for Grief

Help to Manage Your Grief During the Holidays

Sunday, November 17 at 3:00pm in Edwards Hall

Yoga for Grief offers a safe place for those who have experienced the loss of a loved one. This workshop gives participants the opportunity to feel relief from grief symptoms and to sense some peace through the practice of yoga. This trauma informed workshop is for anyone grieving the loss of a loved one; no matter how long it's been, your heart may still be grieving. Participants will gently be introduced to the basics of mindful yoga, including stretching, breathing, relaxation, and optional sharing. You will learn helpful techniques and tools to bring home with you to help manage your grief during the holidays and throughout the new year. This gentle yoga will accommodate any fitness level and can be done on a yoga mat or sitting in a chair. Wear comfortable clothes and bring a water bottle. Please bring a picture of your loved one if you would like to share with the group. For more information or to register, please visit openspiritcenter.org. Led by Sue Stevens, E-RYT 500, TCTSY-F, YACEP. Cost: \$40 (Scholarships are available).

Journey of the Spirit

Sunday, December 1 at 2:00pm at Fatima Shrine

Join us as we continue our journey of discovery to gain greater understanding and appreciation of faith and traditions of our neighbors, deepen relationships among fellow travelers, and strengthen our shared commitment to this community. Our Lady of Fatima Shrine is located at 101 Summer Street in Holliston.

Please register by November 25. To register or for more information, please contact Karen Nell Smith at choresis@comcast.net. Suggested donation of \$15.

Interfaith Multi-Narrative Listening Tour to Israel/Palestine

July, 2020, Register by December, 2019

Travel with a group of Jews, Christians and Muslims on an eight-day journey to the Holy Land and its people that will engage your mind, body and spirit. At the heart of this trip is listening with an open heart and mind to the life stories representing many different perspectives and experiences, lead by Israeli and Palestinian Mejdi Tour™ guides who will model respectful dialogue and disagreement as they offer their respective points of view. Visit openspiritcenter.org/interfaith-multinarrative-tour for more information.

Edwards Church UCC
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Quarterly Congregational Meeting

*Sunday November 3 at 11:30am
in Susan P. Dickerman Hall*

The Stewardship Team will present on the theme
Committing to Hope: The Miracle of Giving