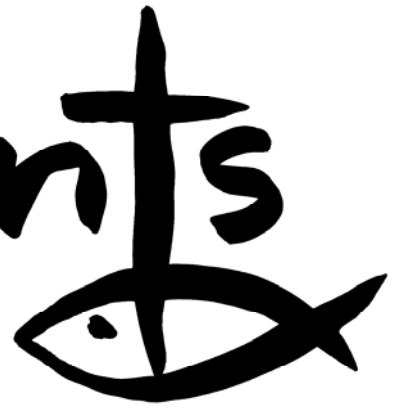


Cross Currents

Newsletter of the Haydenville Congregational Church
February 2009 *Open Hearts & Open Minds & Open Doors*



FROM THE PASTOR

As I write this, radio and TV reports are recounting all the famous people who have gathered in Washington DC for the Inauguration of Barack Obama. On Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday (January 18th) our Church lifted up the words and witness of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and we celebrated the upcoming Inauguration of President Obama. In beautiful words—litanies and responsive readings and in many stirring songs—we referred often to King and Obama and were filled with memories, pride and joy. Now, as I sit at my computer, I am listening to the roll call of famous folks who have flocked to DC for the big event on January 20th. I have heard about Oprah's arrival in DC and how she filmed her TV show from the Kennedy Center, and how Bono, Springsteen and James Taylor performed at the National Mall. Rev. Joseph Lowery, Rev. Rick Warren and Bishop Gene Robinson are there. The list of famous people in DC goes on and on; it made me reflect on who is famous and why. And so today, on yet another snowy January afternoon, I find myself thinking about how God has wired us all for relationships and so we are all famous to someone. We are famous to our family members, friends, Church family and people at the places we work and volunteer because those people love and value us. AND we are famous to God, who knows the details of our lives and the yearnings in our hearts. We are all famous—to God and in our own spheres of influence. Thinking about how we are famous and to whom we are famous made me remember a mural painted on one of the walls at the Hampshire County Jail and House of Correction on Route 66 in Northampton. A group of inmates created and painted a beautiful and vibrant mural that shows a man of color sitting on a park bench next

to a young girl of color. Over their heads are the words: *"To the world, you are one person. To one person, you are the world."* Whenever I am at the jail to volunteer as a Chaplain, I stare at that mural. I love the painting AND the words. Reflecting on being famous also brought to my mind Naomi Shihab Nye's poem "Famous," in which she writes:

I want to be famous to shuffling men
who smile while crossing streets,
sticky children in grocery lines,
famous as the one who smiled back.

I want to be famous in the way a pulley is famous,
or a buttonhole, not because it did anything spectacular;
but because it never forgot what it could do.

I love my Church family. You are the ones who smile back. And you never seem to forget what it is you can do—you give and give and give to a world that needs your care and compassion, your generosity and your prayers. I love my Church family. You are, each one of you, famous to me.

NOTE FROM PASTOR MATILDA

As we move through winter and approach the spring I again want to thank all the children, parents, and teachers who run our Children's Church program. Children's Church teaching is one of the most time consuming volunteer jobs of the church, yet it is also one of the most rewarding. Teaching in Children's Church is the one volunteer job that requires missing out on adult Sunday worship, and this in itself can be a hardship sometimes. However, being in the presence of the children is another way of being in the presence of God, and we worship in Children's Church with joy, curiosity, reverence, and humor. Teachers also always say that they feel fed spiritually in ways they cannot ever predict, week after week...

As our Children's Program continues to grow and mature, in wisdom as well as numbers, we want to begin to integrate our children's program more into the life of the church as a whole so that we are as one body, even through we worship in different rooms! So please stay tuned in the newsletter and in other church venues to learn more about our program. **For the month of February I will leave CC info down on the front table in the dining room so please help yourselves to any of this material.** If you are reading this from afar and cannot access written material, please feel free to email or call me for information.

