

# THE SPIRE

EDWARDS CHURCH *of* NORTHAMPTON  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

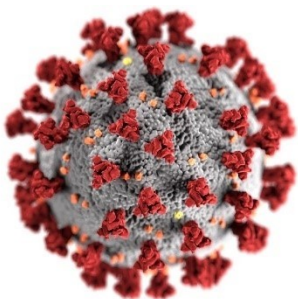
Vol. 30 No. 7 September 2020

Dear Edwards Church Community,

On August 20<sup>th</sup> the Boston Globe ran a story that was partly playful, but mostly serious, about the usefulness to all of us of the lived experience and research into the mental health of submarine crews, astronauts, and other scientists who spend months in close quarters in remote locations. The headline, “They survived life on a submarine and at the South Pole. Here’s their advice for staying sane this winter.” also included this summary: “Create mini events to look forward to. Learn something new. Don’t fall into ‘Is it over yet?’ syndrome.”



Though it may not always feel like it, this summer has provided us with a relative breather from the constraints of the pandemic. The ability to spend time outside walking, cycling, gardening, or whatever else you enjoy helps you stay healthy in many ways. In addition to exercise, it relieves the cooped up feeling that inevitably comes from looking at the same four walls. And those of us lucky enough to live with family all know that, as much as we love each other, there are times when we all need a break.



Last April we went through what many of us probably assumed would be the worst part of the pandemic - the “surge” of cases in our area. Springfield and greater Boston probably had the worst of it in Massachusetts, but all of us knew (and still know) there is an invisible virus, for which we still have no vaccine and no medical treatment beyond supportive care. Other than minimizing transmission, we have no real defense to it.

Some of us have family members, if not our immediate family then extended, who have contracted the virus or have otherwise been affected. Some have become very sick. Others have lost their jobs. There is an undercurrent of sadness and loss that we cannot dispel by denial, pretending we are unaffected, or wishing it away. It will not, in all likelihood, end anytime soon. If you are struggling, please call me (413-531-9729) or Deb (413-275-5507).

People who have made it through extended periods of challenge, whether it was on a submarine, space flight, or research at the south pole, developed ways of coping. They had short term goals to celebrate. They kept structure in their lives. They found new ways of taking small, meaningful breaks. They kept learning and growing.

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**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.*

As a community of faith, we can do those sorts of things individually and together, in ways that deepen our faith and relatedness to each other and God. I hope that weekly worship is one way we are already doing it. Perhaps we can use this pandemic time to explore new practices that will feed us spiritually.

As we approach a new set of seasons, I am reminded of the advice offered by a Buddhist teacher: “You should sit in meditation for twenty minutes every day - unless you're too busy; then you should sit for an hour.” A famous naturalist said the same thing about spending time outdoors. The point is simple: have a practice for taking care of body and soul, and follow it.

On the Spiritual Practices page of our website, you can find a number of good sites with “road tested” practices: <http://edwardschurchnorthampton.org/faith-formation/spiritual-practices/> Reviewing that list for the first time in a while, I have added one of them to my list of current practices. Here are two consistent favorites:



UCC Daily Devotional: If you are not already a subscriber, try this daily devotional, delivered to your email in-box before sunrise. For the small investment of a very few minutes of quiet reading and reflection, you can experience a fresh insight and an uplifting or challenging perspective:

[https://www.ucc.org/daily\\_devotional](https://www.ucc.org/daily_devotional)

inwardoutward.org: The weekly gospel reflection and daily quotation offered here are consistent gems: <http://inwardoutward.org/>

We are in this together. We cannot know what each step along the journey will be like, but this we know. God is with us in each and every step, and we are a community that embodies that. “Knowing that the road is long, we choose to walk together.”

Blessed to be among you,

*Michael*

### Message from the Elected Core Ministry

Dear Edwards Church Congregation,

We hope all of you are doing well and weathering this health crisis safely. We have decided to exercise the utmost caution with regards to the safety and health of all who attend Edwards Church by remaining closed for in person use of the sanctuary until at least December of this year. The “How and When to Open” Ad Hoc Team has met virtually on a regular basis and drafted some internal documents and policies for staff, visitors and future in-person worship.

