

THE SPIRE

EDWARDS CHURCH *of* NORTHAMPTON
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Vol. 34 No. 5

May 2024

From the Senior Minister

Dear Edwards Church Community,

May flowers. It is a simple declarative sentence. May, the month, flowers – but into what? When the month of May expresses the life force welling up in it to become a floral form, what exactly will it be, this time? My sister Madgie, a flower farmer in Maryland, knows exactly what to expect in each area of her fields and greenhouses. She knows what seeds she planted and where. But in life writ large, in our lives and the life of this church, what growth can we expect? What are we planting?



Master gardeners often plan their gardens to take advantage of their environment. Until climate change, with the upward trend in average annual temperatures expected to continue, arborists in our area did not even think of experimenting with trees that historically did not appear north of New York City. Now they are planting them selectively to find the best trees for our future.

Since the pandemic, most mainline churches (including ours) have seen attendance overall, and especially participation in programs for children and youth, shrink and in some cases disappear. Rather than accept that as inevitable and adapt by reducing staff to meet the reduced current size of our regularly attending cohort of children and youth, we are proceeding with a search for a full-time, seminary trained Designated Term Associate Minister of Faith Formation. We will also consider candidates who express a preference for a three-quarter time commitment.

This is a significant financial commitment for our church. The profile posted, which is reproduced in full at the end of this Spire (just before the calendar), offers a compensation range of \$78-88,000 for a full-time person. A designated term minister is “called,” not “hired,” for a minimum of three years, which is what we are offering.

At the end of the search, the search team will recommend a candidate to the congregation. The candidate will participate in leading a Sunday service and attend smaller group social gatherings in anticipation of a vote after the Sunday service. Unlike “called” ministers that our church has had in the past, the designated term minister does not have an open-ended commitment. After three years, the relationship ends, unless both parties want it to become open-ended. Unlike an interim, the church and the minister can decide together to convert the relationship to become a “settled” minister, meaning it would become open ended.



This three-year experiment is an investment in finding out whether we can find a new approach to engaging families of school aged and younger children that will obtain more engagement than we currently have. As described in the profile, the Designated Term Associate Minister of Faith Formation will not only give some energy to “what was before,” they will also be tasked (with congregational support) with reaching out to the community and relevant groups within it to see what might lead to more engagement.

This is an investment in the future of church: not an investment in “church as we know it,” but a in a church still to be discovered. Any church that is not investing in creating new members in the next generation will gradually disappear, even if it has plenty of money in the bank. So we have decided to fund this effort to find a way or ways to start regrowing our future.

In faith, with hope, for love,

Michael

Pentecost Sunday at Look Park



Pentecost Sunday, May 19, we will gather at Look Park for a special Sunday celebration of the Spirit. There will be music and spoken prayers, scripture and (brief) preaching, projects and prayer stations, and a catered meal after the service. We plan for this to be a family friendly, intergenerational event.

Parking is paid for as well, so if you do not have a season pass just tell the gate attendant you are coming for the Edwards Church service, then drive half way around the park to the Dow Pavilion, which is on your right.

A mixture of sandwiches, salads and pizza will be provided, with seltzer and water and other goodies. Feel free to bring a sweet treat to share for dessert, if you are inspired.



From the Bridge Associate Minister

Dear Faithful Friends

Four months after I first walked into Edwards Church, we are closer to the end of the bridge than the beginning. And lo! it is the same wonderful bridge. A sturdy walkway that is crossing the time between Deb's retirement and the time that your new Associate Minister comes to be with all of you. I am so glad to still be on the bridge with you.

In my January letter to you I asked you to please wear your name tags on Sundays. At that time, it was because I am one and you are many, and truthfully, remembering names is not one of my strong points! Now four months later I do know many of you by name and once again I am asking you to consider just how important it is for *our congregation* to know and be known, not just by me, but by all of you!

Isaiah 43: 1-4 But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, Jacob, and formed you, Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine. When you pass through waters, I will be with you; through rivers, you shall not be swept away.

Two of the functions of a healthy and growing congregation is to build and strengthen relationships and to risk being known in our fullness.

Our names are personal to us – when we hear them spoken out by another, we might feel seen and heard in a precious way. As Isaiah says, as though “you are mine.”

Have you ever forgotten the name of the person standing in front of you or across the room or in another pew? This might have been someone that you knew well but, in that moment, you forgot their name. Maybe you got embarrassed by this, or laughed about it, or turned away from that person whose name slipped from your mind. The good thing is that this happens all the time at our church and in the world at large. We are not alone, not “swept away” in our not remembering!

So, here I am again. Suggesting that simple name tag can make a huge difference – not just for “strangers” or “newbies” but for all of us. Will you join me in this intentional practice of welcoming at worship? If you forgot your name tag at home, will you take the time to make a new one? I hope so and I welcome your thoughts. Maybe you have a very different way of looking at names, tags, welcoming, or being seen and heard.

Oh what a joy it is to be in your presence. How sweet it is that we met in the winter and now spring is busting out all over! The next time I write for the Spire will be my last letter in this season of bridging. Now I look forward to what is to come; between us, around us, and within this church and community. Blessings to all, Marguerite



Risen One, open my mind and heart. Let me see and welcome your Presence.

