

THE SPIRE

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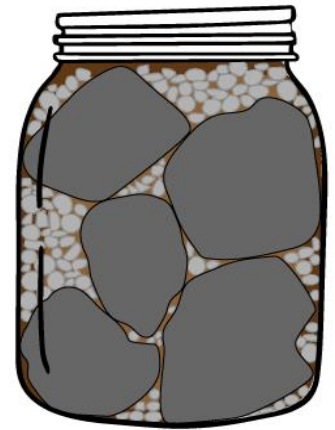
Dear Edwards Church Community,

“We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.”

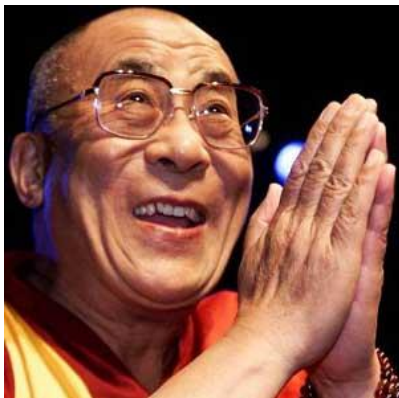
- Winston Churchill

There is so much we could worry or get upset about. There is also so much to celebrate and be grateful for. A lot depends on how you want to fill the time of your life, how you want to use your energy and attention.

A familiar image for time management encourages us to organize our lives the same way we would pack rocks, small stones and sand into a jar: the big rocks (our most important commitments) go in first and occupy most of the cherished space in our cramped schedules; smaller stones (significant but of less urgency or importance) go in around them; finally, there is the sand of our lives, stuff we all have to do that plays a role but which we must, when time is short, simply allow to wait.



In a similar fashion, we can be intentional about how we choose to feel about different things, causes, and even people. On a recent episode of the radio show and podcast Freakonomics, called “How Can We Break Our Addiction to Contempt?” (<https://freakonomics.com/podcast/arthur-brooks/>) the host interviewed Arthur Brooks, who has made his living as (in this order) a professional French horn player, a professor of economics and social scientist, the President of the American Enterprise Institute (a conservative think tank), and now as a professor, writer and public speaker.



Brooks has investigated the psychology and neuroscience of how to change his habits of thought and feeling, especially his negative reaction to certain ideas and the people who espouse them. He once asked the Dalai Lama what to do when his first reaction was to feel contempt. The answer: “Practice warm heartedness.”

Notice the first word: “Practice.” It is a chosen response. This practice is made more demanding and more necessary by the well documented tendency of social media and echo chamber media outlets to deliberately stoke our outrage in the service of their business bottom line.

Brooks is currently a professor at Harvard, teaching in the college and the Kennedy School of Government. Skeptics may suspect he is out of touch. But he is, by nature, a smart and curious person who follows his passion and uses his intelligence and research skills to learn more about what is important to him. Right now, that is learning whether and how the American experiment can survive and thrive. For Brooks, social science and spiritual practice converge. His most recent book is titled *Love Your Enemies*.

In a class on happiness, Brooks has his students enact the Duchenne smile so that they can experience the biofeedback. (The Duchenne smile, named for the 19th century anatomist who discovered its properties, has been shown to induce a pleasure response by engaging all the same muscles used when we naturally express pleasure with a smile so big and deep that we get crow's feet.) Learning to practice warmheartedness can be pleasant. Many of us are unknowingly habituated to activating our dopamine receptors by getting upset – outraged by the news or something on social media. We can reverse that, but first we must want to change it.

America has a history and a future, just like everyone who inhabits it: the Native Americans, who were here first; the European colonists, who came to be the dominant inhabitants; and more recent immigrants, who have been coming for generations for diverse reasons but with a common goal – a better life.

“We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.” In this season of Thanksgiving, may we all have time to reflect on all the good in our lives. And when confronted by whatever triggers our outrage, try responding only after a deeply sincere smile.

