



THE SPIRE

EDWARDS CHURCH *of* NORTHAMPTON
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

297 Main Street, Northampton, Massachusetts 01060

Vol. 36 No. 1 January 2026

Happy New Year! ~ Rev. Jennifer Geary

I woke up this morning to a very red sky and thought “oh, no, a storm”. I clicked the weather app on my phone, which didn’t show any storms at all. Hm, which do I trust, the sky or the Weather Channel? From where do I get information on which to base my daily decisions? Who are the prophets of our time? We began the Christian Year in November, listening to the prophets tell us about the coming Messiah. We just celebrated the birth of Jesus that was broadcast to the world through signs and wonders. What are the signs of our time?

Are you hopeful? There are some signs of decline and fears of loss, but God’s app gives us possibilities and promises. We can pick any day of the year to say it is a day of new beginnings – an anniversary of a birth or death, of a marriage beginning or ending, of a career change. We can pick every day to start anew. As I’ve talked with many of you, we’ve discussed a general malaise, an exhaustion from big outside-us events, sucking up our energy. I invite us to gather during this month to recharge and reconnect with the hope of the Christ child.

Come be in the sanctuary, surrounded by God’s comforting love, and feel the regeneration in your spirit that the plants and trees are, right now, feeling in their roots and stems, even as their bare branches clatter in the wind. Together let’s see the signs of hope. Together, let’s be gentle and compassionate with each other and the world, as we find our way into the new season of faith. Together, let us prepare for what God has planned next for us.

Worship in January

Consider reading each week’s scripture in preparation for worship. For an easy way to access these passages go to: <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts/?y=384&z=p&d=78>

January 4 - Epiphany, Communion, Guest musician

- Matthew 2:1-13

January 11 - Baptism of Jesus

- Matthew 3:13-17

January 18 - Guest Worship Leader

January 25 - Annual Meeting

- Matthew 4:12-23

Pastoral Care & Office Hours – Rev. Jennifer Geary

Please 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 or call or text my cell phone. My open office hours are Wednesdays 9:30-10:45 AM and Thursdays 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM in my office. And am available at other times by appointment. **Please note: Rev. Geary will be away from January 13, 2026 – January 21, 2026.**

Team Meetings in January

- 1/5 7PM Transition Team (Zoom)
- 1/7 7PM Building & Grounds (Zoom)
- 1/7 7PM Finance Team (Zoom)
- 1/8 4PM Care & Visitation (Zoom)
- 1/12 7PM Elected Core Ministry (Zoom)
- 1/21 7PM Building & Grounds (Zoom)

Bible Study

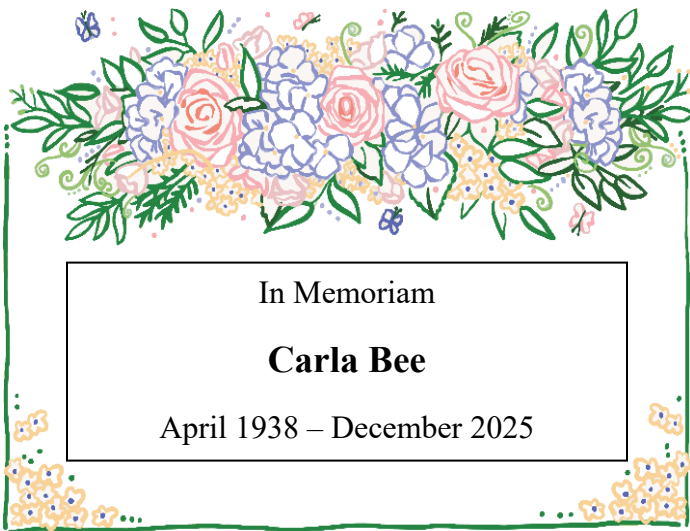
Wed 11AM – 12PM

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.

Thurs 7PM – 8PM

Beginning on January 8th a Zoom Bible Study will be offered following the same format as the Wednesday morning group. If interested, contact the office to receive the weekly reminder and/or just hop on the Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81016569974?pwd=Q3ZZVkdRSENtODZaM0g2bFdPRnhRdz09>. If you need a Bible, there are a few copies available through the Church office.



Northampton Parents Center HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

**NPC IS CLOSED
12/19/25-1/4/26**

**FIRST PLAYGROUP OF 2026 IS
MONDAY 1/5/26!**

Northampton Parents Center Winter/Spring Schedule

WEEKLY 1/5/26-6/11/26

FREE & ALL WELCOME!	MONDAY INDOORS [A] NPC	TUESDAY OUTDOORS [A] THE HAMPSHIRE REGIONAL YMCA PLAYGROUND	TUESDAYS WILL BE INDOORS AT NPC IF THE WEATHER IS RAINY/SNOWY/ TOO COLD!
PLAYGROUPS ARE 9:30AM-11:30AM COME ANYTIME :)	WEDNESDAY INDOORS [A] NPC	THURSDAY INDOORS [A] NPC	INFANT GROUP STARTS AT 8:30!

