

THE SPIRE

EDWARDS CHURCH *of* NORTHAMPTON
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Vol. 27 No. 9 November 2017

Dear Edwards Church Community,

On October 25th, I attended the 1st anniversary party of the Northampton Recovery Center in the Edwards Room. For the last year, individuals currently in recovery from any form of addiction (mostly opioids or alcohol), with allies from the DA's office and other volunteers, have used our church for organizational meetings and recovery support gatherings. They have used the sanctuary for yoga, meditation and other practices that supplement and support familiar routes of recovery. It is one of many activities through which we live into our vision: "we call on all our talents to worship and serve. Encountering the world's joys and suffering, we offer ourselves as instruments of love and justice."

At the Recovery Center anniversary party, participants in its program shared testimony about the difference it makes in their lives and presented me with an engraved wooden plaque, made in the workshop at the Hampshire County jail by program participants. If you had been there, you would have been as moved as I was by their testimonies and gratitude. They can feel that the community is supporting their recovery, and that alone helps. On your behalf, *I thanked them* by saying, "As a church, we are in the transformation business, but you are doing the hard work of walking the talk of transformation. That makes a huge difference." As someone said at a recent gathering of the United Way, "It takes the whole valley to tackle our biggest challenges."

Thank you for giving me and each other the opportunity and the resources to do this work together. Stewardship raises the money, and you contribute. Trustees help maintain the building; we all use it and share it with our neighbors. Deacons, Faith Formation and Music make Sunday morning special, reconnecting us with the spiritual center of our lives and inspiring us to do so much together, for the church and the world.

The traditional American story of Thanksgiving has Native Americans coming to the aid of the Pilgrims during their first winter and saving them from starvation. Our history after that is still being rewritten to take into account how the Europeans prospered and at what cost to whom. I often think, as a person of white European ancestry, that there was a significant hidden cost to "us." My people (more or less) emerged "on top," but are now needing to relearn some ancient wisdom, wisdom that is both cross-cultural and essentially Christian, wisdom like the interdependence of all life and the importance of active compassion for the weak, the poor and all "others."

I do not suggest that those who are secure or successful, in conventional terms, need to feel guilty. But as we approach the season of Thanksgiving, I hope all will remember the source of our lives and good fortune. It is not just individual talent or hard work, which are necessary, but not sufficient. It also requires luck and a family, maybe a whole community of support, sharing its gifts, offering support, creating the conditions for our prospering. To whom do we owe the same? Who is our neighbor?

Grateful for all we are and do together,

Michael

Edwards Church is an Open and Affirming Congregation:

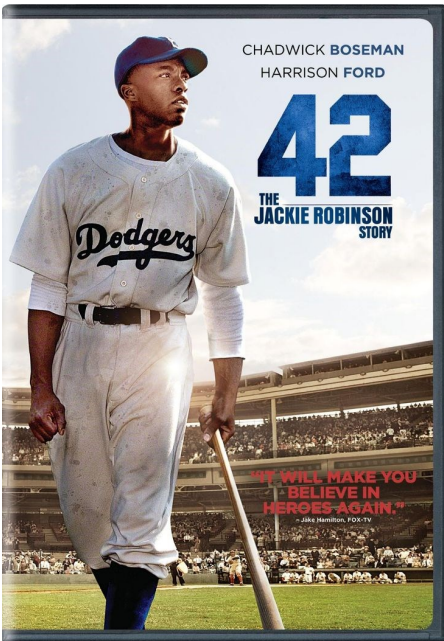
*We embrace Christ's command to love God with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves. Therefore, we welcome **everyone** regardless of ethnic background, economic circumstance, sexual orientation, family configuration, or difference in ability.*

All who seek the love of Christ are welcome to Edwards Church and to share fully in its life and ministry. In response to the Spirit of Christ in our midst, we glorify God and rejoice in the inherent worth, dignity, and gifts of every person as a child of God.

From the Minister of Faith Formation

Dear Beloved of God,

On Sunday, October 1 several participants in the White Privilege: Let's Talk curriculum (published by the United Church of Christ), shared testimonies regarding new insights they – along with others in group – gleaned as all grew in greater awareness of systemic racism and white privilege. An initial list of helpful resources was compiled and is published in this newsletter. In the section titled “video’s,” I would add a movie now playing in theaters: *Marshall*, which is about the late Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall.



Following worship on **Sunday, November 12**, members of our Youth Group invite you to join them in the Edwards Room for a showing of **42: The Jackie Robinson Story**. Produced in 2013, the movie is rated PG-13 and will provide for rich discussion at its conclusion. Pizza will be provided. Please let me know if you are interested in attending.