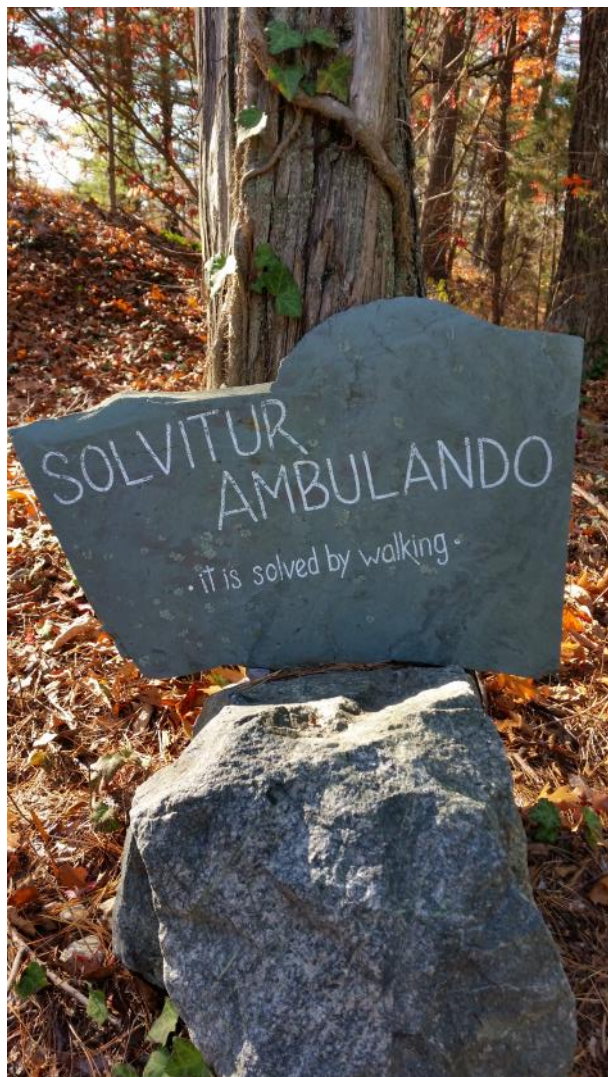
In faith, with hope, for love,
Michael



From the Minister of Faith Formation

Dear Beloved of God,

Come and Experience the Labyrinth
November 21 @ 3:30 & December 21 @ 3:30 in Addis Hall



The Labyrinth Ministry Team invites you to come and experience the spiritual and physical practice of walking a labyrinth. Lauren Artress, author of *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool*, writes: “Walking the labyrinth is a body prayer. It is non-threatening; all we are asked to do is walk. Walking the labyrinth clears the mind and gives insight into the spiritual journey. It calms people in the throes of life transitions. It helps them see their lives in the context of a path, a pilgrimage. They realize that they are not human beings on a spiritual path but spiritual beings on a human path.”

Jill Kimberly Hartwell and Elizabeth Catherine Nagel, in their book, *The Labyrinth and the Enneagram: Circling into Prayer*, write: “The labyrinth is a place where we discover in new ways how God is present with us as we walk through life. Some people report feeling calmed, centered and connected, truth emerging from the inside out, a synchronizing of body, breath and imagination, or a noticing of what was not evident after walking a labyrinth.”

People walk the labyrinth for many reasons: prayer, inspiration, guidance/clarification, meditation, relaxation, movement, ritual, a desire for wholeness and wellbeing, or deepening a relationship with the Divine are just a few.

Theresa of Avila, a 16th century mystic coined the phrase “threefold path” which is often used as a guide for experiencing the labyrinth. Upon entering the labyrinth, which has one way in and one way out, we are encouraged to *release*, or let go of our many roles and demands, feelings of anxiety, guilt, worry, etc. Entering the center is a time to *receive*, to pause, to be open, receptive, and even expectant to what may come: peace, clarity, insight, guidance, forgiveness. After taking as much time as needed in the center to stand in the mystery or listen for an inner voice, we *return* on the same path we entered.

Similarly, in a Labyrinth Ministry class at Andover Newton Theological School, the three movements were described as *moving inward*: a time to cast off discard, divest, unwrap forget, *centering*: a time to be open, expectant, and receptive, as though we were receiving a gift, and *moving outward*: a time to gain direction, satisfaction, comfort, and new energy.

There is no right or wrong way to walk a labyrinth. I have seen people skip, crawl, pause in various places, dance, and sometimes sing as they move through the labyrinth. Some people walk with their hands folded prayerfully, others with arms crossed over their heart, by their side, or extended in front or beside them. Many people bow before entering and after exiting the labyrinth. All are encouraged to keep an open mind throughout their walk.

For many who experience the labyrinth on a regular basis (myself included), it is a clearing, cleansing, and balancing ritual for their spirit.

Pre-COVID, the team offered labyrinth walks to mark the winter and summer solstices and the spring and fall equinoxes. Most recently it was offered as an intergenerational station during our Look Park worship.



The theme of the November walk will be thanksgiving and the theme for December will be centered around the winter solstice. Participants will be required to be masked and to remove footwear before walking the labyrinth. Available will be samples of different labyrinths: a hand held pewter one, a wooden lap one, an 18” by 18” cloth one, and some paper finger labyrinths. Whether you have walked a labyrinth before or are curious about this physical and spiritual practice, I hope you will experience one or both of these offerings.

For more information about labyrinths visit: www.labyrinthsociety.org.

