



THE SPIRE

EDWARDS CHURCH *of* NORTHAMPTON
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Dear Edwards Church Community,

This September we enthusiastically accepted an invitation to partner with other houses of worship and interfaith organizations to solemnly mark the 400th year since English colonists landed on Native shores in Massachusetts. There will be an online gathering to remember that event on **Sunday, October 18th at 2:00 pm**. A link with more information will be circulated before the online event.

In connection with marking that 400th year, we hope to raise awareness of aspects of the history of European colonizing that complicate the history many of us were taught. We can do this by joining with others in a project called **400 Years: Truth & Healing for the Next Seven Generations**. The first part of the project will be to listen and learn. We can reflect on what we are learning and then decide what, if any, new commitments to make, what causes to support.



400 Years
Truth & Healing for
the Next Seven Generations

We do not do this to shame anyone, though there were certainly shameful acts committed. We do this to inform ourselves of the parts of history that were not taught in many 20th century textbooks, but which are now better known and need to be acknowledged. We do this to better understand our current social order, which is built on the foundation of a shared history.

Within the last year, two well regarded local institutions have taken beginning steps to recognize some of that history, adopting statements that acknowledge that we live on land that was first inhabited by Native people for centuries before the arrival of European colonists. Those statements follow:

Congregation B'nai Israel - Congregation B'nai Israel recognizes and honors the original inhabitants who first settled in the valley of the Kwinitekw River. CBI acknowledges that we are on Nonotuck land. We also acknowledge our neighboring Indigenous nations: the Nipmuc and the Wampanoag to the East, the Mohegan and Pequot to the South, the Mohican to the West, and the Sokoi Abenaki to the North.

Smith College Statement on Indigenous Lands - Smith College acknowledges and appreciates the fact that the space in which we gather today is built within the ancestral homelands of the Nonotuck peoples. We also recognize our present-day neighboring Indigenous nations: the Nipmuc and the Wampanoag to the East, the Mohegan, Pequot, and Narragansett to the South, the Mohican and Mohawk to the West, and the Abenaki to the North. Finally, we acknowledge and celebrate the presence of Indigenous people here among us today.

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.

Inspired by these examples, should Edwards Church adopt a similar statement?

Our interest and willingness to partner with the 400 Years project arises from the alignment between that project and the purpose of our Justice Education Ministry Team. The current statement of the team's purpose is: "*Acknowledging the racism in our community both past and present, we come together to educate ourselves and others, and to inspire reflection and action.*"

Should we, as a well-known Christian church named for the famous preacher and theologian Jonathan Edwards, follow the example of CBI, Smith College and others? Why or why not? Racism in our society is not, of course, limited to racism directed at Native people. Are we willing to learn more about the connections between the history of enslaved Africans, the abolitionist movement in Northampton, and the formation of our church?

This sort of learning, reflection, and resulting action is part of an ongoing process. With Deb Moore's leadership, a healthy cohort of folks has been learning about racism for several years, particularly as directed toward Black people. With the 400 Years project, we expand that learning to the racism directed toward Native people. Racism in contemporary culture has its roots in history. We cannot adequately address racism, in ourselves or our society, without considering that background.

We also continue work started 16 years ago when people of good will came together for a reconciliation ceremony. That ceremony acknowledged the wounds of the Turners Falls Massacre, a 1676 raid by colonial forces who killed hundreds of Native people at Great Falls (now called Turners Falls), including women and children, who were camped near the river to fish at a location shared peacefully among different regional groups of Native people. <https://nolumbekaproject.org/reconciliation-ceremony-2004/> Several speakers at the October 18th online event will speak from that location.

There will be more information shared in the coming weeks, such as the opportunity to share a socially distanced walk to Turners Falls (only 3.5 miles from Greenfield center) on the weekend of October 18. There will be opportunities to learn more about and offer support to specific projects of Indigenous people in our region. In the coming months there will also be opportunities to learn about the history of our church and its intersections with the history of slavery and the abolitionist movement in Northampton. To no surprise, it includes some delightfully irreverent and faithful people. So stay tuned.