On **Saturday, November 18**, the Board of Faith Formation invites all to a storytelling event featuring **Valerie Tutson**. This event which will take place in the sanctuary from 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m., titled “**Celebrating All God’s Children**” is appropriate for all

ages and open to the public. Valerie is a very gifted and engaging storyteller who lives in Rhode Island and is a member of the United Church of Christ. Light refreshments will be served following her performance.



As it is never too early to begin preparing for the annual Christmas pageant, Dan and Michelle Prindle will lead members of the church school in learning and practicing a couple of musical selections. On October 29, November 12 & 19 they will join us in Addis Hall following the Chancel Step time. On November 5 there will be a music rehearsal after worship in the sanctuary. The pageant rehearsal will take place on December 16 at 9:00 a.m. in the sanctuary. Darleen Buttrick will again direct the pageant. Participant sign-ups will begin mid-November.

Wishing you all a blessed Thanksgiving with family and friends,

Deb

YOUTH GROUP

Edwards Church Youth Group's ministry is open to those in Grades 6 -12.

We generally meet on the second and fourth Sunday of the month from 11:30-1:00, with a few exceptions. Youth are always welcome to bring a friend!



November 12 – We will host the showing of 42:The Jackie Robinson Story beginning at 11:30.

November 26 – 11:30-1:00 meeting in the Edwards Room.

Mark this Date on your Calendar!!

Hot Chocolate Run/Walk - December 3!

Join Team Edwards in Safe Passage's Annual Run/Walk for Safe Passage.

Connelly Stokes-Buckles will once again be our energetic Team Leader.

Registration has begun!



ADULT FAITH FORMATION OFFERING – FOR YOUNG ADULTS AND ADULTS

Book Discussion – *Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Irving.

“.... is a wake-up call for white people who want to consciously contribute to racial justice rather than unconsciously perpetuate patterns of racism. Debby Irving shares her own story of transformation – a journey of opening herself to learning about the realities of racism and the unintended impacts of white privilege.” Terry Keleher, Thought Leadership and Practice Specialist, Race Forward.

Dates: 11/13 & 11/27 from 7-8:30 in the Heritage Room

Please let Deb Moore know if you would like to be part of this discussion group

Mindfulness Meditation Practice Group

Sundays: November 12 and December 10

4:00-5:00 pm in the Edwards Room

Please arrive 10 minutes ahead of our start time.

You are invited to be part of a meditation group this fall. We will meet once a month and share the experience of sitting together in mindful meditation. This is a wonderful way to start a meditation practice or to deepen your existing practice, and it provides the opportunity to connect with others in the group as we reflect on the experience of meditating and bringing mindfulness into our daily lives.

If you plan to participate in any of the Sunday groups, please let Linda Vincent (lcvincent56@gmail.com) or Deb Moore, our Minister of Faith Formation, know in advance.

Resources We've Found Helpful In Growing Our Awareness Around Racism And White Privilege

Books:

Alexander, Michelle. The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness. New York: The New Press, 2012

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. Between the World and Me. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015.

DuBois, W. E. B. The Souls of Black Folk. New York: W W Norton and Company, 1999.

Dyson, Michael Eric. Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America. New York: St Martin's Press, 2017.

Harvey, Jennifer. Dear White Christians: For Those Still Longing for Reconciliation. Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2014.

Irving, Debby. Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race. Massachusetts: Elephant Room Press, 2014.

McIntosh, Peggy. "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," 1989.

Picoult, Jodi. Great Small Things. New York: Ballantine Books, 2016

Tatum, Beverly Daniel. "Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" And other Conversations About Race 20th Anniversary Edition. New York: Basic Books, 1997, 2017.

Wilkerson, Isabelle. The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration. New York: Random House, 2010.

Videos:

42: The Jackie Robinson Story: 2013 (PG-13)

Amistad: 1999 (R)

Hidden Figures: 2017 (PG)

I am Not Your Negro: 2016 (PG-13)

Moonlight: 2017 (R)

Places in the Heart: 1984 (PG)

Curriculum:

White Privilege: Let's Talk – free download at www.ucc.org/privilege

Labyrinth Ministry

Come walk the Labyrinth
on **Monday, November 27**
at 7:00 p.m. in Addis Hall.



*No matter who you are or
where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome to the Labyrinth.*

Attention College Students:

Please let us know your campus snail mail and email addresses. Your church family would love to keep you up to date with what is happening at Edwards, send you a card or two...and of course a box of cookies decorated by members of the youth group.