Located in the lower level of Edwards Church 297 Main St, Northampton MA
Please use the side entrance and public parking, not the church lot
The closest PVTA bus stop is the Academy of Music

A Prayer for Our Time

God, when life gets tough, we want relief; we want a savior; we want a scapegoat. We want someone or something to blame for all this trouble. Help us accept that stuff happens. Help us accept the challenge of figuring out how to be our best selves, together, no matter what life or death brings us. Help us focus on thriving in the midst of upheaval. Help us forgive ourselves and others. We know we can do this, as we have read the stories of how you have been with humanity since the beginning of time. You, God, have never left us alone. Help us gain strength from your constant presence. Help us access your positivity and share it with others. For it is what the world needs most today - a love that never lets us go, no matter how dark the day feels. God, help us to see the good in each other and celebrate it. God, help us to see the good you are doing around us, every day, and celebrate it. God, remove the depression, remove the dull, remove the frustration, remove the confusion, remove the pressure. Lift this burden that we might join our voices in praise and joy instead of repeating tales of woe. I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Our Inclement Weather Plan

If we decide to cancel in-person worship or any event due to bad weather, we will post it on the website, on the local TV stations and WHMP. Once our new database is up and working we will send out an email and text.

Annual Meeting

An all member Annual Meeting will take place at Edwards Church on Sunday, January 25, 2026. Thanks to all who have been sending in their materials for the Annual Report. All are welcome to attend! If you have any questions about Annual Meeting, please feel free to reach out to the church at 413-584-5500 or info@edwardschurchnorthampton.org.

Poetry, Prose and Pictures

Do you have some art to share with the wider community? Consider submitting it for consideration to be included in future Spire Newsletters. In addition, do you have any picture to share from recent events at Edwards Church - Advent Festival, Christmas Eve, Blue Christmas, First Sunday of Christmas, Christmas Sunday? If so, please feel free to send directly to the office at info@edwardschurchnorthampton.org.



A Big Thank You to the Fellowship Hosting Team for Their Service in 2025!

If you enjoyed a cup of coffee or a delicious snack in the Edwards Room after our Sunday services in 2025, please give a big thank you to the folks listed below, especially Michele Whiting, who volunteers almost every Sunday!

Working in teams of two to three, these volunteers arrive early on Sundays to make sure that tasty beverages and snacks are available to complement our fellowship time. Our experience as a congregation is greatly enhanced when we can mingle together after worship to chat about the service, share news, concerns, a laugh or two, and enjoy each other's company. ***This wouldn't be possible without the time and talent the volunteers listed below share to make it happen.***

If you would like to get involved in the life of the church as a member of this team, please see Grace Del Vecchio or Debbie Davis at church or contact Debbie at debradavis1217@gmail.com or 413-626-5117.

Those who served as our wonderful Fellowship Hosting Team volunteers in 2025 are ...

Sue Anderson
Sarah Briggs
Emmy Clausing
Carolyn Dion
Laura Frogameni
Ruth Griggs
Kathy & Ron Korza

Melissa Mattison
Susan & Brian Swift
Sandra Rossi
Ella Stocker
Kelly Tice
Michele Whiting

Submitted with gratitude by
Grace Del Vecchio & Debbie Davis, Fellowship Hosting Team Coordinators



St. John's Emergency Shelter Staffing Volunteer Sign-Up

Thank you for giving of your time and labor to help us ensure that all members of our community have a safe place to spend the coldest nights this winter! Our goal as an emergency shelter is to house 12 guests during the coldest of cold nights (10-15 degrees F and colder) for the period of time that temperatures fall within that range (typically 8 nights in January & February, and 4 in March).

We are both looking for folks with professional experience working in shelters/similar settings & people without professional experience who are ready and willing to learn. Regardless of previous experience, EVERYONE will receive training in topics including first aid, best policies & practices, de-escalation, and more. You can sign up here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSer9DURnNYDT64hCFx2uHOtaqka8Vj72QYQr0x3PQxBQggjsA/viewform>

If you'd also like to make a financial contribution to the shelter's operations & upkeep, you may do so here: <https://www.stjohnsnorthampton.org/product/give-to-st-john-s/1> (please select "Repairs for Emergency Shelter")

For questions or more information, please reach out to office@stjohnsnorthampton.org or buildingsandgrounds@stjohnsnorthampton.org -- thank you again!

