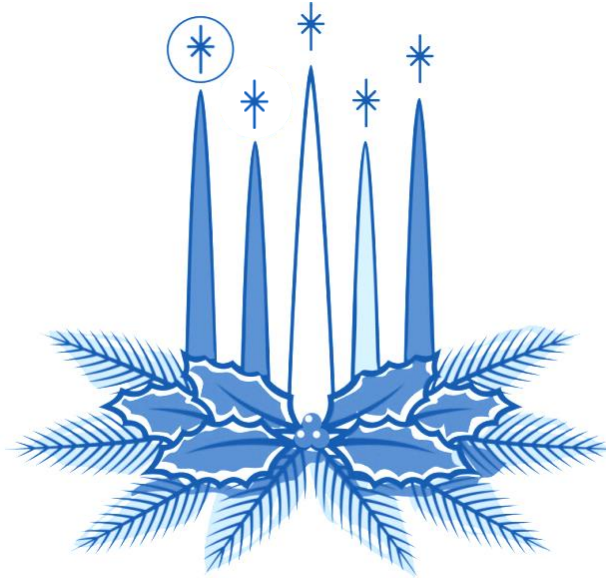


EDWARDS CHURCH

A UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION



In the name of God and Jesus Christ, Edwards Church, a congregation of the United Church of Christ, welcomes all who seek to know and worship God. We invite everyone to join in our faith journey and participate in our congregational life.

As a community of faith we take seriously the Biblical call to love God and our neighbors as ourselves, and recognize that although we are many members we are one. We celebrate the uniqueness of everyone. We rejoice in our diversity of views and understanding of our shared faith. We commit ourselves to work diligently to help end oppression and discrimination. We affirm all relationships founded on the principle of God's love and justice.

We declare ourselves to be an Open and Affirming congregation.

Seeking to be the Body of Christ, we welcome into full fellowship and membership all persons of every race, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical or cognitive ability, and economic status.

39 Edwards Street
Framingham, MA 01701
508-877-2050
edwardschurch.org

A thought for reflection

“Peace is not something you must hope for in the future.

Rather, it is a deepening of the present, and unless you look for it in the present you will never find it.”

—Thomas Merton

*GOD GATHERS US***PRELUDE****GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS****PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

(We invite you to turn to your neighbors and greet them.)

* **HYMN OF PRAISE** “LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, O MIGHTY GATES”

NCH 117

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Wake Up!

People: **God’s time is approaching.**

Leader: Keep awake!

People: **God comes at unexpected hours.**

Leader: Be always ready!

People: **God comes to unexpected places.**

Leader: Keep awake, be always ready!

People: **We will keep awake and be always ready for God to come.**

PRAYER OF INVOCATION AND LORD’S PRAYER

(Please pray using the words you find most meaningful. You may also use the prayer card in your pew rack.)

* **SENTENCES OF PRAISE** *(Please stand for the Sentences of Praise and Gloria.)*

Leader: All praise be to you, O God.

People: **We sing praise to the source of our hope and our redemption.**

* **GLORIA** *(Sing twice.)*

NCH 756

Glory to God, glory to God, glory in the highest!

Glory to God, glory to God, alleluia, alleluia!

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Surprising God, we confess that we walk around half asleep. We are not ready for you to come into our lives. We are too busy focusing on society’s rules to focus on your word. We have not fully learned your ways and we often fail to walk in your paths. Forgive us. Wake us up, God, and keep us alert. Help us see the ways you come into our lives so we can share your love with all those in need. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GOD’S FORGIVENESS**RESPONSE**

FROM NCH 122

Come, O long-expected Jesus, born to set all people free;

From our fears and sins release us; grant us your true liberty.

* *Stand as you are able.*

GOD MEETS US IN THE WORD

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

THE GREEN TEAM

“ADVENT INCANTATION”

SINGING THE SEASON, **C-2**

Leader: Hope is an easy word to say. How’re we gonna make it real?

People: We pray for vision to see hope hidden beneath despair.

Leader: We pray for faith in the promise of hope when we cannot see it.

People: We pray for courage to act in hope.