- *“Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him (Luke 24:31).”*
 - What is God’s latest revelation to me? How has this impacted how I live now?
- *“Jesus said to them, ‘Come and have breakfast’ (John 21:12.)”*
 - What spiritual food am I being offered for the nourishment of my soul? What food do I accept? What food do I reject?
- *“He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him (Matthew 28:7).”*
 - How do I need to adapt to better recognize the Holy One in my life?
- *“Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He has been raised (Matthew 28:5-6).”*
 - Fear filled the hearts of those who had loved Jesus. They found it difficult to believe the Easter message.
 - What is keeping me from hearing the Truth that is being offered to me? What is my resistance revealing?
- *“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe (John 20:29).”*
 - How do I cooperate with what Mystery is inviting in me?
- *“Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ (John 20:16).”*
 - When have I too known intimacy with the Holy One?
 - Who does God say that I am to Him?
- *“Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us? (Luke 24:13)”*
 - Where in my past have I experienced amazing relief after intense struggle?
- *“Why do you look for the living among the dead? (Luke 24:5)”*
 - Where in my past am I looking for life? What am I being invited to release?
- *“So, they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples (Matthew 28:8).”*
 - How do I share the powerful presence of God in my midst? How do I witness what I believe?
- *“Jesus Himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you’ (Luke 24:36).”*
 - How will I greet myself and my world with peace this Easter season?

Source: Out of the Ordinary: Prayers, Poem and Reflections of Every Season. – Joyce Rupp

Are you concerned about faith formation for children, youth and families? As your Bridge Associate Minister, I have signed up for this free online summit. Because I will not be with the church for much longer (end of June at the latest) I encourage you to join me in exploring new ideas about reaching out to and nurturing spiritual growth and faith formation in children, youth and their families. Reach out to me and I will help sign you up. The more of us that think deeply about our intergenerational future the better!
Marguerite ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org

RETHINK CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRY

Online Summit - May 20-24, 2024

In collaboration with leading practitioners and experts in the field, this summit is a unique opportunity for congregational leaders, educators, parents and caregivers, and anyone passionate about nurturing the spiritual growth and faith formation of children, youth, and their families. Our virtual gathering will delve into various aspects of these vital ministries, providing insights, practical tools, and strategies to foster a strong foundation of faith.



FOCUSED TOPICS

- If We Really Cared About Children and Youth....
- A Good Theology of Children and Youth Ministry
- Faith at Home
- An Intergenerational View
- Idea Lab of Practical Approaches

Our Inchworm Quilt and Pentecost

Thank you so much for your help creating 4-patch squares following the service Sunday, April 7th. From 900 squares of fabric, you paired half of them in 45 minutes.

In the movie, "Hans Christian Anderson", Danny Kaye sings a counting song about an inchworm measuring marigolds. "Two and two are four, four and four are eight, eight and eight are sixteen." The song came to us as we were imagining joining sets of fabric squares to make patches of 2 then 4 then 8 then 16. 16 small squares assembled to make a 16-piece block.

And YOU began that process.

The inchworm quilt top will be in church on May 19, Pentecost Sunday which commemorates the day the apostles received the power of the Holy Spirit and spoke of Jesus to those gathered in Jerusalem. People were there from many nations and yet each heard their own language being spoken by the apostles.

We see the quilt as a representation of Pentecost - a time when God sees us as individuals (the fabric squares) from every race and nation (the different patterns and colors) speaking in different tongues (our attempt to explain a 4-patch to non-quilters and the chatter heard while choosing squares). Each of us different yet together we are one body, one nation, one community called to serve (the final quilt top). The team has made a second block to alternate with the congregation's blocks. It resembles a pinwheel - a reminder of the rushing wind of the Spirit on Pentecost.

THANK YOU for your part in creating a color-filled gift of comfort for someone setting out on a new path in their life.

- After counting, Danny Kaye sings to the inchworm - "Seems to me you'd stop and see how beautiful they are" (the marigolds that is). SO, do stop and see how beautiful the quilt top is on May 19th.
- For some mathematical fun: Given the information in the first paragraph, how many pairs of fabric squares were chosen each minute on April 7th?

With gratitude from the quilt team, Janet Tucker, Sandra Rossi, Deb Dietrich, Trudy Bertram.

Our Inchworm Quilt and Pentecost *Pictures*

(Below) Thank you Deb for helping
put together all the pieces!

(Above) Showing our process and
progress.



(Below) The blocks spaced apart as
they were in church on Sunday.



ECM Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2024

7:15-8:33 PM

In Attendance: Mark Dion, Rev Michael McSherry, Jack Hjelt, Sandi Coyne-Gilbert, Marguerite Sheehan, Adam Simon

Absent: Jeff Prince, Heather Bell

Meeting called to order at 7:24pm by Mark Dion.

Opening Devotional offered by Jack Hjelt.

Approval of Minutes: Michael offered some adjustments to the minutes from last month. Michael's adjustments are provided at the conclusion of these minutes. Revised minutes will be sent out to all members.

Music Team Update: Mark presented there is an upcoming concert on April 28. Mark, Jack and Michael will be present for the concert. Some issues with Northampton Live not printing when we run events. No explanation given as to why our events were not printed. Mark brought it to the attention of the people involved and through Northampton Arts Council the event was included. Mark has some posters to put up. Mark expects to get the event posters up by Wednesday.

Choir robes were discussed. Question about if they will be used again? Michael suggested that he can get some wardrobe boxes free to store the choir robes. At the next music meeting the committee will discuss and present the solution to the ECM. Subject tabled for a later date.

Personnel Team/By-Laws Update: Janet, Jeff and Laura will meet next month and complete the bylaws.

Finance Team: Michael presented that ECM can receive the monthly operating statement, results compared to budget year to date, and notes from Sabra, how the investment accounts are performing and some other reports. ECM members were interested in getting the reports. The next Finance meeting is Thursday night but reports are received a few days before finance meets.

Outreach: Jack reported that there will be another meeting coming up soon. Follow up communications regarding gifts. Rob had a tough week with his family.