Nourishing the Beloved Community

Fostering awareness of & garnering support for immigrants & those targeted by ICE in Massachusetts

Folks from area churches and synagogues came together in early December as part of the Nourishing the Beloved Community initiative, organized by St. John's Episcopal Church, to learn about how immigrant detention and ICE actions are affecting people in Western Massachusetts. Three of us from Edwards Church attended and were somewhat surprised to hear that over 5,000 immigrants, including women and children, have been taken by ICE agents in Massachusetts. ICE has been active locally, especially in the Springfield area. When the new federal budget goes into effect in January, there will be increased need for support as refugees and immigrants in the area will be facing loss of health insurance and SNAP benefits.

We heard from five organizations: [Western Massachusetts Asylum Support Network](#), [Jewish Family Service](#), [Immigrant Solidarity Collective](#), [Pioneer Valley Workers Center](#), [LUCÉ](#), and the [Massachusetts Council of Churches](#) who are doing important work with immigrants and in support of those being targeted by ICE. Please take some time to look at the organization websites. All of these organizations are looking for volunteers and financial support. There will be more Nourishing the Beloved Community gatherings in the new year. If you would like to learn more, please speak to Grace Del Vecchio or Debbie Davis. gracedelvecchio@yahoo.com and debradavis1217@gmail.com

December 2025 Outreach Grants Ministry Team Update

The Outreach Team discerns how to disperse the Church's gifts to organizations in the greater community in a manner that reflects our mission and values. This is accomplished through a combination of curated annual gifts and a review process for New Way Fund grants. For a list of our annual grantees, please refer to our last update in the May 2025 edition of the Spire. The list will also be included in the upcoming Annual Report. For New Way grants, the team meets about once a month to review new applications which can be submitted by any

organization, large or small, local or international. We are starting to see an increase in the number of applicants as word spreads and need grows.

In October, we approved three New Way grants: (1) Center for New Americans' Bridging Divides initiative to support digital and financial literacy programs; (2) Northampton Public Schools' BIPOC Affinity Groups (2025-2026 School Year) facilitated by the Collaborative for Educational Services; and (3) Valley to Valley's Clean Energy Transition Project to support a hydroelectric energy initiative in Ecuador.

In November, the team voted to approve a proposal from Floyd Cheung to match fundraising efforts of members of the congregation. The match will be up to \$1000 per organization and is available by submitting a New Way Fund application available from the church office or by emailing Rob Hutchison at robtone247@gmail.com. Our first such match was made in support of Kristin River's AFSP Out of the Darkness walk.

In December we voted to split the remaining funds from our annual gifts budget between Community Action's Emergency Fuel Assistance fund and Rachel's Table. We continue to discuss ways in which Edwards Church might expand our outreach beyond monetary contributions, so stay tuned for some fresh ideas in 2026.

We appreciate your continued trust and support for the team's work. If you might be interested in joining the team, please see any of our members for details.



Respectfully yours,

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

Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Monday, January 19, 2026

Nourishing Beloved Community: an Interfaith MLK Day Gathering

5:00 PM - 8:00 PM Congregation B'nai Israel Sanctuary (253 Prospect Street)
Save the date for this interfaith community sing-along.
Monday, January 19, 6:00-8:00 pm in the CBI Sanctuary.
All are welcome to gather for a potluck meal before the event from 5:00-6:00 pm.
More details and registration form coming soon.

MLK Day Service Fair

Where: Bombyx (130 Pine Street)
When: Doors at 10AM
Pre-registration is strongly encouraged. Register here: <https://bombyx.live/events/mlk-day-service-fair-2/>



Thank you for all your hard work in 2025, Cathedral in the Night Team!

Edwards Church is one of the faith communities that partner with Cathedral in the Night, an outdoor Christian community that creates a safe place for the housed and unhoused, the churched and the unchurched, to build community, live out their spiritual beliefs, and enjoy hot meals together. Cathedral's worship service and meal takes place on the sidewalk in front of First Churches Northampton every Sunday evening. Through our once-every-other-month partnership, our volunteers have built strong ties with each other and our Cathedral friends.

We'd like to express our deep appreciation for the financial support provided by the church and for all the folks listed below who served on the team in 2025, the fourteenth year of our partnership with Cathedral.

Those who serve on the Cathedral in the Night Ministry Team can do so whether they know how to cook or not, prefer working on their own or with others, have just an hour or the better part of an entire day to share their time and talent. New volunteers are always welcome. Contact Debbie to learn more! debradavis1217@gmail.com

Thank you, Cathedral in the Night Ministry Team, for your loving service.