Leader: As we light the candle of hope, we commit ourselves to making hope real in our world.

THE HEBREW BIBLE LESSON

DANIEL 7:1-14

(Pew Bible p. 724)

THE ANTHEM

“O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL”

DAVID SCHWOEBEL

THE GOSPEL LESSON

LUKE 21:25-36

(Pew Bible p. 856)

SERMON

“STAND UP! RAISE YOUR HEADS!”

REV. DR. DEBORAH CLARK

CALL TO PRAYER

CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS

SILENT PRAYER

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING, INTERCESSION AND PETITION

GOD CALLS FOR OUR GIFTS

OUR OFFERING TO GOD

OFFERTORY

* DOXOLOGY

(Lasst uns erfreuen)

NCH 17

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below; Alleluia, Alleluia.

Praise God for all that love has done; Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

GOD CALLS US TO THE TABLE

THE LORD’S SUPPER

HYMN OF COMMUNION

“LET ALL MORTAL FLESH KEEP SILENCE”

NCH 345

THE INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

THE GIVING OF THE BREAD AND THE CUP AT THE TABLE

THE THANKSGIVING

(in unison)

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

GOD SENDS US INTO THE WORLD

* **HYMN OF DEDICATION** “KEEP AWAKE, BE ALWAYS READY”

NCH 112

* **CHARGE & BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE *(Please feel free to remain and listen, or to greet one another in the narthex and at coffee hour.)*

OUR WORSHIP HAS ENDED...

LET OUR SERVICE BEGIN!

MINISTERS

PASTOR

COMMISSIONED MINISTER OF MUSIC

INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

ORGANIST

PIANIST

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

SEXTON

LITURGIST

DEACON-IN-CHARGE

COMMUNION SERVERS

JANIS STEIGMAN OF MOTHER'S HELPERS IS IN CHARGE OF THE NURSERY THIS MORNING.

ALL THE PEOPLE OF EDWARDS CHURCH

THE REV. DR. DEBORAH CLARK

RICK SEAHOLM

DAWN SORENSEN

CHERYL ELKINS

SUSAN MINOR

NICOLA SEAHOLM

LORI WILSON

TERRI TAYLOR

SHELLY CICHOWLAS

CLAIR BALL & DAWN SORENSEN

Communion Note: You are invited to come to the communion table to partake of the Lord's Feast. Come forward row by row from the back to be served. Dip the bread in the **grape juice** in the chalice on your **left** or in the **wine** in the chalice on your **right**. Proceed back to your seats by the side aisles. If you prefer to be served at your seat, we will come to you.

The **Communion Offering** is used for confidential emergency needs. If you or someone you know has a need, bring this to the attention of the minister or a member of the Diaconate. The offering envelopes are in the pew racks. Put your name on the envelope for tax credit purposes. Please consider this offering thoughtfully.

Welcome Visitors! We are glad you are here. Please join us for coffee and fellowship, following the service. Sign our guestbook too! In the Education Building (out the side door follow hallway) are the restrooms and where coffee hour is held. The nursery and Sunday school classes are on the lower level. If you have questions, or suggestions, feel free to talk with the greeter or Deacon-in-Charge.

Accessibility



Large
Print

Available in the Narthex (front entrance hallway):

- Sound-enhancing assistive listening devices
- Large print edition of the church bulletin



- **Accessible parking** spots are marked and located near the Education Building entrance.
- **Accessible entrance** is located on the lower level of the Education Building (to the left of the Church main entrance).
- **Elevator** is located in the Education Building next to the stairs.
- **Accessible restroom** is located on the upper level of the Education Building.