Marguerite's report detailed her activities. Marguerite presented that she is not having any response from young adults. She wondered if we should wait until the new person assumes this position, instead of trying to actively engage she is getting no response. Michael suggested that the young adults are not interested and perhaps we should stop asking for the immediate future. Marguerite's efforts were recognized, and she will send a communication about no gatherings anticipated but if they want to meet with her, she will make herself available.

Another point raised in Marguerite's report was the use of name tags. She senses some resistance to using them. Mark brought up the large board of name tags and perhaps if we cleaned it up this could be more inviting for people to contribute. In 2023 there was a strong effort to invite people to wear the name tags. Let's put energy behind wearing them.

Reminder it is a hospitality practice that will encourage connections. People who have been going to church for some time might feel bad that they can't remember other people's names. We need to promote the use of name tags and begin inviting people, even new visitors, to wear name tags as well. Other ideas are welcome on how to encourage.

We can also connect with Open and Affirming Committee to help further encourage this practice.

Search Team/Faith Formation Minister search: ECM members were impressed with how the invitation to join our church was presented. Should this be ¾ time or full time. Improved utilization of the position will be important. We need to have someone beyond the Senior Minister to help determine new directions and engagement within the congregation. Faith formation is not only for younger children but for all ages. This position would be paid for three years. This is a generalist position with specific areas of focus. This is intended to help us flourish.

Security Issue Response: Mark did not receive a response from the Northampton Police Department liaison to help reframe and retrain our ushers. Mark followed up and asked the administrative assistant for follow up. Hopefully, we will have a date for the session when we meet in May.

ECM Signature: Mark is working with Kyla to finalize and get the correct names on the ECM signature.

Other Business: Michael made a tentative reservation for Sunday May 19 at Look Park Dow Pavilion for Pentecost Sunday. Sandwiches, pizza etc would be provided for attendees. Dobbs Pavilion would be the location. Michael believes we can bring this event in at under \$1,500. Usually very well received including children.

May 26 we will be hosted at First Churches for Pride. Executive Conference Minister, Rev Goodwin, would be bringing the sermon. Michael thinks there will also be communion because of the inclusive group in attendance.

Mark brought up about B and G. Music team put in for dimmers on the lights, looking for an estimate so that is missing from budget. Water in the elevator shaft and we need to get that cleared before we can have an inspection. Mark suggested we need to have a mold test done to ensure the safety of our church. ECM in agreement with the mold test. Should this be brought to B and G? Mark will reach out to B and G and get the mold test done, if anything is found, it will be cleared. The water mentioned has been removed.

Michael discussed increasing the number of people who help with lay leadership. He made a request to the church and will put it in the spire.

Jack mentioned that sometimes when he listens to the service after church, there is a break in the recording. Thomas and Alex are meeting with a person from the company that created our video recording system. Wednesday a visit is expected.

Next meeting date: May 13.

Assignments: Jack will facilitate, Mark will do the agenda, opening devotional Michael, Sandi will do minutes, closing prayer Marguerite.

Closing prayer, Marguerite.

Meeting ended at 8:33 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Sandi Coyne-Gilbert

EDWARDS CHURCH IS INVESTING BIG IN LOW INCOME HOUSING

Our congregation has indicated that their priority for an alternative way to invest the Church's funds is in low income housing. After many years of seeking, researching and interviewing, the Investment Committee is pleased to announce that it has found a well-capitalized, local, low income housing development organization with strong leadership and governance in which to invest \$500,000: Way Finders.

Way Finders is based in Springfield and has over seven, active, low income housing projects currently under development in towns such as Amherst, South Hadley, Ludlow, Springfield, Great Barrington and Agawam. They built and currently manage Live 155 on Pleasant Street in Northampton, and they manage five other low income housing properties here, plus many more throughout western Mass.

Way Finders has established and oversees a "Development Capital Fund" which provides funds between the period of pre-development and acquisition of a construction loan for their low income housing development projects. Way Finders puts money into the fund, as do outside investors, including churches. Edwards Church is now one of those investors. The \$500,000 is a loan to Way Finders, not a grant or gift. The funds earn an annual 4% interest rate, paid quarterly, which is similar to the interest rates on corporate bonds today; the funds can be repaid to the Church in six years if we so choose.

The Investment Committee is thrilled to have found this low-income housing development alternative investment for the Church's funds. We will keep you updated on other alternative investments as they come up. In the meantime, if you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Ruth Griggs, Chair of the Investment Committee at ruthgriggs03@gmail.com

Thank You, Youth Groups!

The Cathedral in the Night Ministry Team sends a special thank you to the Edwards Youth Group as well as the First Churches and St. John's Episcopal Youth Groups for their help with our April 7th partnership with Cathedral in the Night. Youth from First Churches and St. John's made PB&J sandwiches and packed bags of desserts while Jack & Cole Mattison-Gulotta from our own Edwards Youth Group helped assemble personal cleansing kits, loaded and unloaded food into and out of the cars, participated in the worship service, and helped serve dinner. We also had a big crew of adult volunteers helping, some of whom are pictured below. And a huge thanks to everyone else on our volunteer team who made sandwiches, desserts and helped clean up at the end of the day!



Our hot meal & personal cleansing kit prep crews including (L to R):

Jim Green, Melissa Mattison, Cole Mattison-Gulotta, Chris Hjelt, Grace Del Vecchio, Peter Ludwig, Beth Henneman. Not pictured are Sue Anderson and Debbie Davis.

(L to R) Peter Ludwig (in baseball cap); Jack Mattison-Gulotta & Melissa Mattison
with Cathedral congregants and volunteers serving dinner.