We are disheartened that we can't return to the in person social interaction we all crave and the physical setting of the sanctuary that we all love so much. This news is difficult to hear and deal with. If anyone wants to talk about the personal or spiritual difficulty this presents, please reach out to Michael McSherry (at 413-531-9729) or Deb Moore (at 413-275-5507). To discuss those difficulties or the decision to postpone in person worship, you can also contact any member of the ECM at [ECM@EdwardsChurchNorthampton.org](mailto:ECM@EdwardsChurchNorthampton.org)

Have Faith in Jesus.

Sincerely,

The Elected Core Ministry

Mark Dion

Sheri Cheung

Shannon Farrand-Bernadin

Melissa Mattison

Laura Frogameni

Ella Stocker

Leon Drzewianowski

## ***From the Minister of Faith Formation***

Dear Beloved of God,

I pray that you are all healthy and safe.

As we continue in this dual pandemic time, I wonder where you have experienced the Divine in your days. Is there a spiritual practice that has been most helpful for you? Have you engaged in a new hobby or activity? What do you hope for, what do you long for? Is there something you have been (more) intentional about? If you would like to share your thoughts around any of these wonderings, please know that Michael and/or I would love to hear from you.

I have been more intentional about journaling. Journaling is a practice I have engaged in on and off for decades. There is something about writing my thoughts/experiences on paper; sometimes in a free-flowing way, other times in a more deliberate structured manner. Often, I will re-read entries either at random or with a specific time frame in mind. Sometimes the re-visiting brings smiles, laughter, tears, cherished memories, a wondering why I wrote what I wrote, ah-ha moments, and even lessons learned.

I have also been more intentional about value thinking with a deliberate focus on wants versus needs and I know some of you have been as well.

Prayer is a constant practice and friend whether praying my own prayer or reading the prayers of others. Practicing gratitude is also high on my list and I have so much to be grateful for.

Walks in nature or around the neighborhood hold a twofold purpose: the exercise and an intentionality about noticing the presence of the Divine.

During a recent interview, Jon Meacham offered the following: “restoration is not about *going back*, it is about *looking back* and what we can learn from it going forward.” Many of the pre-pandemic ways of being will not be restored and that is painful and to be mourned. I wonder what I/we in looking back can prayerfully discern and take forward.

I continue to be grateful to be serving in mutual ministry with all of you especially in this unprecedented time and continue to hold each of you in prayer.

*Blessings,  
Deb*

### **Faith Formation Leadership Program 2020-2021 Year**

This is a two-year certificate program that originated with the Massachusetts Conference and is now sponsored by the Southern New Conference of the UCC. Sessions are offered in person and via Zoom. Topics to be presented in this upcoming year are:

- Boundary Awareness for Faith Formation and Youth Ministry Leaders
- Making Disciples – Theories and Practices for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Youth Ministry 101 – Practices for a Sustainable Ministry
- Networking in Youth Ministry – Resources & Social Media
- Developing Faith – Ages and Stages
- Faith Formation 101 – Practices for a Sustainable Ministry
- Living into the Mystery – Worship and Sacraments in the UCC

For detailed information go to <https://www.macucc.org/certification>. For personal experience references please speak to Jim Stokes-Buckles or Deb Moore.

## The History of Anti-Black Racism in America

Amherst College is offering a four-part online lecture series titled The History of Anti-Black Racism in America. The lecture series is open to the public; registration is required. All lectures, except the last, are at 7:00p.m. Lecture dates and titles are:

8/26 Callie House and the Struggle for Ex-Slave Reparations

9/22 Vanguard: How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote and Insisted on Equality for All

10/14 The Condemnation of Blackness

11/17 From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime (at 5:00 PM)

Thank you to Sarah Briggs for bringing this excellent opportunity to listen to the history of our Black siblings to our attention. More detailed information about presenters and content description can be found at [https://www.amherst.edu/news/campus\\_community\\_events/virtual](https://www.amherst.edu/news/campus_community_events/virtual).

