



# THE SPIRE

EDWARDS CHURCH *of* NORTHAMPTON  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Vol. 35 No. 6 June 2025

## A message from the Interim Pastor

### **Ordinary Time**— Rev. Jennifer Geary

The Christian year began with Advent back six months ago. From Advent to Pentecost we have rehearsed and retold the church's birth story. Now we enter Ordinary time. Ordinary time is the longest season of the Christian calendar stretching from June to November.

What happens during Ordinary time? The other seasons we know well. We have our traditions for Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter and Pentecost but what do we do during Ordinary time? The work of the Church!

It is a time of evangelism and faithful worship as most newcomers visit during this season. Our liturgy now focuses on the teachings of Jesus and our relationship with God right now more so than celebrating the story of old. We focus on discipleship and mission. While there are fewer rituals & traditions, there is greater responsibility. We do because we want to, not because we have to. We hold ourselves accountable for our

personal discipleship in daily living. There is a different feel during Ordinary time.

Also, this year we will be engaging in transition work as the congregation discerns its future mission and prepares the church profile. Our newly formed Transition Team of Janet Tucker, Melissa Mattison, Chuck McCullagh, Sheri Cheung, Carolyn Dion and Laura Frogameni will be contacting you with surveys and invitations to conversations and gatherings. Please be responsive to their invitations as the broader the participation the more accurate the vision.

Ordinary time is a wonderful season of blessing as God's Spirit blows through our lives, opening possibilities. May you feel the refreshment of God's grace through this season of growth and harvest.

## Sunday Worship in June — Rev. Jennifer Geary

### **June 1**

#### **Pride worship at First Churches, Communion**

the Rev. Laura Everett, Executive Director of the State Council of Churches preaching Psalm 97; John 17:20-26

### **June 8 – *Beloved***

#### **Pentecost, Children's Day, Graduates' Day**

Acts 2:1-21; Romans 8:14-17

### **June 15 - *Wisdom***

#### **Trinity Sunday, Father's Day**

Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15

### **June 22 - *Demons***

Galatians 3:23-29; Luke 8:26-39

### **June 29 - *Freedom***

Galatians 5:1, 13-25; Luke 10: 1-11, 16-20

### Looking Ahead

**July** – Joint worship at Edwards

**August** – Joint worship at First Churches

## Gratitude Corner

*If you see someone doing something nice, share a gratitude here.*

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- Thank you to all who helped with the reception following the funeral service on 5/21.
  - Thank you to all the Sunday morning volunteers.
  - Thank you to everyone who offered me a place to stay and who did research on housing for me. It has been greatly appreciated. I believe I have all my housing needs covered until July.  
- Jennifer
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## Pastoral Care – Rev. Jennifer Geary

Feel free to contact me at any time. Messages left at the church phone (413) 584-5500 x2 will be emailed to me. You can send an email to [minister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org](mailto:minister@edwardschurchnorthampton.org) or call or text my cell phone. I am usually at the church on Mondays and have set office hours: Tuesdays 4-5:30 PM in the lobby; Wednesdays 9:30-10:45 AM in my office. I am happy to visit you in your home or at some neutral location. I look forward to getting to know you.

## Team Meetings in June

6/5 7 PM Buildings and Grounds – Zoom  
6/12 4 PM Care and Visitation - Zoom  
6/12 7 PM Finance – Zoom  
6/16 7 PM Elected Core Ministry – Zoom  
6/22 11:30 AM Pastor-Congregation Relations –  
Heritage Room

## Bible Study

### **Wednesdays 11 AM - Zoom**

Join us every Wednesday as we read together the passages for the upcoming Sunday. Every day is a stand-alone event so come when you can and join our lively discussion. Scripture for each meeting is listed in the worship section of the Spire and in the previous week's bulletin. Let the church office know if you would like to have your name added to the weekly Zoom invitation.