With faith, hope, and love,

Michael

My spirit is one with you, Great Spirit.
You strengthen me day and night to share my very best
with my brothers and sisters.
You, whom my people see in all of creation and in all people,
show me your love for us.
Help me to know, like the soaring eagle, the heights of knowledge.
From the Four Directions, fill me with the four virtues of fortitude, generosity,
respect, and wisdom;
so that I will help my people walk in the path of understanding and peace.

- Lakota prayer, from *The New Century Hymnal* ©1995 The Pilgrim Press. Used with permission

From the Minister of Faith Formation

Dear Beloved of God,

I pray that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy.

During a recent spiritual experience “walking” my wooden lap finger labyrinth while sitting out on my patio, the word “re-discover” came to me. I have spent time in prayer wondering and asking God what God would like me to “re-discover.” Journaling and word searches are two “re-discoveries.”

During this COVID 19 time, I have also “re-discovered” my passion for faith formation across the life span and some of the texts that have shaped my journey. One such text by Rev. John Westerhoff III, written in 1976 is titled *Will Our Children Have Faith?* His premise in the book (revised in 2000) was based on his correct observation that Christian Education had modeled itself on the school-instructional paradigm of our secular schools. Instead of expecting faith formation to happen in a wide variety of contexts – the family, the church family, and the church school, religious education was relegated to a Sunday morning where children would learn the facts about religion (think *head*); yet what about faith and the experience of faith (think *heart*)? Church school curriculum began to incorporate multiple intelligences and the term Christian Education morphed to Faith Formation in many denominations and churches.

Again, during this COVID 19 time with ZOOM church school, worship, youth group, team ministry meetings, etc., your church school ministry team has wondered about the faith formation of our youth. A survey was emailed to church school families and I hope parents will take the time to fill that out as it will help shape how we “re-discover,” if you will, how to honor the vows of baptism during this pandemic time.

I conclude this article with:

- 1) A Faith Talk Question: What is your favorite Bible passage?
 Why is it significant to you?
 Share your answers with someone else.
- 2) I “re-discovered” my wooden finger labyrinth. Having brought it home from my office six months ago, I used it for the first time on September 12 during an offering from the Genesis Spirituality and Conference Center via Zoom. It is now used everyday.

With continued gratitude for our mutual ministries.

Blessings,

Deb

Church School

Our abbreviated Church School will continue to 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.

Church school ministry team will be reviewing responses to the survey sent out in September.



College Students

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



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 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month at 11:30 until further notice. Here are the dates for October and November:

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

11/8 (Thanksgiving Sunday), 11/22

A Good Resource for Continued Learning

For several years I have been attending webinars sponsored by PRC (Practical 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 is an upcoming one I have registered for:

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

I encourage you to check out their website: www.prci.org/webinars-res/ to view live and recorded webinars.

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



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 (lcvincent56@gmail.com) and Deb (ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org) to let us know if you would like to be included on the Zoom invitations.



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 and Heather Dandy at: info@edwardschurchnorthampton.org.

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. Remaining lecture dates and titles are:

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.

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 21st 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.sneucc.org/faith-formation-leadership-training-and-certification>. For personal experience references please speak to Jim Stokes-Buckles or Deb Moore.

Virtual Choir has Begun

The Edwards Church Choir will be singing four virtual anthems this fall. Members are rehearsing over Zoom every other Thursday at 7pm. The first anthem will be presented during the September 27 worship service.

Since everything takes place online, choir participation is not limited by geography. You also don't have to worry about parking or driving after dark! And since each anthem project starts fresh at the beginning of the month, it's possible to jump in any time. Please email Minister of Music David Kidwell (music_minister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org) for more information.



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Sidney Letendre
Thomas Bernardin
Charles McCullagh
Henry C. Atwood
Elise Olson
Delores Thayer
Floyd Cheung
Robert Saalfrank



Judith Almeida
Susan Swift
Fumiko Brown
Sid Montague
Janice Batura
Nancy Flickinger
Daisy Letendre
Janet Smith

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!

Book Group Forming!

Edwards Church is an Open and Affirming UCC congregation. Did you ever wonder what that means and how it plays out in the life of the church?