Acts for our Hungry Neighbors! For the Common Good



Our Edwards Church youth group is proposing that during the season of Pentecost (which starts on Pentecost Sunday) that we, in the fashion of the early Apostles who were committed to pooling all their resources and caring for the greater community (check out Acts 4: 32-37) do a church wide food drive for the Northampton Survival Center. We envision this to happen in early June, but we wanted to let you know now what foods the Survival Center needs so that you can begin, even in these late days of Eastertide, to collect and set aside these goods. We are calling this collection “For the Common Good!” Here is what the Survival Center is looking for.

- Baked beans
- Canned chicken
- Canned fruit in juice
- Canned tomatoes
- Canned vegetables
- Cereal
- Condiments
- Cooking oil (canola, olive, vegetable)
- Crackers
- Flour
- Granola
- Granola bars
- Hearty soups
- Macaroni & cheese
- Oatmeal
- Oats
- Pasta (all kinds, including gluten-free)
- Peanut butter
- Pigeon peas/gandules
- Rice (brown, white)
- Spaghetti sauce
- Sugar
- Unopened spices
- Vegetarian soups



You're Invited to a Parade!

Your small but mighty Open and Affirming Ministry Team would love to have folks join us to represent Edwards Church at the Hampshire Pride Parade. It's a fun and festive way to spend time together as we march in a contingent with other area UCC churches.

Date

Saturday, May 4

When and Where

9:30 am: Meet at back door of Edwards Church

9:45 am: Shuttle to Sheldon Field, the parade starting point (near the fairgrounds at the corner of Bridge Street & Old Ferry Rd.)

10:00 am: Meet other Hampshire Association UCC churches for the parade line up & fellowship

11:00 am: Parade steps off & marches up Bridge St. to Main St., ending at 12 noon downtown at the corner of Main & Old South St. Too long? Contact Debbie (see below) re. the possibility of jumping in to join us at a point closer to downtown.

12:00-5:00 pm: Optional to attend is the Hampshire Pride Festival in the parking lot behind Thornes featuring booths sponsored by local organizations & businesses (including a shared First Churches/ Edwards Church booth!) as well as entertainment & special speakers.

RSVP by May 1st and direct questions to:

Debbie Davis at debradavis1217@gmail.com or 413-626-5117

What else?

First Churches is sponsoring their usual button-making booth at the Pride Festival from 12 – 5 pm in the parking lot behind Thornes on May 4. If you'd like to volunteer for a 1-2 hour shift, reply to Debbie Davis. This is a fun way to get to know folks from Edwards & First Churches!

Thanks for seriously considering this invitation to join us in fun & fellowship and live out our church's commitment to support & celebrate LGBTQ+ folks.

From your Open and Affirming Ministry Team: Debbie Davis, Grace Del Vecchio, Chris Hjelt, Carla Wirzberger, Jude Almeida & Michael McSherry

RAINBOW CONTRA OF WESTERN MASS

Saturday, May 5, 7-10pm

Caller: Dereck Kalish

Music: Becky Miller with Dogtown

First Churches of Northampton

129 Main St. (enter on Center St.), Northampton, MA

\$15-20 • \$8-12 students

Mask (N95, KN95, KF94) required | Drug and alcohol free

No one turned away for lack of funds

lctd.org/rainbowcontra



Northampton Parents Center

Weekly Schedule

NOW THROUGH JUNE 20TH!



PLAYGROUPS ARE
9:30AM-11:30AM

Monday
INDOORS
@ NPC

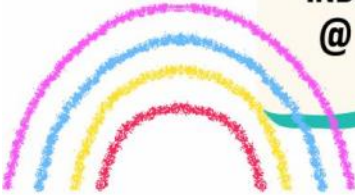
Tuesday
OUTDOORS @ THE
HAMPSHIRE
REGIONAL YMCA
PLAYGROUND

TUESDAYS WILL BE
INDOORS AT NPC IF THE
WEATHER IS RAINY!

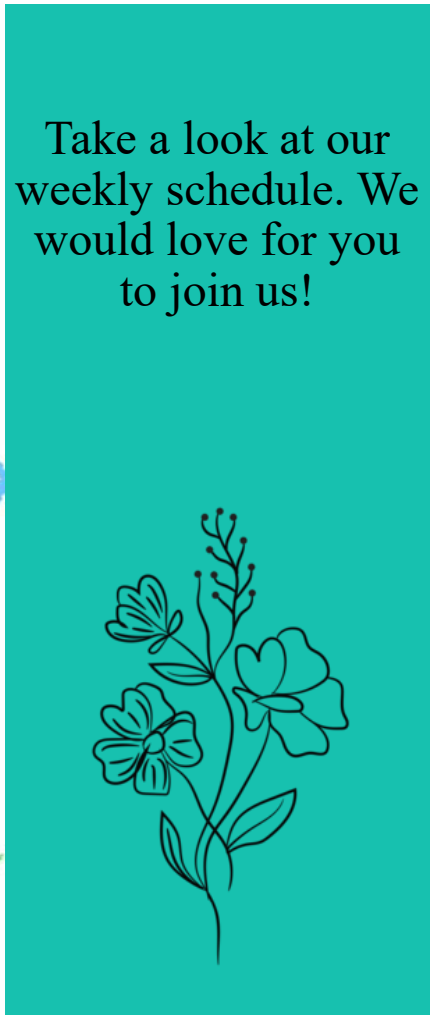
Wednesday
INDOORS
@ NPC

Thursday
INDOORS
@ NPC

INFANT GROUP
STARTS AT 8:30!