## Southern New England Conf. of the



## United Church of Christ

### Annual Meeting

**June 7 – 9a-1p, On-line**

Our congregation should have 2 delegates attend this meeting. Any 2 members can serve as delegates. If you can serve as a delegate by attending on June 7, please let the church office know.

## Hampshire Association of the United

## Church of Christ

### Annual Meeting

**June 1 - 1:30 PM**

### **Easthampton Congregational Church**

Our congregation should have 2 delegates attend this meeting. Any 2 members can serve as delegates. If you can represent our congregation by attending on June 1, please let the church office know.

### Worship Survey – Jennifer

As promised a worship survey will go out soon. Be watching your inbox – I promise; it will go out in June.

## Children's Day

**June 8**

We will be honoring all our children, from birth to those who will begin their senior year of high school in the fall, during worship on June 8<sup>th</sup>. The service will be appropriate for all ages.

## Graduation Sunday

**June 8**

During worship on June 8<sup>th</sup>, we will be honoring and blessing all the graduates among us from High School, College, Trade School, and Graduate School. Please let us know if you have a graduate in your family so we can be prepared to honor them. Please call or email names to the church office by June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Father's Day - Sunday, June 15<sup>th</sup>



Juneteenth - Thursday, June 19<sup>th</sup>



**Sunday Morning Volunteers**

	Flowers	Greeter	Usher	Liturgist	Reader	Fellowship
8-Jun		Bob S	Jon D		Paul B	Carolyn D Michele W
15-Jun		Steve F	Marc W	Brian S	Susan S	Ella S Michele W
22-Jun		Bob S	Ron K	Debbie D		Kathy & Ron Michele W
29-Jun		Bob S	Ron K		Sandra R	Sandra R Michele W

We'd love to have all the spots filled. Can you help out one Sunday this summer?



**VOLUNTEERS  
NEEDED**

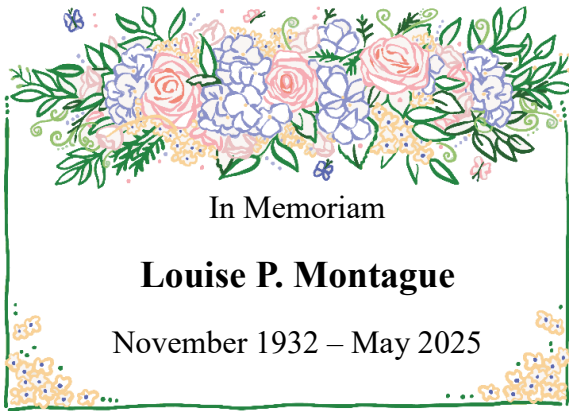
**Proctors Needed**

**A Paid Position**

Part of our service to the wider community is making our building available to other groups needing space to meet. To offer a gracious welcome and secure setting, we have a church member onsite during weddings, funerals and outside events. This Proctor position receives a stipend for each event. The Music Team is gathering names of people interested in serving in this way. Please let the church office know if you would like to be trained to serve as a Proctor.

**Interim Pastor Away**

Jennifer will be away June 9-13, attending a theological retreat in Maine. She can be reached for emergencies during this time by calling her cell phone or contacting the church office.



### **Weekly Ecumenical Vigil**

**In front of 1<sup>st</sup> Churches**

Wednesdays, 12:30 – 1:30

Faithful Witnesses

### **Nourishing Beloved Community**

St. John's Episcopal Church received a Loaves and Fishes grant from the Community Foundation of Massachusetts to bring together people of faith in Northampton to share a meal and discuss current issues that affect all of us. They are looking for each faith community to name four people who can attend their first planning event. If you are interested in representing Edwards Church for the first event, please let the church office know. Others can attend future events.



The Children's Advocacy Center received a New Ways grant to support survivors of sexual and domestic violence. They are looking for volunteers to help assemble Sexual Assault Aftercare Kits on Friday, June 6th. For more information or to volunteer, please contact the church office by June 2.