This Week at Edwards Church

December 2-8

SUNDAY	9:00am	Adult Bible Study	Youth Room
	9:00am	Rental	Edwards Hall
	10:00am	Worship	Sanctuary
	10:00am	Sunday School	Education Building
	11:00am	Coffee Hour	Susan P. Dickerman Hall
	1:00pm	Rental	Sanctuary
MONDAY	9:30am	Chairobics	Susan P. Dickerman Hall
	6:15pm	Rental	Susan P. Dickerman Hall
	7:30pm	Rental	Edwards Hall Classroom
	7:30pm	Board of Trustees	Jonathan House
	7:30pm	Guided Meditation	Susan P. Dickerman Hall
TUESDAY	9:00am	Qi Gong / Tai Chi	Susan P. Dickerman Hall
	10:00am	Gentle Yoga	Edwards Hall
	1:00pm	Nursing Home Services	Heritage & Oak Knoll
	1:30pm	Rental	Susan P. Dickerman Hall
	5:00pm	Rental	Edwards Hall
	5:30pm	Hatha Yoga	Susan P. Dickerman Hall
WEDNESDAY	9:30am	Move with Ease	Edwards Hall
	9:30am	Chairobics	Susan P. Dickerman Hall
	12:00pm	Lunch Bunch	Susan P. Dickerman Hall
	1:15pm	Prayer Shawl Knitters	Edwards Hall
	6:00pm	Rental	Sanctuary
	6:00pm	Veterans Yoga	Edwards Hall
	7:15pm	Diaconate	Jonathan House
	7:30pm	Rental	Edwards Hall
THURSDAY	9:00am	Qi Gong / Tai Chi	Susan P. Dickerman Hall
	9:30am	Not-Your-Ordinary Yoga Class	Edwards Hall
	6:00pm	Kripalu Yoga	Edwards Hall
	6:00pm	Cancer Support Group	Youth Room
	6:30pm	Multi-Faith Collaborative	Jonathan House
	7:00pm	Board of Finance	Jonathan House
	7:15pm	Choir Rehearsal	Susan P. Dickerman Hall
	7:30pm	AA Meeting	Edwards Hall
FRIDAY	9:30am	Chairobics	Susan P. Dickerman Hall
	7:00pm	Rental	Edwards Hall Classrooms
SATURDAY	9:00am	Chair/Mat Yoga	Edwards Hall

1:00pm Gifts that Give FairEdwards Hall
4:30pm Rental Sanctuary

Important Announcements

Music Note

A perennial favorite in Protestant churches throughout the world, this morning's anthem is likely the oldest tune we hear at Edwards in any given year. Its origins date to fifteenth century France, and it has been in wide usage since then. The setting we sing this morning—one of hundreds in existence—was arranged by David Schwoebel in 1990.

Presents for Pathways

Select a tag today or December 9; Return your gift on or before Sunday, December 16

The Board of Wider Mission is sponsoring a Christmas gift drive for the residents of Pathways Family Shelter. To participate, please select a tag with size and color information from the bulletin board during coffee hour, and bring your gift to church by December 16. Please do not wrap the present; we do welcome donations of gift boxes and wrapping paper so parents can wrap the gifts for their children.

Gifts that Give: A Holiday Fair of Hope—With Santa on a Fire Truck!

Saturday, December 8, 1:00-4:00pm in Edwards Hall

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 can 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! Take a photo with Santa on an antique fire truck and buy some gourmet hot chocolate to support our youth trip!

Steeple Articles: Early Due Date this Month!

Thursday, December 13 at 9:00am; Send articles to nicola@edwardschurch.org

Articles for the January issue of the *Steeple* will be due early this month. This is so that we can have it printed well in advance of Christmas. There are so many wonderful events in our community during December and the church office is very busy. Nicola will be filled with the joy of Christmas if everyone could make an extra effort to be on time this month.

Seeds of Grace Advent Worship

Sunday, December 16 at 5:30pm in Susan P. Dickerman Hall

Join us for an informal, impromptu pageant led by Rev. Isaac Everett and members of the Seeds of Grace worship team.

Lunch Bunch Christmas Gathering

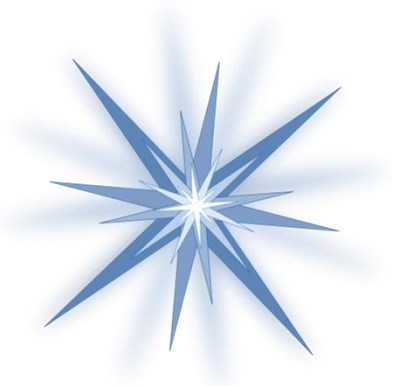
Wednesday, December 19 at noon in Edwards Hall

The Lunch Bunch invites you to a special Christmas luncheon, featuring turkey, stuffing, and all your favorite dishes. Fran and Debbie will provide turkey and stuffing; everyone is invited to bring a favorite holiday dish. Please sign up on the way to coffee hour or RSVP to the church office.