Reaching Out to Girls Inc.

Encountering the world's joys and suffering, we offer ourselves as instruments of love and justice.

One of the joys of serving on the Edwards Church Committee on Christian Outreach is the ability to designate financial grants to community organizations which serve the hungry and the homeless (among others), and those which provide special services to children and young people. Most of the committee's budget is used to provide annual grants, ranging from \$320 to \$3000, to 19 such organizations. Some, such as Manna and Cathedral in the Night, have strong ties to Edwards. All of our contributions serve to help our neighbors and connect us to the wider community.

This is the first of a series of articles designed to reacquaint us with the groups which receive ongoing support from Edwards via the Outreach Committee.

This year we added Girls Inc. of Holyoke to the list of recipients, with an annual grant of \$1000. We had given them a one-time donation in the past. A few Outreach members got to know the group's work through various channels, including the yearly fundraising breakfast, and from their reports we learned about the transformative influence Girls Inc. has in the lives of girls and young women who would otherwise be at risk.

The organization is affiliated with the national group Girls Incorporated (formerly Girls Club of America). It serves girls aged 5 – 18 in Holyoke and nearby communities, with the goal of "inspiring girls to be strong, smart and bold." Programs are offered year round, mostly free of charge, emphasizing academic tutoring (especially in science and technology) but also focusing on life skills such as money management, good health habits, and the development of leadership qualities. Girls who have participated in Girls Inc. programs are more likely to graduate from high school, to attend college, to achieve economic independence, and to have higher self-esteem, and less likely to become pregnant or to engage in violence.

Suzanne Parker, the Executive Director of Girls. Inc., will join us for worship on November 5 and will be available during fellowship time to share her experience and insights. Please welcome her!

Members of the Outreach Committee are Barbara Kirchner, Hazel Waller, Harriet Smith, Jack Hjelt, Beth Henneman, Jim Stokes-Buckles (co-chair), and Jeanne Kocsis (co-chair).

Fellowship Time is Busy!

Hello Edwards Church! Here's another friendly reminder about the after-church fellowship hour, which has been well-attended this fall. Everything is there: Good company, a watchful deacon, hot coffee and tea, and – well, usually tasty snacks. But not always. Once in a while we have a pretty lean Sunday, hence this appeal. Please, when you get that gentle reminder that your alphabet group comes up, consider bringing a little something. Lots of littles add up to a generous and welcoming table.



Thank you, from the Deacons,

Tom Derr

November 5 - Last names with A-D

November 12 - Last names with E-K

November 19 - Last names with L-P

November 26 - Last names with R-Z

Singers Needed!

Do you like to sing? Do you have friends or family members who enjoy singing?

The Edwards Church Choir has openings in the tenor and bass sections (high and low male voices). If you've ever thought about singing with the choir, this would be the perfect time to start.

The Edwards Church Choir is a friendly and supportive group of people, led by our wonderful Minister of Music, David Kidwell. Rehearsals are Thursday evenings from 7:00 to 8:00 in the sanctuary, and Sunday mornings at 9. It's helpful if you can read music, but that's not a requirement. And there's no need to audition; just come and see how you like it.

For more information, please check out the "Join the Choir" page on the church website, or talk to or email David Kidwell (dkidwell22@gmail.com).

Come experience worship from a different perspective!

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

C. Rutherford Platt

Grace Lively

Elizabeth Young

Krisinda S. Semb

Heidi Kinner

Susan Banas



Paul C. Gustavson

Louise P. Montague

Samuel A. Grant

Jody Kinner

William Roeder

Lindsey Ann Wells

Susan Anderson

Note: In an effort to protect the digital identities of our community members, we will no longer publish dates of birth in the newsletter. Please contact the church office directly if you would like to obtain this information.

Is your birthday missing? We'd like to include everyone, so please call the church office and let us know your birthday!

Update on our Refugee Family and How You Can Help

Every month brings new accomplishments and new challenges for our refugee family. Ayooob is now a licensed driver after hours of instruction and will soon take possession of a 2004 Toyota Corolla donated by a Northampton family. He is fully employed and recently received a pay raise based on his excellent work ethic. Several nights each week, Ayooob continues his English instruction and has started working towards his GED. Yousuf is a full time student at Holyoke Community College in the English as a Second Language program and dedicates much of his spare time to caring for his mother. His summer job ended in October, and he is looking for part time work, perhaps two days a week. **If you know about work possibilities, please contact Deb Moore.**