### **Handwork during services?**



Edwards Church has two ministries that involve handwork. Many of you have helped create blocks for the quilt team ministry. Others have requested or received a shawl from the prayer shawl ministry. Both teams have had discussions on whether it is appropriate or disruptive to do the handwork during a worship service. One benefit is to have a visual reminder of what the teams create and offer to the congregation and wider community.

In quilting, the handwork is only done when we hand stitch a binding to finish the quilt. It is a repetitive, quiet movement. With knitting or crocheting, there is a definitive rhythm of movement that can create a quiet clicking sound.

There was a New York Times article from 3/31/2023 reporting that hand work sharpens the creator's attention and allows them to focus more on what is being spoken than when their hands are idle. Other reports say that there is a calming effect on the mind and that will allow for better attention. Can handwork be like using a fidget spinner? Or doodling on the worship folder?

In the coming months, if you see someone knitting, stitching or crocheting during a service, feel free to engage them in conversation afterward. Perhaps you might like to join the prayer shawl or quilt team ministries. And if you are bothered by the clicking sound of the needles, it is okay to politely ask the person to stop.

Please know that though our hands are busy, it will only happen during listening times. We will join along with you singing, praying and praising God.

- Edwards Church quilt team and prayer shawl ministries

### **Thank you, Edwards Church Pride Parade Marchers!**

Ten folks from our Edwards Church congregation marched behind our banner at the Hampshire Pride Parade on Saturday, May 3rd. We were joined by our friends at First Churches and St. John's Episcopal who

had large contingents marching directly behind us. As we handed out lots of bottles of bubbles to kids along the parade route we were greeted with cheers and smiles. After the parade the Pride Festival kicked off in the parking lot behind Thornes. A couple folks from our group helped out at the First Churches booth where festival goers enjoyed making Pride-themed buttons. It was a wonderful day of fun and fellowship while showing our support for the LGBTQ+ community.

– submitted by Debbie Davis



**PRIDE**  
**MONTH**  
1<sup>ST</sup> - 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2025



**Northampton Parents Center**  
**2025 SUMMER SCHEDULE!**  
Weekly on Tuesdays from 7/1-8/12

TUESDAYS [AT] BRIDGE ST. SCHOOL IN NORTHAMPTON  
9:30AM-11:30AM

We will be at the lower preschool playground and classroom.  
Look for the NPC sandwich board!

Bridge Street School is located at 2 Parsons Street Northampton

Thank You!

**Northampton Parents Center**  
**TAG SALE**  
SAVE THE DATE!  
JUNE 7 ★ 9-2  
220 MAIN ST. NORTHAMPTON

SPRING CLEANING? DONATE TO THE TAG SALE!

WE ARE COLLECTING DONATIONS FROM NOW UNTIL THURSDAY 6/5!

Email [npctagsale@gmail.com](mailto:npctagsale@gmail.com) for info re: donation drop-off guidelines

## Outreach Grants Ministry Team Update

In an effort to foster transparency and strengthen communication within the congregation, the Outreach Grants Ministry Team is pleased to share this update. The Outreach Team gives money to organizations in the greater community through a combination of curated annual grants and a review process for new grants. The team meets once a month after church to review new applications which can be submitted by any organization, large or small, local or international, that **aligns** with the values and mission of the church.

Here is a list of our annual grantees:

- Sojourner Truth School
- 18 Degrees
- Habitat for Humanity
- Children's Advocacy Center
- Friends of Children
- National Alliance for Mental Illness
- Manna Soup Kitchen
- Safe Passage
- Food Bank of Western Mass
- Interfaith Help Fund
- Northampton Survival Center
- Cathedral in the Night
- Girls' Inc
- Andover Newton Seminary
- Hampshire Support Alliance
- Community Action
- Edwards Church Quilt Ministry Team
- Edwards Church ONA Team
- Edwards Church Pastor's discretionary fund

Recently, we welcomed two new members, Karen Pohlman and Justin Chick, to our team. At the same time, we bid farewell to longtime member Hazel Waller, who stepped down after over ten years of dedicated service. We are grateful for her many contributions. Having lost four members in two years, **we would love to have more voices at the table!** The only required skill is the ability to listen to the needs presented and thoughtfully consider how Edwards can

respond. Members find the work deeply meaningful. If you're interested or have questions about what we do, feel free to connect with any of us after service—we'd be happy to share more.

