

THE SPIRE

EDWARDS CHURCH *of* NORTHAMPTON
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Vol. 32 No. 6

June-August 2022

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. (Acts 2:4)

Dear Edwards Church Community,

To stand before a painting by Titian and bathe in its beauty can be stunning. This one doesn't have the rich colors many of his paintings do, but it captures the moment. I have had the privilege of traveling to museums where you can stand before one of his paintings and just be blown away by the depth of detail, the stunning colors, and other qualities of his work. The size, depth and splendor of most of the ones I have seen is what draws me in. In this painting of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit, represented as a dove, radiates light and warmth, providing insight, encouragement, and a shared sense of identity to the gathered community of Jesus followers. Titian was a master of the high Renaissance, and it shows in his style.



Like the diversity of nationalities in the people gathered in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost, people drawn to follow Jesus have always come from different backgrounds. In the 1970's, French missionaries engaged Cameroonian Christians in retelling gospel stories by acting them out and having those reenactments captured in pictures. As noted on the website Indigenous Jesus, "The paintings that resulted from this partnership were western in style, but depicted the Mafa and their environment accurately so that the Mafa could identify with the biblical stories being portrayed." Same Jesus, same Spirit, different expression.



Maybe it was the natural resistance to change, or the need to provide an explanation they were ready to accept, that caused a skeptic in the crowd at the first Pentecost to claim that those who heard the apostles speaking a language not their own must be “drunk on new wine.” The author of Acts reports that Peter then explained how Jesus fulfilled Hebrew scripture’s promise of a Messiah.

Three thousand people were baptized that day. Peter must have been a really good preacher! The book of Acts reports: “Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common “ It was the Woodstock phase of the early church. Same Jesus, same Spirit, different expression.

Today we face new circumstances. Participation in any kind of a community of faith is way down in our culture. Covid has affected almost all communities of faith in challenging ways. And we have some conflict still to recover from.

Following Jesus has always involved struggle and being invited, if not required, to change in ways we cannot fully foresee and only understand after the fact. If you read the whole book of Acts, you can better appreciate that contending points of view and a variety of backgrounds among members have always created tension in Christian communities. We still need the same Jesus, the same Spirit and our own expression. May they be ours to share.

In faith, with hope, for love,
Michael

From the Minister of Faith Formation

Dear Beloved of God,

*“Who has seen the wind?
Neither I nor you
But when the leaves hang trembling
The wind is passing through.
Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I
But when the trees bow down their heads.
The wind is passing by.”
(Christina Rossetti)*

While we are still in the season of Eastertide, the day of Pentecost and the season following it – Ordinary Time – will be here shortly after this edition of the Spire arrives in your inbox or mail box. Pentecost is celebrated fifty days after Easter and the liturgical color for the day is red. (Many of you may remember that all are invited to wear red or some semblance of that color to worship that Sunday). Along with the liturgical color, symbols for Pentecost include a descending dove, flames of fire and often a ship symbolizing the church and the birth of it on Pentecost.



While the author of the Book of Acts gives us some clues, I like to enter the story and contemplate the many emotions that must have filled the room that day. A sense of community in being with others; fear or amazement at the sound of the violent wind and seeing tongues of fire resting on the heads of those gathered; the cacophony of noise with the sound of so many languages being spoken at the same time; affirmation of feeling heard and understood; confusion as to what was happening and what would be next; grateful for the fulfilled promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Spirit means pneuma, breath, wind, air. Like the wind we can't see the Spirit; however, we, or at least I, can truly feel and see the effects of the Spirit at work. We, or at least I, can see the gifts of the Spirit manifest in people, events and nature. Gifts of love, joy, peace, patience, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. *How, when, or in whom have you experienced these gifts?*




The mother rabbit in *The Runaway Bunny*, by Margaret Wise Brown is representative, for the young of God's indwelling and loving presence. God's Spirit will always be with us. That indwelling Spirit in each one of us manifests itself as we make meaning with and bring healing to others and to our world. Or better yet, when in the words of the prophet Micah, we do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God. (Micah 6:8).

Often during my morning meditation (and when no one is around to hear me), I sing this song:

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me,
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me,
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me,
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.*

As the summer months and vacations for many approach, I pray that each of us will intentionally be open to the Spirit of our living God falling upon us, melting, molding, filling, and using us just as she will and when she desires. May we notice the Spirit's presence in those around us, in ourselves, in our communities and the world. May we be manifestations of the gifts of Spirit seeking to bring about God's vision of Shalom for all people and all of creation.

*Blessings,
Deb*

Congratulations to our Graduates!  ***Your Edwards Church
Family celebrates with you and wishes you well!
High School Graduates:***

Ben Cheung from Northampton High School. Ben will attend Wheaton College in Norton, MA in the fall.

Remy Gutterman from Northampton High School. Remy will attend UMASS Amherst enrolled in the BFA Dance Program.

Rose McCollough from Smith Academy. Rose will attend Smith College in the fall majoring in Biology.

Max Schneider from Northampton High School. Max will attend UMASS Amherst in the fall.