Jasimiyah begins physical therapy this month and has qualified for Social Security Disability Benefits which helps the family's finances. The members of their Circle of Care from Edwards Church continue to love working with this family—celebrating their victories, sharing events in our area (here is Jasimiyah enjoying the Bridge of Flowers) and helping to support them as they face new challenges. Although, they are living in a wonderful apartment at Village Hill, thanks to a local builder, this unit will only be available until next March. We know that affordable, accessible housing will be a challenge, and **we would like to ask every member of our church to be on a look out for an affordable three bedroom unit that is either handicap accessible or could be made accessible by adding ramps and grab bars.**



This family has blessed us in so many ways. We love the relationship between Jasimiyah and her sons. We have learned much about spiritual piety when we are with them and the call to prayer sounds on their phones. We admire their determination to build a new life in America but know that they worry about family members in Iraq. We can only imagine the fear that bubbles up when deadly explosions in Iraq make our news. We enjoy sharing food, learning new vocabulary in both English and Arabic, sharing musical performances and community events, ensuring that they get to doctors' appointments, and being a part of a network of love that includes you.

The Campaign to Reclaim Our Future (endorsed by our Outreach Committee)

The Campaign to Reclaim Our Future will highlight the United Nations Climate Talks being held in Bonn, Germany, in November and organize a series of demonstrations calling on political leaders to restore care for creation. There will be a **march and candlelight rally in Northampton on Sunday, November 5**, the night before the Bonn conference opens, and then **two separate standouts at the Springfield office of Governor Charlie Baker from 12:15 to 12:45 pm on Monday, November 6 and Thursday, November 16**. We will demand that politicians "Reclaim Our Future" from the dirty air, joblessness and floods and fires of climate change. We will demand that the US rejoin the Paris Agreement and that Charlie Baker "Stand Up" and fulfill his pledge to follow the international climate agreement in Massachusetts, as he promised when Trump pulled our federal government out. Please mark your calendar and turn out. – Your Christian Outreach Committee

NOVEMBER 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Abbreviations: AA = Alcoholics Anonymous AF = Augustine Fellowship NPC = Northampton Parents Center FF = Faith Formation	PVIRAG= Pioneer Valley Interfaith Refugee Action Group RVS= River Valley Sangha VMSG = Valley Men's Support Group		10am AA Women's Group 12 pm Bible Study 4:30pm Friends of the Homeless Mgmt. Comm. 6pm MANNA 6:30 Faith Formation Mtg.	7pm Choir Rehearsal 7pm MANNA Board of Directors Mtg.	6:30pm AA	11:30am MANNA 3:00 Circle of Care
5 9am Choir Rehearsal 10am Communion 11:15 Fellowship (A-D) 11:30 Music Committee 11:30 Endowment Sub-Committee	6 2pm PVIRAG 6pm RVS 7pm VMSG 7pm Diaconate Mtg.	7 7pm AF 7pm Trustees Mtg.	8 10am AA Women's Group 12 pm Bible Study 5pm Board of Friends of the Homeless 6pm MANNA	9 7pm Choir Rehearsal	10 6:30pm AA	11 Veteran's Day 9:30am Rediscovering Jane Addams Forum
12 9am Choir Rehearsal 10am Worship 11:15 Fellowship (E-K) 11:30 Youth Group 42: The Jackie Robinson Story 4pm Mindfulness Meditation	13 6pm RVS 7pm VMSG 7pm Waking Up White Book Discussion	14 4pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 7pm AF 7pm VMSG	15 10am AA Women's Group 12 pm Bible Study 6pm MANNA 7pm Council Meeting	16 7pm Choir Rehearsal 6 pm Members in Discernment	17 6:30pm AA	18 11:30am MANNA 4pm Valerie Tutson, Storyteller 7:30pm Pioneer Valley Capella Concert
19 9am Choir Rehearsal 9:30 Hymn Sing 10am Worship 11:15 Fellowship (L-P) 11:30 Pastor Parish Relations Committee	20 6pm RVS 7pm VMSG	21 7pm AF 7pm CE Community of Practice	22 10am AA Women's Group 12 pm Bible Study 6pm MANNA 7pm Outreach Mtg.	23 Thanksgiving	24 6:30pm AA	25 11:30am MANNA
26 9am Choir Rehearsal 10am Worship 11:15 Fellowship (R-Z) 11:30 Youth Group 2pm Bella Voice Concert	27 6pm RVS 7pm VMSG 7pm Labyrinth Walk 7pm Waking Up White Book Discussion	28 4pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 7pm AF 7pm VMSG	29 10am AA Women's Group 12 pm Bible Study 6pm MANNA	30 7pm Choir Rehearsal	6:30pm AA	