Some of you have remarked on the numbers of children that we have in our program, and that we have been able to engage kids at a time when people are every busy outside of church and when young people have been losing interest or have not found themselves sustained spiritually in conventional houses of worship. I believe the reason that we have interested children is this:

*Jesus was a **particular human person**, and therefore we do our best to recognize the **particular human person** of each child. By seeing them and hearing them and noticing what is unique in who they are, we **show** them the message of regard, justice, and love for all people that Jesus taught. The children, we hope, feel seen and heard and have interest taken in them as particular human people, and thus they become interested in the gospel that communicates this attitude.*

Being the shepherds of the spiritual life of children is a profound responsibility and a complex job. Yet we do our best to start here, and find that the rest follows.

In faith and gratitude,
Matilda

FAITH AND FITNESS

Diet and Exercise for a Better World

By Pastor Andrea



A few folks have responded to my "shout out" in the January Newsletter that we are forming a group to read this new FAITH AND FITNESS book and discuss it together. The book, Faith and Fitness: Diet and Exercise for a Better World, is by Tom P. Hafer and it looks great. The group will begin in early February. We'll read the book over a three week period and talk about the high points and any commitments/goals we want to set individually or together. There will be mutual support for those wanting to make some changes in their self-care and we'll see if Hafer's suggestions inspire and motivate us to become more active and more healthy! Let me know if you want to be a part of this book study group!

COFFEE HOUR: FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD!

As all the regulars know, we go by last names and when it is your week to bring food for Coffee Hour, you can bring anything yummy to share (does NOT have to be homemade). We welcome fruit, veggies and dip, nuts and all kinds of pastries! Also good and faithful servants, you help set-up and clean-up when it is "your" Sunday. Thank you everyone!



February 1: U, V, W, X, Y, Z

February 8: A, B, C, D, E

February 15: F, G, H, I, J

February 22: K, L, M, N, O

GIFT CARDS TO DISTRIBUTE



Pastor Andrea has 5 Gift Cards (for \$50 each) to Stop and Shop and 5 Gift Cards (\$50 each) to Big Y to distribute. If your family needs help buying groceries, please see Pastor Andrea for one of these Gift Cards—from your Church Family with love.

PRAYERS FOR PEACE IN GAZA



General Secretary of the National Council of Churches (USA) The Rev. Michael Kinnamon has written a prayer of contrition and a plea to God to "make war cease." This prayer was sent out electronically to UCC pastors around the country and the pastors were encouraged to read the prayer in Church. Pastor Andrea used this prayer as the

Pastoral Prayer on January 11, 2009 joining with hundreds of other UCC churches nationwide by offering Rev. Kinnamon's words in a spirit of sorrow, confession and a plea for peace. The prayer appears below.

God of all creation, you who are so bound to humankind that you feel the joys that complete us and the sorrows that rend us; God of Abraham, you who have made covenant with our ancestors and called us to be special instruments of your peace; we come to you in pain. You have commanded us to love our neighbors as ourselves; yet throughout our world we see horrifying examples of our failure to love as you command.

In the land made holy by the prophets and the birth of Christ, an insane cycle of rocket attacks and air bombardment has left hundreds of your children dead and wounded. Murderous conflict continues in Iraq, Afghanistan, Darfur, and Sri Lanka. A recent act of terrorism threatens the peace between India and Pakistan. Animosity lingers between Georgians and Russians. Thousands of persons who bear your image face starvation and violence in Congo, Myanmar, Somalia, Sudan, and Zimbabwe, often because power-hungry leaders have put themselves above your law.

God of peace and justice, we come to you in pain and contrition. Forgive us for how we turn away from the suffering of others. Help us to face their agony so that you might use us as instruments of your peace. We know, in the words of the psalmist, that you are the one who can make war cease to the ends of the earth, breaking the bow and shattering the spear; but we also know that you have called us to participate in this holy mission. May this new year be the time when your name will be exalted among the nations, and when we will come to love others as we have been loved by you. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

LIVING THE QUESTIONS



Pastor Andrea, Pastor Matilda and Pastor Phil Hall invite you to join them for a seven-week series called LIVING THE QUESTIONS. This program is based on a series of DVDs that the gathered group will view each week and discuss. Living the Questions (according to the promotional material) "is an open-minded alternative to studies that attempt to give participants all the answers. Living the Questions creates an environment where participants not only interact with one another in exploring the best of today's theological thought, but together strive to explore what's next for Christianity." The 20-minute video segments include conversations with leading voices of faith, sermon and lecture clips, digital stories illustrating aspects of an evolving faith, and concrete spiritual practices.