## 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!*



In order to stay safe and healthy, we will continue to meet via Zoom on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month at 11:30 until further notice. Here are the dates for September, October and November:

9/13 (Blessing of Backpacks and Devices), 9/27

10/11 (National Coming Out Day), 10/25

11/8 (Thanksgiving Sunday), 11/22

## College Students

We will continue to meet via Zoom on the first Sunday of the month at 1:00 p.m.



## A Good Resource for Continued Learning

For several years I have been attending webinars sponsored by PRC (Pastoral Resources for Churches). Thanks to the generosity of our conference these webinars are free and cover a multitude of topics and categories. To list the ones I have participated in these last 5 months would take up too much space; suffice it to say they have all been worthwhile. Here are three upcoming webinars for which I have registered:

Sept. 2 from 7-8pm: Engaging “Zoomed Out” Youth

Sept 23 from 7-8pm: What Will Christmas Pageants Look Like this Year?

October 7 from 11am – noon: Spiritual Practices and Self Care

I encourage you to check out their website: [www.prcli.org/webinars-res/](http://www.prcli.org/webinars-res/) to view live and recorded webinars.

## Blessing of Backpacks and Devices

On Sunday morning, September 13, we will have our annual blessing of backpacks and add devices. The blessing ritual will happen three times: during church school at 9:00, during worship at 10:00 and during youth group at 11:30.

## Scholarship Ministry Team

The Scholarship Ministry Team is pleased to announce that Edwards Church will offer scholarships to applicants who are active participants in the life of Edwards Church and are seeking to broaden their education in formal or informal ways. To request an application, please email Deb Moore at: [ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org](mailto:ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org) and Heather Dandy at: [info@edwardschurchnorthampton.org](mailto:info@edwardschurchnorthampton.org).



### Prayer Shawl Ministry

We will meet via Zoom from 3:00 – 4:00 on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. We all welcome knitters, weavers, and crocheters. If you would like to join us, please email email Deb Moore at [ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org](mailto:ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org).

### Prayers for a New School Year

For several years members of our faith community have submitted prayers for a new school year that have been printed in the Spire. During this unprecedented pandemic time, as schools begin with some form of hybrid or remote learning model, prayers are requested and needed for students, parents, teachers, administrators, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, etc. more than prior years. Please email your prayers for a new school year to Deb Moore at [ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org](mailto:ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org) by September 6. They will be compiled, delivered to those in the educational system and will also be shared in an all church email.

### Guided Meditation Offering

We are thrilled to begin offering this spiritual practice once again! Join Linda Vincent and Deb Moore on the mornings of October 8 and October 22 via Zoom from 10:00 – 10:30. If interested in participating, please join promptly at 10:00 as we will close the gathering at 10:05 to avoid disruption of the meditation. Please email Linda ([lvincent56@gmail.com](mailto:lvincent56@gmail.com)) and Deb ([ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org](mailto:ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org)) to let us know if you would like to be included on the Zoom invitations.



### Virtual Choir in the Fall



The Edwards Church Choir will be back in the fall! They will be creating four virtual anthems between September and December. Rehearsals will be held over Zoom, and choir members will record their individual parts at their homes. The first rehearsal will be Thursday, September 10 at 7pm.

If anyone would like to join the choir for these special projects, please email or call our Minister of Music, David Kidwell ([music\\_minister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org](mailto:music_minister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org), 413-320-3213).

# SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Carolyn Gray  
Kathleen Korza  
Shirley Atwood  
Pamela Cook  
Debra Moore



James Young  
Phillip Cooper  
Michael Hayden  
William Hogan, Jr.

**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!

## Becoming a (More) Thriving Congregation

In December 2019 our church received an invitation to apply to be one of the UCC churches in New England selected to participate in a four-year, nation-wide project of local church renewal and revitalization. Funded by a grant from the Lilly Foundation, the Thriving Congregations project is being led by Vibrant Faith, a non-profit Christian coaching organization that helps congregations cultivate deeper faith by incorporating ancient faith-forming practices, strengthening inter-generational relationships, discerning a rich sense of God's calling, and engaging with contemporary culture and our neighbors, both locally and in cyberspace.