On a local note: Sr. Lorrie Villemaire, of the Sisters of St. Joseph (from whom we purchased our portable labyrinth) some years ago developed a 12-week Labyrinth Program at the Hampshire County Jail and House of Correction in Northampton. In 2010 that led to the construction of an outdoor labyrinth at the Jail and House of Correction (not open to the public). One inmate quoted in a 2013 article in the Gazette said: “the labyrinth is a place where you can be a free man even though you are locked into a facility.”

Blessings,
Deb

In Person Pastoral Care

We have enjoyed meeting in person with many folks in the community since getting vaccinated last spring, and we hope to see each of you soon. As is always true, if there is a special reason to meet, we want to do that but need you to let us know.

We can sit inside or out. If you are not vaccinated we can still visit, but may need to take more precautions for your benefit.

Please email anytime or call us at the church office (413) 584-5500 or on our cell phones.

Michael minister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org cell: 413-531-9729

Deb ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org cell: 413-275-5507

A Message From Jeanne

Dear Edwards friends,

Thank you for the many get well cards and the emailed expressions of caring and concern following my recent injury. I very much appreciate the assistance with transportation and the surprise basket of goodies which included the world's best corn chowder. Most of all, thank you for your prayers.

I am pleased to report that I am feeling much better and am gradually returning to my normal activities. As always, I feel blessed to be part of the Edwards Church community.

Jeanne Kocsis

Cathedral in the Night Team Volunteers Are Back at It!

Thanks to 17 of our Edwards Cathedral in the Night Mission Team volunteers who helped make sandwiches, desserts and a hot meal for our Cathedral in the Night neighbors on Sunday, October 3rd! We're very happy that we've been able to expand our all-vaccinated volunteer crew to make the work a bit easier on everyone. In fact, 6 of our crew of 17 were able to participate in the Cathedral worship service and help hand out food on October 3, most of whom can be seen in the photos below.

Unfortunately, our Cathedral friends are struggling. The length and unpredictability of the pandemic has taken a heavy toll on Pastor Steph Smith and her congregation. Below is a message I recently received from Cathedral in the Night, for those of you who may feel called and able to provide support.

Our next partnership date with Cathedral is on Sunday, December 5th. If you are interested in joining the Edwards Cathedral in the Night team and receiving emails inviting you to help with the meals we provide once every other month, please email me at debradavis1217@gmail.com. Thanks, everyone!

Debbie Davis, Coordinator
Cathedral in the Night Mission Team

(more on page 5)

Excerpt from Cathedral in the Night's most recent online newsletter:

"We could use a win"

This year and a half has been long and difficult for everyone and our ministry is no exception. We have not missed a single Sunday and have adapted over and over to keep everyone safe. Our community is feeling more marginalized than ever - with fewer beds at local shelters, lack of housing available, few places to be during the day, etc. We are seeing new people every week, some who have never experienced homelessness before. People are hurting and we need a win. Can you be a part of this win with your prayers and donations? Financial gifts can be donated at PayPal or send us a check made out to Cathedral in the Night Ministry and mailed to 867 N. Pleasant St. Amherst, MA 01002. Every gift, no matter the size, means so much to us! It will help us to purchase the extra supplies we need to package our meals as to-go's and meet the needs of our community.



Edwards Church Cathedral in the Night Team members on October 3.

Left to right: Chris Hjelt, Susan Anderson, Shauneen Kroll, Jim Green, Danny Shanahan

Left to right: Chris Hjelt, Grace Del Vecchio, Jim Green creating and sharing customized "to-go" dinner bags.



Intergenerational Christmas Pageant

Would you like to be involved in visioning our intergenerational Christmas Pageant? Please contact Deb Moore at: ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org

Music at the Crossroads Returns!

For the first time since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic the Edwards Church series *Music at the Crossroads* will be returning. For this first concert, on Saturday, November 13 at 7:30pm, church member Dave Haughey will be returning with his cello quartet, 1200 Horsehairs, to play an eclectic range of music including arrangements of music by Lonard Cohen, Muse, and The Allman Brothers, as well as some traditional music and a few of Dave's original compositions. Seating in the sanctuary will be limited to 25 audience members, but the concert will be streamed live on Zoom. All proceeds from the concert will go to benefit the Trans Asylum Seekers Ministry Alliance.

1200 Horsehairs is a band of four cellos playing popular and new music ranging from traditional to metal to modern original compositions. Its members, Dave Haughey, Pablo Issa, Karl Knapp, and Wayne Smith, are internationally active cellists who have played with the likes of the Trans-Siberian Orchestra, The Paul Winter Consort, Eugene Friesen, and the Moody Blues, among many others. They have been on faculty at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the Hartt School, and have taught and presented masterclasses at The Berklee College of Music, The University of Massachusetts, The Rio International Cello Encounter, Amherst College, and Depauw University.