Pastor Andrea, Pastor Matilda and Pastor Phil ask that if you sign up for this series you make a commitment to attend each session so that the group can gain momentum and build on discussions from the previous weeks.

The Living the Questions series will be held in the Dining Room at the Church, and is open to all. To "sign up" for the series you need to appear at the first session and the overview for the series will be discussed at that time. If you have thoughts, questions or need more information, please see Pastor Andrea, Pastor Matilda or Pastor Phil.

The Living the Questions series schedule is as follows--with all sessions held from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM:

Wednesday, February 11
Wednesday, February 18
Thursday, February 26
Wednesday, March 4
Tuesday, March 10
Wednesday, March 18
Wednesday, March 25

MITTEN TREE COLLECTS SO MANY ITEMS!



The Ladies Aid is happy to report that this year's MITTEN TREE collected 32 hats, 7 hat and mitten sets, 37 pairs of mittens or gloves, 1 pair of socks and 17 scarves. These were divided between the H.E. James School in Williamsburg, Sanderson Academy in Ashfield (where Denis O'Dea and Anna Morin go to school), Safe Passage and The Grove Street Inn. Thank you to everyone who made and donated these items!

REFLECTIONS ON THE INAUGURATION OF BARACK OBAMA AND PRAYERS FOR OUR NEW PRESIDENT

By the Fridays at Four Writing Group (Jan. 16, 2009)

Prayer for Michelle, Malia, and Sasha

By Bonnie Atkins

When you hold your husband
When you hold your father
When the winds of change caress your dark skin
I ask of you
One thing.

Be gentle with your husband
Be gentle with your father
Play hard and run wild
Rest at night, sleep deep, and dream slow
Hold my brothers and sisters in your heart when you pray
Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered.
Don't let Rick Warren fool you.
He believes I am a sinner for how it is I love.

Change

By Bonnie Atkins

Hold the dove
Hold my hand
Hold your heart
Hold my name

In peace's promise
I hear the train
On the track
Sing BARACK
OUT of IRAQ.

BARACK OBAMA

By Hope Solanis

Be
Assured
Resolute
Americans
Can
Know

Our
Brilliant
Advocate
Miraculously
Arrives

BARACK OBAMA

Blessed
Are
Reverent
And
Careful
Knowers
Of
Beauty
Amongst
A
Misguided
Administration

BARACK OBAMA

Be
Always
Real
And
Certainly
Know

Our
Blessings
Are
Multiplying
Always

A World Without Seams

By Hope Solanis

You who drew form from many colors of clay
Whose heart pumps the bloodlines of lineages in array
You who can alchemize through your mind-body-soul
You are now stepping into a Divinely-cast role

Conceived long ago in a far-distant heaven
Where wisdom and knowing knew September 11
Anguish turned to outrage spawning misguided actions
Serving to splinter our hopes into fractions

You were born for this task and through your ancestral
blend
You have torn down division and made it your friend
Your companion is truth and it's an unerring guide
Summoning a matrix of support from inside

You who are NOW and could only now be,
You who walk tall with our First Family
Sasha and Malia will help you hold steady
For the stars have aligned and you are now ready

You're a walking example of the audacity of hope

The YES WE CAN man, you're unlimited in scope
You're the realized fulfillment of our own Highest dreams
Weaving all of humanity into a world without seams

For soon barriers will fall and old paradigms crumble
Divine Guidance will flood the man who stays humble
We're a world becoming One, not of individual nations
Our innate Unity is revealed through Divine Invitation

You're the blender, the mender, the healer of divisions
Bandaging our fractures and political collisions
America's heart pumps the blood of diversity's dreams
Weaving all of humanity into a world without seams

Prayers for Obama and Family

By Linda Small

Prayer 1:

Dear Mother\Father\Creator of All That is, please watch over our brother Barack Obama and our sister Michelle Obama, as well as their beautiful daughters (and our sisters) Malia and Sasha.