**In May**, we approved three New Way Fund grants:

- **Medical Education Collaborative:** A \$3,600 grant will support Physician Assistant training programs in Liberia and Ghana, helping to expand access to medical education and public health research in under-served areas. This includes neonatal resuscitation curriculum using simulation units and a "train the trainer" model. It also provides local medical and allied health students the opportunity for interdisciplinary, cross-cultural and experiential learning.
- **Self-Evident Education:** We awarded \$5,000 per year for three years to support this group's anti-racism training and their annual Power of Truths conference. This conference harnesses the power of storytelling, music and dance to explain systemic racism, promote social justice and foster community engagement. Three congregation members attended this year's event in April and shared how impactful the experience was. In addition to the annual conference, this organization produces online multimedia tools for students, educators, religious organizations and more designed to inspire critical conversations about the creation and weaponization of race. We hope this grant will offer stability during a time of targeted efforts to censor our country's history.
- **Children's Advocacy Center & Northampton Police Department Partnership:** A \$5,000 grant will fund a pilot program for Sexual Assault Aftercare Kits, which will provide clothing, toiletries, blankets, and supportive information to survivors in the critical hours following an assault. We believe this trauma-informed initiative will help preserve dignity and foster a more humane community response in the wake of sexual violence.

In February, we voted to offer a \$500 sponsorship for the first annual Hampshire Support Alliance Gala to support housing initiatives in the region. We also voted on a \$500 sponsorship for Hampshire Pride in support of May 3rd's Pride Parade.

Lastly, our team conducted a review of the 16 organizations we support annually. Across the board, we heard similar stories of growing need in the community and shrinking federal funding. In response, we have allocated a portion of New Way funds to increase grants for most of our recipients by 75%, offering additional support as they navigate this challenging landscape.

We are grateful for the congregation's ongoing support and look forward to continuing our mission of outreach and **social justice**.

Gratefully,  
Grace DelVecchio  
Karen Pohlman  
Mariana Haughey  
Justin Chick  
Rob Hutchison  
Rev. Jennifer Geary

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## **ECM Meeting Minutes**

May 5, 2025

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

- Facilitator: Mark
- Opening Devotional: Ron
- Approval of previous minutes: Approved unanimously
- Acknowledgment that Sandi Coyne-Gilbert has resigned from her ECM position and discussed potential replacement prospects. ECM thanks Sandi for her effort and insight over the past 1.5 years.
- Office Manager replacement hiring process discussion
  - ECM confirmed that ad hoc committee composed of Janet Tucker, Mark Dion and Rev. Geary was empowered to select a candidate and Rev. Geary, as Head of

- Staff, was empowered to hire a candidate.
- Just the same, Leon motioned that ECM receive the recommendation to hire Keith Barnicle and offer support, noting changes to budget. Motion approved unanimously
- Rev. Geary noted that both she and Keith need to sign conflict of interest form
- Music Team update:
  - Laura Frogameni and Adam will advertise for staff singer, which is a vendor/contractor position
- Outreach update:
  - Outreach has not met since last ECM meeting
  - Outreach has received several grant applications and will sort through those
  - ECM asked Rev. Geary to convey its support for any efforts that help LGBTQ+ organizations given the challenging environment for that particular community
- LGBTQ Senior Housing project: Edwards Church was asked to lend support to a Boston area based non-profit that seeks to convert the records building at 33 King St in Northampton into a senior housing community for LGBTQ seniors. ECM endorses the project but believes that it is too early in the process to commit any financial resources.
- Appointment of new Clerk (Tabled until next meeting)
- Rev. Geary informed ECM that the memberships of Deb Moore and Rev. McSherry have both transferred from Edwards Church
- City Sidewalk Request: A Special Business Meeting of the congregation will be called for May 25, 2025, to discuss the City of Northampton request to transfer a portion of Edwards Church property to the City. The transfer will permit the City to proceed more expeditiously with the Picture Main Street project. Leon will draft meeting notice to be sent (via post) to all members.
- Settled Pastor Transition Planning: Two members have accepted the invitation to join the Transition