Please call the Edwards Church office at 413-584-5500 to reserve a seat or to register for the Zoom meeting.



AFGHAN REFUGEES ARRIVING

Afghan refugees are arriving and being resettled in the Pioneer Valley. Catholic Charities, the resettlement agency with which the Edwards Church Circle of Care has work most closely to shepherd an Iraqi family, has informed us of some immediate needs for the arriving families:

- Adult and child winter coats, boots, gloves and hats (new or very gently used)
- Child bikes, helmets, and locks
- Brooms, mops, dustpans, wastebaskets, shower curtains and rings (new)
- Coffee tables - Large mixing bowls
- Cooking knives - Water glasses
- Markers, crayons, paper for children.

These items can be brought to the church during the week (Monday – Thursday 8 – 2, Friday 9-1) or on Sunday morning. Thank you!!



YOUTH GROUP

All youth in Grades 6-12 are welcome to be part of the Edwards Church Youth Group and to invite a friend.

Our November schedule times to be announced:

November 14 - we will meet via Zoom at 11:30

November 28 - we will gather at 1:00 in Addis Hall



Prayer Shawl Ministry

All knitters, crocheters, and weavers are welcome to join this ministry team which meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month via Zoom from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. If you would like to join us, please email Deb Moore at ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org. If you or someone you know would like a prayer shawl, please contact the church office at info@edwardschurchnorthampton.org to arrange a time for pick-up or delivery of a shawl.



Guided Meditation Offering

This popular offering meets on the first Thursday of the month via Zoom from 9:55 – 10:30 a.m. Please email Linda Vincent (lcvincent56@gmail.com) and Deb Moore (ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org) if you would like to be part of this group and we will make sure you get a link to the offering. We also encourage those participating to join via Zoom promptly at 9:55 to avoid disrupting the meditation.



College Students

Ministry with our College Students – and those who have graduated – we will meet via Zoom on November 7 at 1:00p.m. This group is open to Edwards Church, local college students, and graduates.

November Birthdays



C. Rutherford Platt

Heidi Kinner

Grace Lively

Susan Banas

Elizabeth Young

Paul C. Gustavson

William Roeder

Krisinda S. Semb

Louise P. Montague

Lindsey Ann Wells

Samuel A. Grant

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!

Re-imagining Church School

Hope springs eternal is the saying and yes, it does. Wonderful is the news that vaccines will soon be available to those between the ages of 5 and 11! Following CDC, the Northampton Board of Health and the Northampton School Board guidelines for COVID protocols, we are moving forward reimagining Church School in Addis Hall. All are wondering about Church School on Sunday morning – what will it look like? Just like Sunday morning worship it is bound to be different.

Several families have expressed interest in an intergenerational gathering on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon consisted a main theme with stations similar to the theme, followed by a meal. The space in Addis Hall, with windows that can be opened provides multiple opportunities limited only by our imagination.

Parents, I continue to desire your feedback and am happy to visit with you in person, following protocols, talk on the phone or schedule – yes – a Zoom.

Congratulations to Jim Stokes-Buckles!

Jim has completed participation in the SNEUCC Faith Formation Leadership Program and will receive his certificate virtually on November 6. Classes and workshops during the pandemic have been held virtually and included:

Engaging Our Sacred Story
Serving Together – Mission for All Ages
Exploring the UCC – Our History, Our Beliefs, Our Identity
Developing Faith – Ages and Stages
Living Into the Mystery – Worship and Sacraments in the UCC
Making Disciples – Theories and Practices for the 21st Century
Creating Safe Environments – Policies and Practices
Racial Justice Training
Exploring Curriculum Resources

For more information about this Leadership Program, visit www.sneucc.org.

November 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 7:30 Book Group	2 7:00 Music Team	3 12:00 Bible Study Building & 7:00 Grounds	4 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	5	6 5:00 Circle of Care
7 Communion Sunday 10:00 Worship 1:00 College Students	8	9 3:00 Prayer Shawl	10 12:00 Bible Study 7:00 ECM	11 Office Closed 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	12	13 5:00 Music at the Crossroads
14 10:00 Worship 11:30 Youth Group	15 7:30 Book Group SPIRE deadline	16 7:00 Finance	17 12:00 Bible Study 7:00 Thriving Congregations 7:00 Building & Grounds	18 4:30 Care & Visitation 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	19	20
21 10:00 Worship 3:30 Labyrinth Walk	22	23 3:00 Prayer Shawl 6:30 CE Community of Practice	24 12:00 Bible Study	25 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	26	27
28 10:00 Worship 11:30 Youth Group	29	30				