May their days at the White House be filled with your peace, love, and good health.

Surround them with the light of your truth, beauty and love.

Help them to remember that those who speak ill of them are coming from a place of ignorance and fear. The best thing to do when this happens is to bless those who say negative things and help them toward the light. Amen.

Prayer 2

Dear Creator of All That is help Barack Obama when he is alone, when he feels the weight of the world on his shoulders, when he is heavy with doubt and fear, when he is weary and worried, help him to know that you are always, always with him. Help him to remember to breathe and relax, to allow your light and love to fill him and relieve him of his burdens and to see the way. Guide him to truth and understanding, to love and peace, to justice and fairness. Lift his spirits and give him the courage to do what is best for all. And protect our dear brother with you light and love, keep him safe. Amen.

Prayer for our New President

By Annie Warner

Dear Jesus,
Our Inclusive Brother,
To You we pray on this historic Inauguration Day that You

will grant more wisdom to this already wise man.
We pray that he will have the understanding of Martin.
We pray that he will have the patience and determination of Rosa.

We pray for our citizens and all the citizens of the world to be united in an unending quest for peace.

Most of all, Dear Jesus, we pray for the safety of President Obama and his beautiful family. Let no harm or injury befall them.

Let not only our children soar, but let all of us to a new understanding of all mankind. Amen

The World Hopes

By Lynn Goodhue

The hope of the world is with him. The world watches our nation that has elected a new leader from a new color-blind generation. He stands on the shoulders of giants, to be sure. We want so much for him to fix the problems created by that "Weapon of Mass Dysfunction."

Dear God, be with Obama, keep him safe. Be with us as we have in desperation set our own expectations so high. Help us understand his humanity, and help us not to be disappointed with the speed at which he turns this old ark of a nation around.

May we as a people come together – finally – to realize the dream of Martin Luther King Jr., and to hold our heads up high again, to be proud to proclaim and reclaim our American heritage.

A Mother's Advice

By Trish LaFreniere

Be wise, Barack—
remember nothing is ever just black or white,
but all the shades between.

Be careful, Barack—
remember that hearts can break and bleed
from careless words.

Be just, Barack--
for justice must be served equally,
and you must be wise in your judgement.

Be true to your words, Barack--
for you have given us hope
and allowed us to dream again
of peace in a multicolored world.

Up Over My Head

By Emily Dines

I am up over my head in a land of happiness,
hope, love, and peace.

Happiness that we as a country have elected
Barack Obama as our new president.

Hope for a smooth as possible journey ahead,
that will extend far into the futures of our
children's children.

Love that fills this room in our beautiful church
and that will ride on the air waves, continuing
around the world, making all beings and creatures
as one.

Peace that will someday come, soon!

A Day for Celebrating

By Sally J. Lemaire

How unlikely the story.

A Black man, an American of mixed heritage with
An African name, challenging all Americans to vote
and to vote for him.

Not all did but enough did to make him

The winner---but is it winning?

Inheriting two wars of our country, even more world catas-
trophes, climate change,

Racism, recession bordering on depression-----this is win-
ning?

YES we can call it winning.

YES we can celebrate.

YES we elected a leader for our times.

Pitfalls of Platforms

By Sally J. Lemaire

Political platforms and theatrical platforms.

Wooden pallets—words of wisdom.

Something to stand on and from which one can speak.

Pledges to make. Tasks to complete.

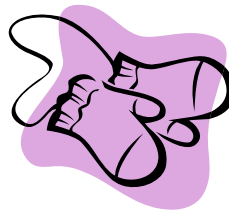
Barack

By Lee Satterfield

Barack, may your symphony soar.