Team and looking for three or more participants. Participants should expect a 6-month commitment with twice monthly meetings. Jeff will solicit participation on Sunday morning

- Kyla farewell celebration: In honor of Kyla's hard work and dedication over the past several years in her role as Office Manager, ECM invites congregants and staff to join us with farewell cake and juice at noon on Friday, May 16th at the church. A small gift from the church will be presented.
- Flow of funds guiderails (Finance is working on this and meets again on Thursday)
- Rev Geary Check in:
  - Who should have keys (tabled again)
  - Summer worship schedule is set: June 1 at first churches but otherwise June and July at Edwards and at First Churches in August
  - Move Sunday May 18 service to Look Park (Rev. Geary to investigate)
  - ECM endorsed blessing Zoe during a worship service. Zoe's effort over the past year, particularly with church youth, has been tremendous.
  - Rev. Geary requested that ECM announcement the gift to Hampshire Support Alliance in Rev. McSherry's honor. ECM agreed that an announcement will be put in the Spire and card sent to Michael acknowledging the gift once the gift is posted.
  - Spire article in place of minutes (tabled)
  - Sponsorships: Rev Geary indicated that Edwards Church is frequently approached to endorse or sponsor community activities, events, etc. Rev. Geary requested guidance in responding to such requests. ECM indicated that Rev Geary should use her discretion to respond to any such requests that are consistent with causes that Edwards Church has traditionally supported (e.g., homelessness, hunger, human rights, etc.) but please consult with ECM regarding any requests

outside of those traditional causes (e.g., anything political in nature).

- Question on where does sound system responsibility resides. Mark will speak with Music Committee regarding additional hand-held microphones and lapel microphone and revert to ECM
- St Mary's housing conversion: Lean noted that Jon Deitrich has raised concerns around parking availability at public hearings.
- Other Business:
- Rev Geary requests 6 children size chairs and table for sanctuary. ECM approves from ECM budget.
- Next Meeting Date: June 16, 7pm



# June 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10 Worship	2 9:30 NPC	3 9:30 NPC 4 POH	4 9:30 NPC 9:30 POH 11 Bible Study 7 AA	5 NPC 9:30 6:30 AA	6 11:30 Manna 7 AA	7 8:30 YWCA 11:30 Manna
8 10 Worship	9 9:30 NPC	10 9:30 NPC 4 POH 7 GA	11 9:30 NPC 9:30 POH 11 Bible Study 5:30 HSA 7 AA	12 9:30 NPC 4 Care & Visitation 6:30 AA	13 11:30 Manna 5 YWCA 7 AA	14 8:30 YWCA 11:30 Manna 2 NCMC
15 10 Worship	16 7PM ECM	17 4 POH 7 GA	18 9:30 POH 11 Bible Study 7 AA	19 6:30 AA	20 11:30 Manna 5 YWCA 7 AA	21 8:30 YWCA 11:30 Manna
22 10 Worship 11:45 PCR	23	24 4 POH 7 GA	25 9:30 POH 11 Bible Study 7 AA	26 6:30 AA	27 11:30 Manna 5 YWCA 7 AA	28 8:30 YWCA 11:30 Manna
29 10 Worship 4PM Valerie Tutson Storyteller	30	1	2	3	4	5

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