We recognized that if we were accepted it would require an additional commitment of time and energy, but considered the potential benefits more than worth that commitment. In the late winter we learned we were finalists, and in the spring we were officially invited into the program. (Yes, all with the pandemic unfolding!)

Vibrant Faith adapted the first-year schedule and curriculum for participating congregations in light of the pandemic. All meetings will be on Zoom. This summer our team began meeting to discuss our assigned reading – *Always On: Practicing Faith in a New Media Landscape* by Angela Gorrell plus a packet of materials prepared for us by Vibrant Faith.



In the coming weeks and months we will continue to update you on our work, and we will be in touch to ask you questions, conduct surveys about our congregation's individual and shared spiritual practices, and begin to learn more about the community around us.

Stay safe, and stay in touch with the Spirit,

Your Thriving Congregations Team

Sarah Briggs

Sheri Cheung

Melissa Mattison

Karen Pohlman

Jim Stokes-Buckles

Debra Moore

Michael McSherry

# Ministry Team News

## Sweltering Summer Weather & Social Distancing Doesn't Deter Our Ministry Teams!

Meeting the challenge of social distancing and this summer's magnificently hot, humid weather, our Ministry Teams made headway on a variety of fronts. Check out these team updates, which include (in blue font) opportunities to get involved in the life of the church.



Hard physical work of the **Garden Ministry Team**, which kept garden beds at the church looking cheerful and healthy, was augmented by signs bearing social justice messages this summer. The Garden Team sends their thanks to Edwards community members who made these beautiful handwritten signs.

The **Ad Hoc Team, When And How To Re-Open The Church**, has met via Zoom since early June. They've been researching many documents and guidelines on how best to handle our church operations regarding daily church staff functions, inside and outside church building activities, community service and mission activities, and congregation member activities, while adhering to COVID 19 safety guidelines and procedures as recommended by local, State, and Federal health officials, as well as our Southern New England Conference of the UCC. Drafting our own Edwards Church guidelines has begun and is currently being reviewed internally by our team members. Our goal is to make these guidelines available to our larger church family in the near future. The guidelines we're working on thus far include:

- Self Check list (health checklist to be completed by anyone that wants to participate in any activity within the Edwards Church building, including staff)
- Staff Protocols for Working at Edwards Church (draft 6/29/20)
- Guidelines for Those Planning to Enter the Edwards Church Building Draft 3
- Visitor (Outside Groups) Guidelines (draft 7/15/20)
- Reopening for Internal Activities: Guidelines & Safety Standards Checklist (draft 6/22/20)

The **Finance Ministry Team** meets regularly with the Treasurer and the **Investment Ministry Team** with the investment manager to attend to our church's financial plans and health. *One or two more members are needed to serve on the Finance Ministry Team. Financial experience is NOT a requirement. We are blessed to have a skilled Treasurer and current members who work with finances in their professional and/or volunteer lives. Who we really need are people who can faithfully consider the ways we use our financial resources, who can ask "why" questions and help us dive deeper in discussions. Intrigued but want to talk about it first? Email Leon Drzewianowski at [LDrez35@gmail.com](mailto:LDrez35@gmail.com) or Laura Frogameni at [LauraFrogameni@gmail.com](mailto:LauraFrogameni@gmail.com)*

Thanks to Cynthia Stanton who recently joined; please consider joining yourself!

The **Justice Education Team** has begun exploring racism, past and present, in our community and is working on a statement to define our team. At present we see our role as educating ourselves and others and to inspire reflection and action. We hope to curate resources regarding racism and anti-racism for the Edwards Church web site.

The **Elected Core Ministry** has Zoom meetings on average every other week to address policy and operational matters of the church and determine how to support ministry teams.

Great news! Edwards Church was selected to be one of the nine UCC churches in New England to participate in a nation-wide project of local church renewal and revitalization funded by a grant from the Lilly Foundation. A **Thriving Congregations Ministry Team** was created this summer to work on this exciting endeavor. Be sure to read the full story on page 6.

