

THE SPIRE

EDWARDS CHURCH *of* NORTHAMPTON
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Vol. 30 No. 5 May 2020

Dear Edwards Church Community,

Resurrection has never been about resuscitation, the revival of a body that had stopped breathing and died. Resurrection happens when an old body gives way and new life rises from it: a new life growing out of the old one, a new life with some features carried over from the old, perhaps, but renewed and not the same. Butterflies are not caterpillars, and should not be expected to behave as if they were.

Knowing this from our Christian tradition helps to prepare us for the “new normal,” whatever that will be. Someday we will rise up from our tombs of physical distancing and begin to resume beloved customs. It will be more like what we are used to, but probably not exactly the same, especially not all at once. Carefully, step by step at first, we will at some time in the future worship in the sanctuary. But as much as I love greeting all of you on Sundays, I doubt it will happen anytime soon.

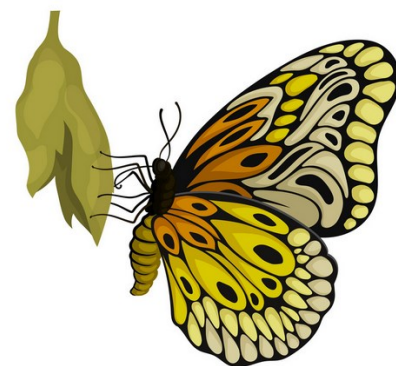


Local, state and national public health experts – the people we need to listen to at least as much as political leaders – are clearly saying that some form of physical distancing will continue to be not only prudent but necessary for some time to come. This will preserve the hard won progress in avoiding illness from the virus so far.



All that said, we still have much to celebrate, because we are an Easter people and Christ has risen! Or as one of my indirect mentors (that is, someone my mentors looked up to) was fond of saying, “Christ died on the cross and rose as the church.” We, the church, keep dying and rising with Jesus all the time. Sometimes it is just more obvious, because some of the changes are more painful and difficult.

In this time of wholesale disruption to what we consider the normal patterns of our social and economic lives, let us never lose sight of what is happening down the road in Springfield, Worcester, Boston, or Chelsea, much less New York and around the world. We will find ways to transition back into freer movement and activity, but it will take time. These adaptations are about protecting lives. I can think of nothing more deserving of our patience. And if you need to blow off steam, take a walk!



Meanwhile, hang in there. I look forward to “seeing you” any way I can.

Blessings,

Michael

From the Minister of Faith Formation

Dear Beloved of God,

Like many of you, there are passages in scripture that I have turned to in times of joy, trial, confusion, questioning, gratitude, solace, and wonder. In this unprecedented pandemic time, a passage from Jeremiah 29:11-13: is one I have found myself returning to:

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come to me and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart.” (NRSV)

I know in the depths of my heart God desires the welfare, not harm, of all humankind and creation. I am certain that our God does hear our every prayer (I routinely thank God for taking up so much of God’s time). I am certain that our God is grieving with us during this time.

I know that when I look for glimpses of the Divine around me, I see them. Where do you? In this season of Eastertide, in the midst of COVID 19, I pray that I/we will continue to reflect and act on the future of hope and justice that God desires for all people and creation. And I am grateful for the ways we have been.

Please take good care and be well!

*Blessings,
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!



Here is our May schedule:

May 17 – We will meet via Zoom at 11:30 a.m.

May 31 – To be determined on May 17

Care and Visitation Team – Praying for Each Other and Praying Together

At a recent Zoom meeting the Care and Visitation Team, which works with Michael and Deb to cultivate the social and spiritual connections among individuals in our faith community, we decided two things. First, team members will pray each Wednesday, at 10 a.m., 7 p.m., or whenever they can, for people in our community whom we know with any concern (ongoing health challenge, loss of employment, or any other issue). These might, but need not be, the same as prayer concerns listed in the Sunday worship bulletin. Second, the Care and Visitation Team invites you to join them in these Wednesday prayers. Add your voice to ours, as we pray for individuals within our community, and for all around it. If you have a specific prayer request or know of someone who would appreciate a phone call or card please contact Deb Moore at ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org or Rev. Michael McSherry at minister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org and with permission we will let members of the Care and Visitation Team know.

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.*

Church School



An abbreviated Church School will be held via Zoom on Sunday mornings from 9 – 9:30. Our time together will offer an opening ritual, story, prayer including joys and concerns, and an activity.

May 3 ~ Acts 2:42-47 ~ Living in Abundance

May 10 ~ Acts 7:55-60 ~ Brave Witness

May 17 ~ John 14:15-21 ~ To See Is to Love

May 24 ~ John 17:1-11 ~ In It Together

May 31 ~ Acts 2:1-21 ~ Spiritual Understanding –
Pentecost Sunday – wear RED

Parents and church school members, I would appreciate feedback regarding this offering. Please email me at:

ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org

Milestone Ministries during COVID 19

Several years ago, the Board of Faith Formation began honoring milestones in the lives of our members and friends such as baptisms, graduations, driver licenses, retirements, anniversaries, etc. In this pandemic time, while we are practicing physical distancing and other protocols, it is still important to honor these and other milestones. Please be sure to make Deb Moore aware of these or other significant life events that you would like to share with our faith community.

Graduates – from any public, private, or religious institution. High school, college, post graduate, elementary, middle school – where are you graduating from and what are your plans?