College Graduates:

Elena Frogameni from Mt. Holyoke College with a Politics and French Major and a concentration in Journalism, Media & Public Discourse. Elena will attend the University of Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar studying Global Governance and Diplomacy.

***~Summer Book Read~
July 11, 25 & August 8, 22 from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.***

Ladder to the Light: An Indigenous Elder's Meditations on Hope and Courage by Steven Charleston. "Native America knows something about cultivating resilience and resisting darkness. Choctaw elder and Episcopal priest Steven Charleston offers words of hard-won hope, rooted in daily conversation with the Spirit and steeped in Indigenous wisdom."

Rev. Michael B. Curry – "Here is a wisdom born out of a lifetime of listening faithfully to the voice of God. Here is wisdom we need for the living of these days."

Barbara Brown Taylor – "This book touched me as few do. Steven Charleston is a spiritual medic who has given himself to a life of healing, and you will want to share his medicine with everyone you know."

Please let Deb Moore (ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org) know by June 13 if you would like to be part of this book discussion. FYI – you will not be disappointed.

Northampton Parents Center

Dear Edwards Church Community,

Northampton Parents Center is wrapping up our "regular" season on June 2. We have been grateful to be back indoors in our wonderful space in the church on Mondays and Wednesdays for several months now. We look forward to being back in the fall! We will have outdoor playgroups for families with young children weekly through the summer months. For details see our website: www.northamptonparentscenter.org

ALSO: We invite you to join us for our Annual Tag Sale Fundraiser, taking place on the front lawn of the Unitarian Society at 220 Main Street on Saturday, June 4, 9 am to 1 pm. We welcome donations of gently used items towards the Tag Sale from now until 10 am, June 3. For details email: northamptonparentscenter@gmail.com

Thank you for your support of our families with young children!
-Northampton Parents Center

In Person Pastoral Care

Michael and Deb have enjoyed meeting in person with many folks in the community since getting vaccinated last spring and our second booster shots. We hope to see you this summer. 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, or walk outdoors. 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



GROUP

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

Our upcoming schedule:

June 12 - in person in Addis Hall at 11:30



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 ffmininister@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

Linda and Deb invite you during our sabbath break from our monthly spiritual practice to take time this summer to water and nurture the sister seeds of joy in your hearts. Seeds of beauty, humility, generosity, and compassion. We look forward to seeing with you when our practice starts back up in October.



Young Adults

Ministry with our college students and 20 somethings— we will meet on June 5th. A separate email will be sent regarding time and place.



June

Linda Vincent
Mark Smith
Jonathon Tucker
Matthew Teague
Maryann Bankman
Thomas Derr
Robert Daniels
Jennifer Korza
Mary Lyons
Sarah McCullagh

July

Beth Firmin
Melissa Mattison
Christian Schmidt
Jon Dietrich
Phyllis Taylor
Ellyn McAllister Schmidt
Lyle Phipps
Carl Erickson
Ron Korza

August

Glenn Gulotta
Florence Howes Semb
Alexandra Webb
Mark Dion
Carolyn Dion
Jeffrey Prince

SUMMER BIRTHDAYS

Note: In an effort to protect the digital identities of our community members, we will no longer publish dates of birth in the newsletter. 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!

June 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 12 Bible Study	2	3	4
5 <i>Communion Sunday</i> 10 Worship 11:30 Pastoral Congregation Relations 1 Young Adults	6	7 7 Parent Education Workshop 7:15 Outreach	8 12 Bible Study 7 Building & Grounds	9	10 5 Music at the Crossroads	11
12 10 Worship 11:30 Youth Group	13	14 3 Prayer Shawl 7 ECM 7 Parent Education Workshop	15 12 Bible Study	16 4 Care & Visitation	17	18
19 10 Worship	20	21 7 Finance 7 Parent Education Workshop	22	23	24	25
26 10 Worship 11:30 Youth Group	27	28 3 Prayer Shawl 6:30 FF COP	29 12 Bible Study	30		

July 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Communion Sunday 10 Worship 1 Young Adults	4	5	6 12 Bible Study 7 Building & Grounds	7	8	9
10 10 Worship	11 7 Summer Book Read	12 3 Prayer Shawl	13 12 Bible Study	14	15	16
17 10 Worship	18	19	20 12 Bible Study 7 Building & Grounds	21 4 Care and Visitation	22	23
24 10 Worship	25 7 Summer Book Read	26 3 Prayer Shawl 6:30 FF COP	27 12 Bible Study	28	29	30
31 10 Worship						

August 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 12 Bible Study 7 Building & Grounds	4	5	6
7 Communion Sunday 10 Worship 1 Young Adults	8 7 Summer Book Read	9 3 Prayer Shawl	10 12 Bible Study	11	12	13
14 10 Worship	15 **SPIRE Deadline**	16	17 12 Bible Study 7 Building & Grounds	18 4 Care & Visitation	19	20
21 10 Worship	22 7 Summer Book Read	23 3 Prayer Shawl 6:30 FF COP	24 12 Bible Study	25	26	27
28 10 Worship	29	30	31 12 Bible Study 7 Building & Grounds			