The **Scholarship Ministry Team** announces that Edwards Church offers scholarships to applicants who are active participants in the life of Edwards Church and are seeking to broaden their education in formal or informal ways. For an application, please email Deb Moore at [ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org](mailto:ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org) and Heather Dandy at: [info@edwardschurchnorthampton.org](mailto:info@edwardschurchnorthampton.org).

The **Trans Asylum Seekers Alliance Ministry Team** works with ministers, lay volunteers, and donors from other congregations and the wider community to provide support to transgender asylum seekers. We have obtained leases for two apartments, collected donations of money, furniture, bedding, kitchen supplies and other forms of material support. Most importantly, we have tried to help these individuals feel welcome and safe while they learn English, pursue the legal process for asylum, and work toward what we all hope will be a new life of self determination in the United States. We already have collaborators from other UCC congregations, so the next phase of our efforts will emphasize growing the alliance to include even more houses of worship, individuals, and civic organizations.

An **Open and Affirming Ministry Team** formed over the summer! The team focuses on honoring our covenant to welcome into the life of Edwards Church persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions, and to connect with LGBTQ organizations in our community. Given the active role our church is taking in supporting transgender asylum seekers to settle in the Pioneer Valley, the team is planning a workshop for our congregation and other area churches this fall on transgender basics, featuring author and speaker Austen Hartke. Austen is a graduate of Luther Seminary's Master of Arts program in Old Testament/Hebrew Bible Studies, and author of *transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians*. *The Open and Affirming Ministry Team would love more members!* Contact Debbie Davis, [debradavis1217@gmail.com](mailto:debradavis1217@gmail.com).

The **Choir Ministry Team** has had several Zoom meetings over the summer to stay in touch and to talk about plans for the fall. Choir section leaders have collaborated with David to provide special music for many of our Zoom worship services. In the fall, the choir will be rehearsing over Zoom every other week and will be recording four virtual anthems.

Our **Youth Group** meets the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month, usually at 11:30 a.m. via Zoom. *Deb Moore would welcome an adult assistant to minister to our dynamic young folks!* Contact Deb at [ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org](mailto:ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org)

At the request of the college students in our church community, **College Fellowship** continues to take place once a month via Zoom.

Though church school usually doesn't happen in July and August, this year the **Church School Ministry Team** decided to offer it throughout the summer via Zoom at 9 am on Sundays. Throughout the COVID period, church school teachers are taking turns leading activities. Attendance varies but there are often several households in attendance. Though we don't anticipate offering church school in person this calendar year, our mission actively continues! Pastor Deb has led us on a curriculum review process to find a new curriculum for church school. *Additional church school teachers are always welcome! Contact Jim Stokes-Buckles, [jim.stokesbuckles@gmail.com](mailto:jim.stokesbuckles@gmail.com)*

In July, our **Outreach Grants Ministry Team** Outreach allocated a grant in the amount of \$2,428 to MANNA, from New Way funds. The Food Bank had already given MANNA \$10,000, to be used toward the purchase of two additional refrigeration units, one to be installed in St. John's kitchen and the other at Edwards. The total cost of the two was \$12,428, so Edwards provided the additional amount to make the purchase possible. These new refrigerators will increase capacity as the need for MANNA meals has grown.



Sandra Rossi (left), Marj Tauer (center), & Fumiko Brown (right) were three of the sixteen volunteers who prepared or picked up and delivered food for Cathedral in the Night on August 2<sup>nd</sup>.

On Sundays June 7<sup>th</sup> and August 2<sup>nd</sup>, the **Cathedral in the Night Ministry Team** got busy in their kitchens to make a hot meal, sandwiches and desserts for the Cathedral in the Night congregation, an outdoor church that ministers to many in Northampton's homeless community. Special thanks goes to new team members Elena and Rachel Frogameni, who took on the task of driving to destinations in Holyoke, Westhampton, Easthampton, Florence and Northampton to collect sandwiches and desserts from the homes of those who made delicious items for our Cathedral neighbors. On August 2 we were blessed when Pastor Steph Smith, full-time minister to the Cathedral in the Night congregation, gave the sermon for the Edwards Church worship service in which she included a message of gratitude for our partnership. That gratitude is mutual as we feel we get back much more than we give to our Cathedral friends.