NORTHAMPTON PARENTS CENTER IS LOCATED IN THE LOWER LEVEL OF EDWARDS CHURCH 297 MAIN STREET. PLEASE USE PUBLIC PARKING AND THE BACKDOOR ENTRANCE. WE ARE WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE!



Take a look at our weekly schedule. We would love for you to join us!

Please join our first aid training!

First Aid for Parents and Caregivers

Thursday May 9, 5:30-7:00 @ Bridge Street School
Northampton, MA



Taught by Nicole Thurrell of Institute for Wild Med
Hosted by Northampton Parents Center with Northampton Preschool
Partnership and Northampton Public Schools
Questions? support@instituteforwildmed.com



NPC IS HIRING!

We are looking for a Program Assistant to join our team!



We need someone to join the team! Perhaps it could be you?



It's time for our annual tag sale! Hope to see you there!

NORTHAMPTON PARENTS CENTER

ANNUAL TAG SALE!

JUNE 1ST, 2024

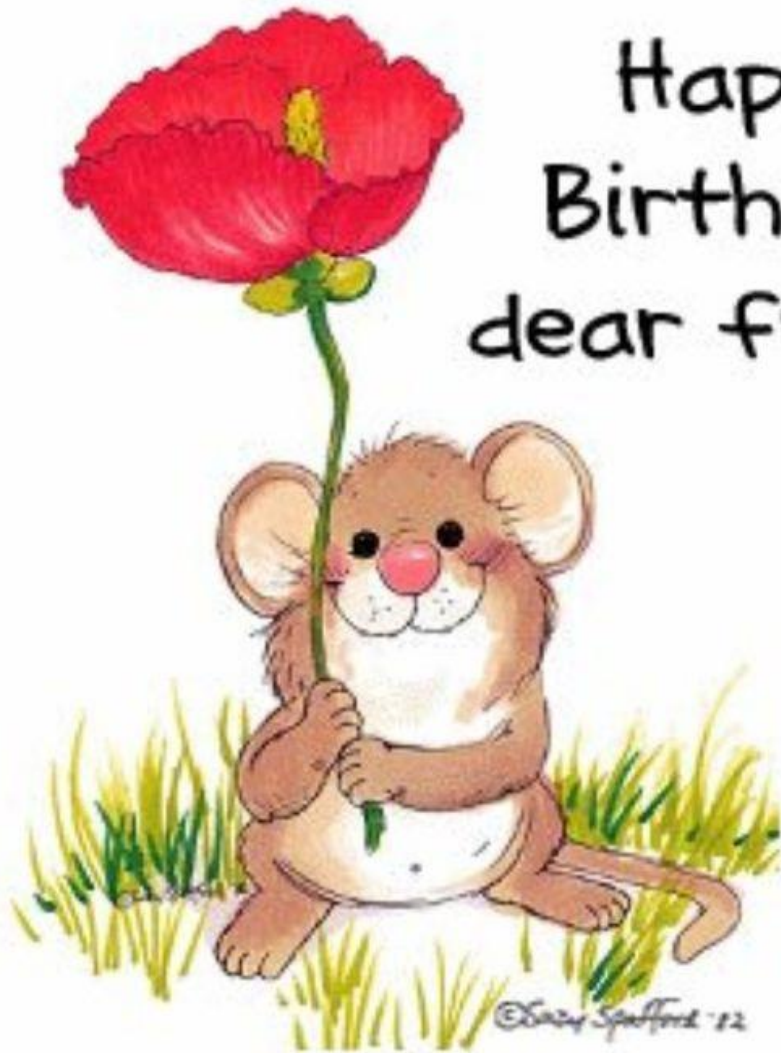
9:00AM-1:00PM

220 MAIN ST, NORTHAMPTON

NOW COLLECTING DONATIONS!

Email npctagsale@gmail.com for information and guidelines about dropping off your items!





Happy
Birthday,
dear friend!

Jody Gerbasi
Ann Abel
Sarah Briggs
Sally Griggs
Debra Davis
Lynda Kamik
Owen Hutchison
Julia Shapleigh

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!

Pastoral Care

There is no substitute for personal contact. Marguerite and Michael enjoy meeting in person. There need not be a special reason to meet. We can sit inside or out, take a walk, whatever is comfortable. 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
Marguerite ffminister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org cell: 413-687-1418

Local Church Profile for Churches Seeking a Designated Term Pastor (DTP)

Church Contact Information

Full Name: Edwards Church Northampton
Address: 297 Main Street Northampton MA 01060
Phone: 413-584-5500
Email: info@edwardschurchnorthampton.org
Website: <https://edwardschurchnorthampton.org/>

Additional Denominational Affiliations: none

UCC Conference: Southern New England
Association: Hampshire
Area Conference Minister Name: Rev. Terry Yasuko Ogawa
ACM email: OgawaTY@sneucc.org
ACM phone: (860) 761-7192

Position Details

1. Describe the ministry position for which you are seeking a pastor.

We invite you to consider our church for your next ministry setting! We are seeking a Designated Term Associate Minister of Faith Formation who will engage with our community, inside and outside our doors, while participating in all areas of ministry. We are a church with dedicated and supportive lay leaders, a commitment to social justice, and a desire to deepen our faith and demonstrate it through service. If called, an integral part of your ministry will be providing leadership in faith formation across the lifespan. We want someone to help us reimagine our programming for younger individuals and families, renewing our efforts with familiar approaches and exploring new ways of forming faith together.