The Open and Affirming Ministry Team would like to invite you to join a Book Group to discuss ***transforming: The Bible & the Lives of Transgender Christians*** by author Austen Hartke. Austen will offer a 2-hour workshop for our community via Zoom on Saturday, November 21.

Please consider joining us for a book discussion group that may answer some questions and hopefully raise some new ones for the Edwards community. We anticipate meeting to discuss the book three times this fall via Zoom on October 26, November 2, and November 9. Please contact Deb Moore at ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org for a copy of Austen's book. Look for more information in the Ministers' Weekly Message about meeting times.

Ministry Team News

Message from the Elected Core Ministry

Dear Edwards Church Members and Friends,

We want to provide an update on the work the ECM has been doing recently. We have been meeting regularly since our inception and have spent a great deal of time considering when it would be safe to open and how to reopen when the time is right. We have also been thoughtfully contemplating operating by consensus, the budget, input from the congregation for an ask for support on which we didn't have consensus, and changing from Council to ECM in the most transparent way possible. We look forward to hearing from you on any matter or concern.

Look for dates for the Core Ministry teams to be meeting via Zoom.

Faithfully,

The Elected Core Ministry

Mark Dion

Sheri Cheung

Shannon Farrand-Bernadin

Melissa Mattison

Laura Frogameni

Ella Stocker

Leon Drzewianowski

Garden Ministry

On Saturday, October 17 from 8:30-9:30, we will plant bulbs for the church front section. We will keep the social distances with face masks on, or divide time by tasks if you prefer to work alone. Please contact Fumiko Brown at fumikobrown1@gmail.com. This project will be done with sunshine or light rain.



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4TH

3:00-4:30 PM

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

**Let Us Not Forget Refugees:
The 40th 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



Make an Impact on the homeless & hungry in Northampton October 4, 2020

SHELTER SUNDAY

Supporting the work of:

Center for Human Development (CHD): Single Room Occupancy Outreach Project—connecting adults who are living in local rooming houses to permanent housing, food, and networking opportunities.

Friends of Hampshire County Homeless: Interfaith Emergency Shelter—offering wintertime shelter for adults, coordinating volunteers and evening meals, and covering operations costs, while ServiceNet provides overnight staff.

Manna Community Kitchen—serving healthy, locally sourced meals to people in need, prepared by dedicated volunteers; and now providing take-out meals to allow for social distancing.

ServiceNet—providing year-round shelter for adults at the Grove Street Inn; offering vital support services through the Resource Center; staffing the Interfaith Emergency Shelter; and providing permanent housing at Yvonne’s House and the Florence Inn for people moving out of homelessness.



Look for the Shelter Sunday mailer
and please give generously!
Or donate online at
northamptonsheltersunday.org

Your gift will be divided equally between the four Shelter Sunday organizations

Sponsored By:

Mo and Cher Willems Foundation



Florence Bank

Construct Associates, Inc.
Florence Pie Bar

Delap Real Estate
Rick Kristek Income Tax Services

OCTOBER 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
				6:30 Justice & Education Team 7pm Building & Grounds		4pm Circle of Care
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9am Church School - Zoom 9:55am Worship – Online 1pm College Student Gathering 3pm PVIRAG Presentation 5pm CITN	5pm Worship & Spirituality Team Meeting	7pm When & How to Re-Open Ad Hoc Team	12pm Bible Study – Zoom 6pm MANNA	7pm Congregation Life Team – Core Ministry Meeting 7pm Choir Rehearsal		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9am Church School - Zoom 9:55am Worship – Online 11:30 Youth Group		3pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 7pm Finance Team	12pm Bible Study – Zoom 5:30pm ONA Ministry Team 6pm MANNA	7pm ECM		1pm Thriving Congregations Ministry Team
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9am Church School - Zoom 9:55am Worship – Online		6:30pm CE Community of Practice 7pm Justice & Outreach Team – Core Ministry Meeting	12pm Bible Study - Zoom 6pm MANNA	7pm Choir Rehearsal		
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
9am Church School - Zoom 9:55am Worship – Online 11:30 Youth Group		3pm Prayer Shawl Ministry	12pm Bible Study - Zoom 6pm MANNA			Halloween