Wednesday noon **Bible Study Team**, discussions and conversations are continuing on Zoom and have proven insightful and thought provoking. Shared ideas and comprehensions often lead to deeper understandings and present day reflections with the added enjoyment of being among friends. **To join, please contact Rev. McSherry at [minister@Edwardschurchnorthampton.org](mailto:minister@Edwardschurchnorthampton.org) or the church office at [info@edwardschurchnorthampton.org](mailto:info@edwardschurchnorthampton.org)**

Throughout the summer, the **Care and Visitation Ministry Team** held meetings every three weeks to coordinate supportive phone calls, note cards and prayers for members of our congregation and those on our church's "In Our Prayers" list. The team invites you to join them in prayer from wherever you are on Wednesdays at either 10 a.m. or 7 p.m.

Since the formation of the **Worship Service Structure, Themes & Music Team**, we met twice to brainstorm for specific upcoming services. In late March we met to discuss themes for Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter, with special attention to how the stories, experience and themes of that season could help us move through the challenges of the pandemic. In May we met to prepare for Pentecost. This fall, perhaps we can take a longer view and not only gather to brainstorm specific services. but also explore adjustments to our current worship and different ways of enhancing the experience of virtual gathering.

**Prayer Shawl Ministry Team** is knitting, weaving, and crocheting prayer shawls together via Zoom meetings. **Knitters, crocheters, and weavers of all levels are welcome.** Contact Deb Moore at [ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org](mailto:ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org)

Though sewing together is on hold at present, the **Quilt Ministry Team** continues to connect via Zoom for fellowship.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, our **Music at the Crossroads Ministry Team** had to make the decision to cancel all concerts for 2020. They will meet via Zoom sometime in November to decide what planning can be done for 2021.

Our **Buildings and Grounds Ministry Team** meets every two weeks to maintain the safe and efficient operation of the church building and surrounding church property. They've been pretty busy since February resolving some interesting maintenance challenges including the following:

- Repair of Boiler #2, which had a malfunction in March
- Major leak in heating system in the Edwards Room, which necessitated a shut-down of the first floor offices heating zone; this major repair is presently being designed for replacement with the help of a mechanical consulting engineer that we hired
- Replaced failed parts in Boiler #1 which had resulted in no hot water for our kitchen
- Cleaned plugged storm water drains in window well outside Addis Hall on State. St. side
- Repaired leaking outdoor water faucets

Routine projects that have been completed or are in process include:

- Replaced door handles on children's classrooms, church meeting rooms, and office rooms to provide handicap accessible lever handles and interior locking capabilities for security/safety
- Replaced old bookshelves in Heritage Room with new, large wall cabinet for increased storage
- Contracted a professional painting company to paint the church steeple and other exterior parts of our church building (including around the front windows).
- Currently working on developing project specifications for replacement of the flat roof membrane surface over the main church offices; this will likely happen next year.

The Buildings and Grounds Team extends thanks to Justin Clifford our sexton, Heather Dandy, Marc Waller, Deb Moore, and Michael McSherry for their watchful eyes and continuing assistance with the daily maintenance and repairs regarding the on-going operation of the church facilities during these challenging COVID 19 times. **We're always looking for volunteers to join the B&G team!** Contact Heather in the church office if you're interested at [info@edwardschurchnorthampton.org](mailto:info@edwardschurchnorthampton.org)

**Thank you to all of our volunteers** who are keeping Edwards Church members engaged with each other and our community!

Want to volunteer for or learn more about our Ministry Teams? Contact the **Volunteer Coordinator Ministry Team** (Debbie and Laura) at [Volunteers@EdwardsChurchNorthampton.org](mailto:Volunteers@EdwardsChurchNorthampton.org) or by phone. We'd love to have a conversation with you!