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Jack and Chris Hjelt who recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

Congratulations to Gabriella Wilkerson who will be headed to Wesleyan University.

Prayer Shawl

We will meet via Zoom from 3:00 – 4:00 on
May 12 and May 26



Register now for Summer Camping Opportunities!
Silver Lake Conference Center in Connecticut:

<https://www.silverlakeect.org>

Star Island off the coast of New Hampshire:

<https://starisland.org>

Pilgrim Lodge on Lake Umbagog in Maine:

<https://www.pilgrimlodge.org>

Horton Center in the White Mountains of New Hampshire:

<https://hortoncenter.org>



Ministry Team News

Message from the Elected Core Ministry

Dear Edwards Church Community,

We hope this message finds you well and healthy. The Elected Core Ministry (ECM) continues to meet and plan for implementation of our new way of running the church (e.g. less meetings and engagement of more members). We have most recently worked together on the structure of our teams and our outreach to our community including Cathedral in the Night. Donations have been made to the Survival Center and support of MANNA and their weekly operations is ongoing. Virtual worship efforts have grown under the ECM and we hope you are enjoying one of the ways to join worship and remain connected to the church family. The ECM would like to ask people to share life events, joys, and sorrows that they want the congregation to know about. These would be added to the bulletin or read aloud, your preference. Please let Michael or Deb know ahead of Sunday worship if you would like something shared.

ECM has most recently sent a statement of support to both the Finance and Investment Teams and encouraged their shared work together on behalf of the congregation. Behind the scenes does not end and we cannot wait to be together again when it is safe and appropriate to do so. We are excited to work on teams with our church family!

Faithfully,
The ECM Team

Sheri Cheung
Melissa Mattison

Mark Dion
Ella Stocker

Leon Drzewianowski
Shannon Farrand-Bernardin

Laura Frogameni

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Jody Gerbasi

Ann Abel

Sarah Briggs

Janice Longstreeth

Sally Griggs



Debra Davis

Lynda Kamik

Janie Thurber

Barbara Kirchner

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!

Cathedral in the Night
867 North Pleasant Street
Amherst, Massachusetts 01002

cathedral
IN THE NIGHT

www.cathedralinthenight.org
info@cathedralinthenight.org

April 1, 2020

Edward's Church of Northampton
297 Main Street
Northampton, MA 01060

Dear friends,

Thank you for your contribution of \$300 received in the first quarter of 2020. We pray your members and community are safe. We keep you all in our prayers and are thankful for your support of our ministry!

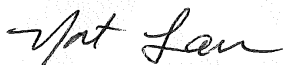
As you know we are in uncharted territory due to the Coronavirus emergency and restrictions on gathering. We rely on churches to provide our Sunday Community meal and that is no longer possible. With your help we can keep our meal program intact as "to go" meals each Sunday night. We have been blessed to work with a local restaurant to help us buy food in bulk to cook for Sundays.

Here are some ways to help:

1. Prayers. We need your prayers. This emergency and economic shutdown affects our community in ways most of us never think about. With everything closed there is less access to food, no places to be during the day and less access to showers or bathrooms. This makes life even harder than ever.
2. Donate toward a meal - it costs about \$300 for each night of meals. We welcome donations from your church or your members by check or also through Facebook.
3. Amazon Wishlist for Care-Packages – Your church or members can purchase things off our Amazon wish list - we are trying to make high protein care-packages each week.
4. For any of your members who have an account with Thrivent, a financial company partnering with churches, Thrivent Choice Dollars or small grants can benefit Cathedral.

For any help with Facebook, Amazon or Thrivent, please contact Pastor Steph at pastorstephsmith@gmail.com to walk you through the process.

God's Peace be with you !



Nat Larson
Treasurer
Treasurer@cathedralinthenight.org

www.cathedralinthenight.org
Mailing address: 867 N. Pleasant St., Amherst, MA 01002
Pastor Stephanie Smith cell: 413-575-0845 email: pastorstephsmith@gmail.com

Pursuant to Internal Revenue Service requirements for substantiation of charitable contributions, no goods or services were provided in return for these contributions.

MAY 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Abbreviations: AA = Alcoholics Anonymous NPC = Northampton Parents Center FF = Faith Formation PVIRAG= Pioneer Valley Interfaith Refugee Action Group	RVS= River Valley Sangha SAA=Pioneer Sex Addicts Anonymous VMMSG = Valley Men's Support Group					
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9am Church School - Zoom 10am Worship - Online 11:30 Care & Visitation 1:00 College Student Gathering		7pm Finance Team 7pm Building & Grounds Team	12 pm Bible Study - Zoom 6pm MANNA			11:30am MANNA
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
9am Church School - Zoom 10am Worship - Online		3pm Prayer Shawl Ministry	12 pm Bible Study - Zoom 6pm MANNA	6:30pm ECM		11:30am MANNA
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
9am Church School - Zoom 10am Worship - Online 11:30 Youth Group		6:30pm CE Community of Practice	12 pm Bible Study - Zoom 6pm MANNA			11:30am MANNA
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
9am Church School - Zoom 10am Worship - Online	Memorial Day	3pm Prayer Shawl Ministry	12 pm Bible Study - Zoom 6pm MANNA	6:30pm ECM		11:30am MANNA
31						
9am Church School - Zoom 10am Worship - Online						