Steeple Mailing: Early this Month!

Thursday, December 20 at 10:30am in the church office

The December *Steeple* mailing will not take place on its usual day as the office will be closed. We will do the mailing one week early so that everyone can take a little break on the day after Christmas. If you are able to help out, please contact the office of speak to Jeannette Loughman or Norma Hart.



Coming up at Open Spirit

Candlelight Restorative Yoga: The Kiss of Peace

Sunday, December 9 from 4:30-6:00pm in Susan P. Dickerman Hall

Enjoy all the benefits of Restorative Yoga in a nurturing and soothing environment. Rest in comfortable, well-supported positions that gently and passively open the body. Elicit the relaxation response and release layers of physical and mental stress. In this grounding practice, our breath can flow more deeply and we can shift out of fight/flight mode. We will allow ourselves time to simply be, to heal, to renew. You will learn to listen more carefully to your inner voice. Led by Katherine McClean. Cost: \$25. Space is limited and **advance registration is required**. Visit openspiritcenter.org or contact the office by December 6 to reserve your spot!

Evening of Exploration under the Moon and Stars

Tuesday, December 11 at 5:30pm on the Carol Getchell Nature Trail

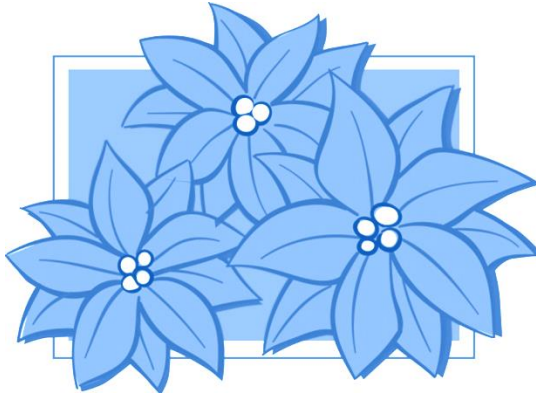
Bring a flashlight but be ready to turn it off! One Earth Collaborative and the Appalachian Mountain Club Outdoor Rx will be co-sponsoring an outdoor exploration of the nighttime sky. This walk, open to ages, takes the group alongside the Sudbury River, and may uncover stars you've never seen before! Rabbi Katy Allen and other leaders will ensure that walking conditions are safe. Meet in the cul-de-sac on Little Farms Road in Framingham.

Honoring the Dark; Trusting the Promise of Light

Friday, December 21 at 7:30pm in Susan P. Dickerman Hall

In this holiday season, it is easy to feel isolated, especially if you are grieving. Whatever is going on in your life, you may become overwhelmed with busyness and forget to honor the natural rhythms of your body and our earth. Join us on the longest night of the year for an hour of gentle yoga, deep relaxation, and guided meditation. We will draw inspiration from a variety of spiritual traditions as we honor the wide range of emotions that are stirred this time of year, and as we point to the promise of the return of light and hope. Debbie Clark will be the leader. There is no charge for this event; donations to support Open Spirit are appreciated.

Christmas Poinsettias



The Christmas season is upon us! It is our tradition to decorate the chancel with beautiful poinsettias. This year they will be displayed during worship on Sunday, December 23. You can help by ordering a poinsettia either in honor of someone special or in memory of a loved one who has passed.

I would like to order _____ [number] poinsettias.

Given by: _____

In memory

of: _____

("In memory of..." is to remember those who have gone before us.)

In honor

of: _____

("In honor of..." is to honor those still living.)

Date paid: _____

Amount

paid: _____ (\$6 per poinsettia)

Checks should be made payable to Edwards Church with a memo for "Poinsettias."