Love, Lee

NEEDED: GLOVES AND HATS AND MITTENS



Joanne Wells, a kindergarten teacher in
Springfield (and Peter Wells' wife), has
informed our church of the pressing need
during these cold winter months
for gloves, hats and mittens for young
elementary school children. If you are
willing to donate any of these items

please contact Peter and he will make arrangements for pick
up. (wellsp@macucc.org or (413) 589-7034).

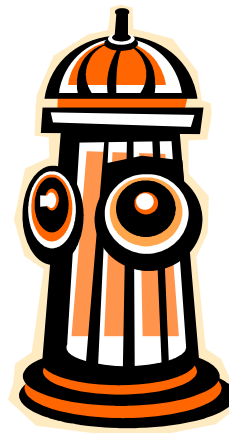
THANK YOU ANONYMOUS DONOR

Someone has AGAIN visited Para-
dise Copies in Northampton, where
we do all our church copying, and
has made a huge deposit (credit) on
our church account there. Just af-
ter Christmas, an anonymous donor
put \$875 on our account at the
Copy Center. Wow, Wow, Wow, Wow!
THANK YOU WHOEVER YOU ARE!!!!!!



CHURCH SUPPER FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

By Cindy McQuestion



The Haydenville Congregational
Church Ladies Aid Society is hosting the
Williamsburg/Haydenville Fire Depart-
ment Association on Feb 4, 2009 at 6:30
PM at the Church with a roast pork din-
ner. This is a grateful thank you to
the firefighters who promptly came to
our aid on one Sunday morning before
Christmas due to a faulty furnace prob-
lem. Please contact Cindy McQuestion
(cinmcq@aol.com or (413) 320-
3040) if you can contribute any items or
time.

BLUE MOON SUNDAY IN MARCH

Our next Blue Moon Sunday is
March 29. Would you like to
lead or co-lead a Blue Moon
Sunday Community Service
Project? If so, please call Blue
Moon Sunday Project Coordi-
nator Lynn Fogg at (413) 532-9848.



Praise for "Steeple's" ad

By Denise Leboeuf



I am writing with much appreciation and admiration for the UCC and the Steeples commercial.

We celebrated the Steeples ad, and honored the UCC, during our congregation's "joys and concerns" Sunday, Oct. 4. One woman mentioned that she could feel the deep

sincerity in the UCC's welcome, and was warmed when she heard a favorite childhood song, "*Here is the church, here is the steeple, open the doors and see all the people.*"

I especially like that the "whoever you are, wherever you are..." expression is in the ad. We repeat that extravagant welcome every Sunday during our services. It is my favorite of the many ways our church is weaving the "Steeple's" themes of an extravagant welcome and inclusion into our spiritual practices.

We want to thank the UCC, everyone involved and everyone who supported the "Steeple's" project. Thank you for showing everyone just how wide the UCC and its churches open their arms to... *all the people!*

HYMN TITLES BY OCCUPATION

submitted by Cindy McQueston

When you go to Church this weekend
be sure to smile as you go through your
Hymnal!



Dentist's Hymn.....Crown Him with
Many Crowns

Contractor's Hymn.....The Church's one Foundation
The Weatherman's Hymn.....There Shall Be Showers of
Blessings

The Tailor's Hymn.....Holy, Holy, Holy

The Politician's Hymn.....Standing on the Promises

Optometrist's Hymn.....Open My Eyes That I May See

The IRS Agent's Hymn.....I Surrender All

The Electrician's Hymn.....Send The Light

The Shopper's Hymn.....Sweet Bye and Bye

Dear Church Family,

I just have to say I appreciate my church family so much. Your generous support of The Sunrise Foundation has been very moving. I want to especially thank the Ladies Aide for their contribution of \$500, which will be used on meals for the children, teachers' salaries and other essential expenses.

I also want to thank each of the members of the congregation who has contributed a sewing machine or fabric for the sewing classes for the mothers of our children. The four machines and fabric we received this fall have already arrived in Nicaragua. The sewing classes are starting this week, with 14 women and girls participating. They will be following an official curriculum and will receive certificates when they complete the classes.