Janet Abreu
Stephanie Adair
Sue Anderson
Carla Bee & Danny
Shanahan
Medford Boston
Marisa Brown Ludwig &
Peter Ludwig
Polly Cassell
Sheri & Floyd Cheung
Emmy Clausing
First Churches/St. John's
Youth Group

Sandi Coyne & Gaston
Gilbert
David Dickinson &
Claudia Lyons
Deb & Jon Dietrich
Carolyn Dion
Susan & Leon
Drzewianowski
Steve Fancy & Dawn
Scaparotti
Rev. Jennifer Geary
Nancy Flickinger
Laura Frogameni
Beth Henneman

Dianne Hobbs
Lynda Kamik
Kathy Korza
Laura Kroll
Pam Lemlein
Mattison-Gulotta family
Bob Riddle
Diane Roeder
Sandra Rossi
Ella Stocker
Susan & Brian Swift
Hazel & Marc Waller
Michele Whiting
Carla Wirzburger

With gratitude,

Debbie Davis & Grace Del Vecchio, Co-Coordiators, Cathedral in the Night Ministry Team



Gratitude Corner

If you see someone doing something nice, share a gratitude here. Thank you to:

- Thanks to Deb and Jon Dietrich for creating a welcoming worship space through the altarscapes and the putting up and taking down of banners.
- Thanks to Debbie Davis and Janet Tucker for hours upon hours of reviewing membership files and lists as we create our updated database.
- Thank you to everyone who returned your information card to the office making data updates easier.
- Thank you to everyone in the congregation for the fruit basket and the care we received while moving and having Bud’s knee replaced. Bud is slowly gaining mobility in his new knee and we are settling in. – Bud and Jennifer Geary
- Thank you, Adam and choir for the beautiful holiday music.
- Thank you, Keith for staying up beat and getting it all done as the season got busier and busier.
- Thank you to everyone who supported Team Edwards in the Hot Chocolate Run. We raised \$4800.
- Thank you, Jeff Prince, for the wonderful Advent Party dinner.



- Jean Koester
 Sharon Carlson
 Jillian Grant
 Todd Rossi
 Susan Canning
 Paul Voss
- Lawrence Mattison
 Linda Smith
 Julie Abel
 Marjorie Tauer
 Nathan Korza
 Laura Frogameni
 Claudia Lyons

Thank You

To my kind friends at Edwards Church – It was so good of you to drop by my new digs at Rockridge. So good to feel you aren’t forgetting me, even if I don’t come by as often as I would like. Thank you for the gift bag and card.
 Love to all, Emily Schmalzer

Sunday Morning Volunteers

We are in need of volunteers to help lead worship. January is a great time for children, adults and families to volunteer to be the liturgist, reader, greeter, etc. Please consider signing up by contacting the church office at 413-584-5500 or info@edwardschurchnorthampton.org

Sunday	Flowers	Greeter	Usher	Liturgist	Reader	Fellowship
Jan 4th			Ron K			Kathy & Ron Korza and Michele Whiting
Jan 11th	Sally G.		Marc W.			Susan & Brian Swift and Michele Whiting
Jan 18 th			Carolyn D.			
Jan 25 th			Justin C.			

January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				New Year's Day – Church Offices Closed	5:00PM YWCA 7:00PM AA	8:30AM YWCA
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10AM Worship 11:15AM Fellowship	9:30AM NPC 6:00 PM Meditation 7:00 PM Transition Team	9:30AM NPC	9:30AM NPC 9:30AM POH 11AM Bible 7:00PM AA 7:00 PM Finance 7:00 PM B&G	8:30 Infant Group 9:30AM NPC 4:00 PM C&V 5:00 PM POH 7:00PM Choir 7:00PM Bible	5:00PM YWCA 7:00PM AA	8:30AM YWCA
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
10AM Worship 11:15AM Fellowship	9:30AM NPC 6:00 PM Meditation 7:00 PM ECM	9:30AM NPC	9:30AM NPC 9:30AM POH 11AM Bible 7:00PM AA	8:30 Infant Group 9:30AM NPC 5:00 PM POH 7:00PM Choir 7:00PM Bible	5:00PM YWCA 7:00PM AA	8:30AM YWCA
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
10AM Worship 11:15AM Fellowship	Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Church Offices Closed 6:00 PM Meditation	9:30AM NPC	9:30AM NPC 9:30AM POH 11AM Bible 7:00PM AA 7:00 PM B&G	8:30 Infant Group 9:30AM NPC 5:00 PM POH 7:00PM Choir 7:00PM Bible	5:00PM YWCA 7:00PM AA	8:30AM YWCA
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
10AM Worship 11:15AM Fellowship	9:30AM NPC 6:00 PM Meditation	9:30AM NPC	9:30AM NPC 9:30AM POH 11AM Bible 7:00PM AA	8:30 Infant Group 9:30AM NPC 5:00 PM POH 7:00PM Choir 7:00PM Bible	5:00PM YWCA 7:00PM AA	8:30AM YWCA

NOTES:

NPC – Northampton Parents Center

ECM – Elected Core Ministry

POH – Pastor Office Hours

Bible – Bible Study

B&G – Building & Grounds