Northampton is a vibrant small city of 30,000 people where diversity and the arts are celebrated. You will find an abundance of music, theater, and other arts venues, as well as a wide variety of shops and restaurants in Northampton and the surrounding area. Located next to the Connecticut River and the foothills of the Berkshires, we have easy access to outdoor activities from boating to hiking, camping and skiing. We are nestled among an array of farms, from small hillside farms to larger farms along the river. In season, farmers markets operate two days a week just blocks from the church. Northampton is home to Smith College, a member of the Five College Consortium, which also includes Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Education is valued in the area. Bradley Airport near Hartford, CT is a quick 40 minute drive, and Amtrak connects us to New York City and Montreal.

We invite you to join our community as a leader and a collaborator. We want to learn from you and will seek to nurture you. This opportunity is one where you will be called to use your learning and experience in faith formation across the lifespan. You will be called as a partner in worship planning and monthly preaching. We will seek to support you in challenging work. We are interested to learn what lights you up and brings you joy.

Updated 1/2022

2. Name 3 core competencies that you feel you will need in your DTP.

Natural Network Builder: Demonstrated success in cultivating relationships with others in relevant community settings, e.g., recruiting and training volunteers in church, or identifying and developing contacts with other houses of worship or other non-profits to increase impact on shared goals.

Effective Change Leader: Demonstrated ability to engage groups with shared goals and values to try new ways to pursue those goals and express those values.

Experienced Faith Former/Educator: Capable of preaching to comfort, challenge, uplift, and enlighten, with appropriate attention to scripture, the current context, the needs of the people, and the mission and ministry of the church. This includes leadership of a variety of faith-forming experiences for a range of age groups and intergenerational groups, with awareness of techniques for adjusting materials and programs for discreet age cohorts and mixed age groups.

3. Position Scope: Fulltime ¾ time ½ time ¼ time

We are open to candidates who would prefer a ¾ time commitment.

4. Position Duration: 3 years; with an option for longer

5. Is the DTP eligible for the settled position? Y N

If yes, how will that be discerned?

Moving from a DTP position into a settled position will be determined through prayerful discernment by our church and the DTP. An annual review will round out decision making. Assuming the DTP, the ECM, and the Senior Minister all agree, the ECM in consultation with the Senior Minister will formulate an offer for the DTP and a recommendation to the congregation. A vote of the congregation is required for the DTP to be called as an Associate Pastor for Faith Formation. This position reports to the Senior Minister.

Measurements may include but are not limited to the following:

1. the number of programs offered: an increase in current folks' engagement is what we are seeking and some growth in numbers is also good
2. networking with other churches: conversation nurtured in visioning future; programs offered to bring folks together from multiple churches. We currently have relationships and collaborations with First Churches, Congregation B'nai Israel, St John's Episcopal, and several others in and around our community. Continued development of relationships and programming will be expected as well as forging new relationships with churches in our area.

Designated Term Ministry Goals

The focus of a designated term ministry is to work toward the church's declared purpose for a specific season. Whereas, the purpose of an Interim Pastor is to help a congregation prepare for their next Settled Pastor, a Designated Term Pastor is called to assist the church with meeting specific goals within a specific time period. These are the most common reasons that churches choose a Designated Term Ministry.

Updated 1/2022

1. Please choose all the reasons for choosing a DTM that applies to you.

- New ministry development, start or continuance
- Revitalization of current ministries and church vitality
- Legacy/hospice
- Reassessment of ministry, which may include:
 - exploring merger, yoking or unification with another church
 - assessment of properties
 - Staffing restructuring
- Major conflict/healing

2. In a paragraph or two, explain how you discerned that a DTM was right for the church at this time.

Our church received notice in the fall of 2023 that our long-term Faith Formation Minister was ready to retire at the end of the calendar year. At that point, our Elected Core Ministry (church council) reviewed with our Senior Minister the options for short-term coverage and longer-term ideas for filling the position. Upon reflection, it was noted that the Faith Formation Minister had moved over the years to fulfilling a role most often understood as an Associate Pastor. In the past five years, we also shifted our church structure from a hierarchical committee/council model to a circle model of collaborative teaming of folks in ministry circles. With these recent changes in mind, the Elected Core Ministry recommended to the congregation that we seek a Designated Term Minister to focus on three to five initiatives to aid us in figuring out where we are now (post-pandemic) as a congregation and what we might look like in a few years (structure, membership, staffing). The congregation voted to approve the recommendation of the Elected Core Ministry.

3. Please explain your goals for this Designated period using the table below.

	Goal: with specificity, describe what you hope to accomplish during this time.	Commitment: describe how the congregation will prioritize and participate in reaching this goal?	Assessment: describe how the congregation will know the goal has been accomplished
1.	Revitalize Programming in Which to Engage Children, Youth, and Young Adults: A. Restore and maintain staff for childcare B. Recruit and equip (with training, curriculum, materials) adults from congregation to lead/accompany children and youth in faith-forming activities C. Resume, reimagine, and redesign teen and young adult programming D. Collaborate with local agencies in outreach to	A. Provide budget, leads to sources for hiring childcare staff and, if required, identify volunteers B. Provide budget, support, in recruiting volunteers or volunteering C. Identify former participants still considered potential to re-engage and reach out for new participants or those who have not been involved recently D. Provide leads/introductions to relevant program personnel who could	A. Increase in the number of Sundays childcare is staffed B. Increase in positive feedback from children and parents on the Sunday programs designed to engage children and youth C. Individual outreach conducted to explore re-engagement and nurture connection while exploring new possibilities and valuing past successful engagements D. The congregation will embrace the phrase “it takes a