Debbie Davis 413-626-5117

Laura Frogameni 413-270-0287

August 19,2020

To The Edwards Church Community,

On behalf of Friends of Children, an organization that advocates for the best interests of children and young adults in and aging out of the foster care system, and as a member of Edwards Church, I want to thank you all for your kindness and generosity.

Over the past 6 months, we have lost the third of our budget covered by the state. We approached Edwards and you made a one time donation of \$5,000 in addition to the \$500 you have given us each year. Thank you.

We have approached you again this summer. You spread the word for our Foster Dignity Backpack Campaign, which supplies over 500 new backpacks for children and youth who are part of the foster care system. Many of you signed up and brought us not only one backpack, but several filled with the supplies these children will need, whether in school or at home! Thank you!!

Recently, we also approached Heather to advertise our **Movie at the Mall**, a Covid-age drive-in film featuring Aladdin and held in the parking lot of the Hampshire Mall. This was a wonderful way to fundraise for Friends of Children and provide a much needed night out for families. Heather shared this on the Edwards Church community Facebook page and the event was sold out. It raised much needed funds for us.

So we just want to thank you. Thank you for helping Friends of Children and other nonprofits in the area who are working hard to meet the needs of so many.

Take care, stay safe and well,

Susan

Susan Swift  
Development Director  
Friends of Children, Inc  
[www.friendsofchildreninc.org](http://www.friendsofchildreninc.org)



**SAVE THE DATE (on Zoom)**  
**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4<sup>TH</sup>**  
**3:00-4:30 PM**

**Pioneer Valley Interfaith Refugee Action Group**  
**presents:**

**Let Us Not Forget Refugees:**  
**The 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1980 Refugee Act**



**Speakers:**

**Melonee Douglas**, Regional Director for HIAS of EurAsia and Africa. Her work oversees the operations of HIAS' country offices throughout these regions, ranging from refugee camps in Chad, to the Greek islands, to Eritrean and Darfuri families in Israel.

**Two refugees** resettled in Northampton speak about their experience with family reunification and what it has meant to them.

A detailed flyer will be sent out in early September. It will include a registration link for the event.

HIAS, founded 139 years ago, stands for a world in which refugees find welcome, safety, and freedom. HIAS rescues people whose lives are in danger for being who they are. Its mission is to protect the most vulnerable refugees, helping them build new lives and reuniting them with their families in safety and freedom, and to advocate for the protection of refugees and assure that displaced people are treated with the dignity they deserve.

For more information, email: [ellen27louise@yahoo.com](mailto:ellen27louise@yahoo.com)

# SEPTEMBER 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
		7pm <b>When &amp; How to Re-Open Ad Hoc Team</b>	12pm Bible Study - Zoom 6pm MANNA			
6	Labor Day 7	8	9	10	11	12
9am Church School - Zoom 10am Worship – Online 1pm College Student Gathering		3pm <b>Prayer Shawl Ministry</b> 4:30pm <b>ONA Ministry Team</b>	12pm Bible Study – Zoom 4:30pm <b>Care &amp; Visitation Team</b> 6pm MANNA 6:30 <b>Investment Team Mtg.</b>	7pm <b>ECM</b> 7pm Choir Rehearsal		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
9am Church School - Zoom 10am Worship – Online 11:30 Youth Group		1pm <b>Thriving Congregations Ministry Team</b> 6:30pm CE Community of Practice 7:15pm <b>Finance Team</b>	12pm Bible Study - Zoom 6pm MANNA 7pm <b>Worship &amp; Spirituality Team Meeting</b>	6:30 <b>Justice &amp; Education Team</b>		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
9am Church School - Zoom 10am Worship – Online		3pm <b>Prayer Shawl Ministry</b>	12pm Bible Study - Zoom 6pm MANNA	7pm Choir Rehearsal		
27	28	29	30			
9am Church School - Zoom 10am Worship – Online 11:30 Youth Group			12pm Bible Study - Zoom 6pm MANNA			