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	underserved youth and young adults E. Seek guidance from SNEUCC Faith formation team to understand trends in ministry	refer/identify youth and young adults E. Attend conferences or workshops to understand trends in ministry, and then experiment and innovate using that learning	village” and will report on outreach conducted E. Regularly reflect on past year to examine what has taken place and what has worked well vs not working so well, refocusing energy as indicated
2.	Expand intergenerational opportunities in mission work: A. Develop strategies to encourage friendships between youth and adults B. Implement specific mission events throughout the year; including one-time and ones that could recur annually C. Support and assist ideas of mission work from congregants	A. Participate in opportunities to deepen bonds between our youth and adults B. Commit to participate in mission events offered C. Agree to brainstorm and participate in the planning process of upcoming and potential mission events	A. Survey the congregation on whether they feel more intergenerational bonding B. Keep records of each event and the number of participants, and seek feedback from participants C. Review mission events every year for engagement and impact
3.	Explore practical and visionary collaboration with other churches A. Support development of combined services B. Special events at our church that are specifically designed to include other congregations C. Plan mission work in collaboration with other congregations D. Create opportunities to learn about other faiths and practices	A. Commit to attending combined services in our sanctuary and elsewhere B. Help develop and participate in special events/practices/services that include other congregations C. Help plan and attend mission work opportunities D. Attend and participate in educational opportunities surrounding faiths and practices	A. Track participants in combined services and impact B. Seek feedback on special events and provide follow up discussion or written synopses to church newsletters C. Track participation in combined mission work and impact D. Survey participants to gain insight into experience in interfaith learning

Who We Are

In a paragraph or two for each item, please provide the following.

1. Church's Mission Statement *(or name that one needs to be developed):*

The purpose of this Church, in all its programs and activities, shall be to bind together followers of Jesus Christ for sharing in the praise and worship of God and in seeking and serving God. As Christians, it is our mission to respond to all God's creation with the love Christ directs, through collective and individual worship, prayer, support, and action.

Let us share a bit about ourselves through the lens of our Vision Statement (in italics below). Although adopted in 2015, it still serves to inspire and guide us.

Gathering at the crossroads of ancient faith and contemporary culture, we are a Christian church asking God to open us to a new way.

Our church is grounded in the Christian faith and is located in downtown Northampton, a progressive community in western Massachusetts. Our city is home to Smith College, a community hospital, and a vibrant downtown with a city-owned community theater just across the street.

Knowing that the road is long, we choose to walk together.

Our staff and congregation work collaboratively to bring the church to life for its members, and the wider community. We hold each other through the grief and joy life brings and strive to stay connected through conflict.

Finding strength in our diversity, we call on all our talents to worship and serve.

Members of our church create comfort and assurance by weaving prayer shawls and stitching quilts to give to friends, families, and foster children entering young adulthood. Members rewrote our Welcoming Statement to be more gender inclusive. Members serve on financial teams to steward our resources.

Encountering the world's joys and suffering, we offer ourselves as instruments of love and justice.

Our community gives of itself and its resources. Through ongoing programs and one-time efforts, we strive to meet the persistent and emerging needs of our community.

Longing to find the holy in ourselves and others, we listen for God's still-speaking voice.

Our congregation listens to one another and works to understand different perspectives with patience and grace. We worship and seek to create multiple avenues for folks to lean into the word of God. Team meetings include prayer. We bring artwork to our bulletins and chancel.

2. Brief Church History:

Edwards Church began in 1833. It was called the Edwards Society and was started primarily by some of the younger people from the First Church of Northampton. The First Church had grown to over 700 members and was straining the resources of the current pastor. Ninety-nine parishioners struck out to start a new church with the good wishes of their parent church. The First Church showed its love for the new church by giving them a silver communion serving set. It was

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presented to the Edwards Society in 1834 and is the same communion silver we still use every month.

And so began Edwards Church. We have been through many changes since that time. Each new pastor has brought a different perspective, and the church has often reflected the times in which it found itself. The Edwards Church you see at 297 Main Street is the third building to house its congregation. Many things have changed since the Edwards Society began. We have been the church for Calvin Coolidge and his family. We have watched Main Street in Northampton change from a center of industry to the eclectic town of today. During the life of Edwards Church, we have seen dirt streets become water canals, which became trolley tracks, and then paved roads. Through it all, we have remained an inviting church to all who seek to find God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Our great glass wall covered with crosses allows all in our community to look in and see who we are and allows us to look out and be reminded that our calling is to go out and help our community as Jesus would ask us to do.

3. 2-3 Significant Events:

Transition Musical Leadership: Music has always been a large part of our experience of the divine, and we have historically had a strong music program. Our previous Minister of Music was asked to step down in 2022, and our church has worked hard to manage the many emotions of our congregants, to listen to each other's' concerns, and to find a way to move forward. Our new Music Director, Adam Simon, started in September 2023 and has energized us in so many ways! The choir is gaining members, and he is encouraging members of the congregation to participate not only in the choir, but in concerts and other musical offerings. We used to pay 7 soloists to act as section leaders in the choir and provide special music during the service. Adam has inspired many of us to rethink the necessity of this, and to rely instead on the participation of volunteers.

Creation of New Way Funds: In order to provide more financial support to organizations that align with our values and help us create a more socially just world, without undermining our own long-term stability, lay leaders consulted with our financial advisor and developed a formula that tells us, on an annual basis, how much we can withdraw from our investment account to give away. Using this formula, we have substantially increased financial giving to other organizations and our connections to others doing work we feel needs to be supported.

4. Church Strengths:

We are open to change and innovation while we celebrate our deep spirituality. We invite a diversity of perspectives and strive to be a community in which diverse people can be at ease. We are a well-resourced church and care about outreach fund distribution as well as outreach activities; our resources run deep in our congregation with skill sets that run the gamut from gardening to cooking to public speaking and a generosity in lending the skills. We value intergenerational faith formation and music. Our location in the heart of the city drives aspects of our ministry. Social justice is valued and acted upon. Many church members are highly engaged in more than one church ministry and the recent revitalizing of the organizational church structure. Our vision statement drafted in 2015 still holds the congregations in good stead.

5. Church Challenges:

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Although we were seeing slow but measurable decline in total membership and average attendance before the pandemic, coming out of the pandemic attendance declined by approximately half and participation by children and youth dropped even more.

Our congregation has weathered two challenging staff situations in the past twenty years. We are continuing to heal from the more recent conflict in 2022. Membership declined due to that conflict, with approximately 20 members and friends of Edwards leaving the church, taking approximately 5 children and youth with them. Current membership skews to the older generation. Teams such as the ECM and children’s programming leadership have strong members, although the number of volunteers is low.

Experience of Conflict:

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. On a scale of 1-5, where would you rank your church’s level of conflict? 1 current level: Over the years we have experienced all levels, including 5 ; however, we currently are enjoying no discernible level of conflict. Some members are healing from the 2022 personnel issue and we care for each other with respect and patience.

(Based on this work by Speed Leas 1. Problem to solve 2. Disagreement 3. Contest 4. Fight or Flight 5. Intractable)

1. Please explain why you chose this level.

We feel conflicts and disagreements are very case-based and that we have experienced all of these levels at different times. These have ranged from discussions over how best to use our investment funds, to harder issues such as when nearly twenty years ago a staff member was arrested, and two years ago, when a long serving musical leader was let go.

2. Describe your congregation’s values and practices when it comes to conflict.

We strive to be respectful and patient and seek outside support when necessary to resolve issues. To help us process the conflict in 2022, we engaged a church conflict consultant who led a series of listening circles. Our congregants value transparency whenever possible, while maintaining rights of privacy when appropriate. When addressed, conflicts can be resolved and bridged as we meet on the other side, closer for the experiences and stronger in our resolve to let God guide us through challenging times.

Basic Church Statistics
Yearly average

	Church Membership	Weekly Worship Attendance	Children & Youth Participation	Adult Ed Participation
Pre-pandemic	237	90	22	83
Current year	219	53 in person 6 online	7	21

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	Income	Overall Budget	Mission Giving	Reserves & Endowment Principals
Pre-pandemic	\$471,785	\$459,621	\$46,200	\$7,631,257
Current year	\$580,006	\$560,535	\$50,400	\$7,987,470

Compensation

Total Compensation Package Amount or Range: \$78-88,000, depending on experience, for a full-time position. We are open to candidates who would prefer a ¾ time commitment, with compensation adjusted accordingly.

Package offered: Total Package, no additional monetary benefits offered
(choose only one) Total Package Includes Benefits (please list the benefits that are offered)

Housing:

- Housing allowance only
 Parsonage only
 Can offer either

Please explain briefly your process in discerning your compensation.

We reviewed the conference compensation guidelines as if our current Senior Minister were our only ministerial staff member and believe that compensation is in line with the guidelines. We then calculated a range of compensation for this position at 80% of the Senior Minister 's level for a person of comparable experience and lower for less experience. We understand this is consistent with the guidelines, though the formula used for a multi-staff church would produce a different indication. We still believe the compensation is quite fair.

+ + +

Statement of Consent

The covenantal relationship between a church and those called by that church to serve as pastors and teachers and in other ministerial positions is strengthened when vital information is openly shared by covenantal partners. To that end, we attest that, to the best of our abilities, we have provided information in this document that accurately represents our church. We have not knowingly withheld any information that would be helpful to candidates. As the committee charged with the responsibility for identifying and recommending a suitable leader for the interim time for our church, we have been authorized to share the information herein with potential candidates.

We understand that a candidate may wish to secure further knowledge, information, and opinions about our church. We encourage a candidate to do so, recognizing that an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for continuing and healthy relationships between calling bodies and persons seeking a ministry position.

Laura Frogameni
Signature of Search Committee Chairperson

April 2, 2024
Date (typed is sufficient)

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May 2014

NPC = Northampton Parent's Center
 NMCC= Northampton Music Community Center
 FoH = Friends of the Homeless
 B&G = Building & Grounds

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9:30 NPC 12 Bible Study	2 9:30 NPC 6:30 AA 7 Choir 7 B&G	3 11:30 MANNA 7 AA 7:30 PVC	4 11:30 MANNA
5 10 Worship 1 Young Adults	6 9:30 NPC 7 VJV	7 9:30 NPC 7 Gamblers Anon.	8 9:30 NPC 12 Bible Study 5:30 FoH	9 9:30 NPC 4 Care & Visitation 6:30 AA 7 Choir	10 11:30 MANNA 7 AA	11 11:30 MANNA
12 10 Worship 11:30 ONA	13 9:30 NPC 6 FF Search 7 VJV	14 9:30 NPC 3 Prayer Shawl 7 Gamblers Anon.	15 9:30 NPC 12 Bible Study	16 9:30 NPC 6:30 AA 7 Choir	17 11:30 MANNA 7 AA	18 11:30 MANNA
19 10 Worship	20 9:30 NPC 7 VJV	21 9:30 NPC 7 Gamblers Anon. 7 M@C	22 9:30 NPC 12 Bible Study 6 Investment	23 9:30 NPC 6:30 AA 7 Choir	24 11:30 MANNA 7 AA	25 11:30 MANNA
26 10 Worship	27 9:30 NPC 7 VJV	28 9:30 NPC 7 Gamblers Anon.	29 9:30 NPC 12 Bible Study	30 9:30 NPC 6:30 AA 7 Choir	31 11:30 MANNA 7 AA	