We are continuing to collect machines and fabric throughout the year, which will be shipped next fall. Already we have seven more machines waiting to go. You can bring machines or fabric to church any Sunday. If you have a machine you would like me to pick up, please wait until the better weather in the spring. I'll put a reminder in the newsletter then.

When I made a presentation at the church on January 17 about the project, it was so wonderful to have help setting up the presentation and refreshments.

Thanks to everyone for coming. And thanks to the church, itself, for a \$100 contribution on Saturday.

Thanks to you all. It is great to be part of a caring community.

Lisa Hall



INTRODUCING...

The newest member of Bonnie and Alice's family, *Chico*.
Photo by Linda Small



FLOWER POWER

By Trish LaFreniere

As you may know, every February I get together a group of local singers--either singles or bands, and including members of our own church--and create a night of music here in the Sanctuary to chase away the mid winter gloom. This year, the theme is "Flower Power--Music from the 60s and 70s." Remember those great songs? Beatles, Animals, Tina Turner, John Denver--do I need to go on? Even if you weren't around yet during that time, you know the music. You know the words. What better way to spend a cold February night than listening to great music in our beautiful old church? Then, we will treat you to great refreshments in the dining room. I promise this will go a long way toward chasing away your blues.

The date is Tuesday, Feb 17th from 7pm-9ish.

A free will donation will be collected at the door, with the money to go toward a local charity. The generosity of our church is widely known, and there is much need in our own valley. So, please join us in a bright, happy night of great music and awesome food. And if you want to perform, call me and I'll book you in. Groovy, huh? Call Trish LaFreniere at (413) 268-7254.



Ann Podolske and Linda Small



The Brides Wore Carhartt

Linda Small & Ann Podolske

Ann Podolske and Linda Small were married September 12 at 4:00 p.m. at Haydenville

Congregational Church by the Rev. Andrea Ayvazian. The brides wore Carhartt.

Ann is the daughter of the late Elaine and George Podolske of Marinette, Wisc. Linda is the daughter of Marion and the late Edward Small of New Port Richey, Fla.

Ann is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin - Madison and is a Communications Consultant for MassMutual Financial Group in Springfield and a standup comic. Linda is a graduate of Pace University and after 30 years as a systems analyst she has found herself in an occupational hallway. The couple lives in Northampton with their dear dog Shwea.

0054703



FALL STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

FINAL GOAL

****Drum Roll Please****

\$129,620

GREAT JOB CHURCH FAMILY!

We exceeded our goal of \$100,000 by almost \$30,000. Wow!

Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you!

FEBRUARY 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10 AM Worship Service with Communion	2 4 PM Youth Group Meeting 5 PM Diaconate Meeting, Church Dining Room	3	4 6:30 PM Dinner for the Fire Dept. sponsored by the Ladies Aid (see article) 7 PM Non-violence Study Group Meeting in Children's Church	5	6	7
8 10 AM Worship Service with Ceremony to Welcome New Members! Mentor Meeting following worship (for more information, see Pastor Matilda)	9 4:30 PM Confirmation Class in Children's Church 5:15 PM Trustees' Meeting, Church Dining Room 5:30 PM Green Task Force Mtng. Child. Church 7 PM Children's Church Teacher Training: see Pastor Matilda for more information	10	11 5 to 6:30 PM "Living the Questions" series Class #1 (see article in this issue of the newsletter)	12	13	14
15 10 AM Worship Service followed by our Church ANNUAL MEETING	16	17 7 PM FLOWER POWER a program of songs and the joy of Community! See Trish Lafi Freniere for more information! Church Sanctuary	18 5 to 6:30 PM "Living the Questions" series Class #2 (see article in this issue of the newsletter)	19 1 PM Ladies Aid Meeting	20	21
22 10 AM Worship Service Noon: Fun and Fellowship Group for Single People, meet in the Narthex (by front door) of the church	23 4:30 PM Confirmation Class	24	25 7 PM Ash Wednesday Service with the imposition of ashes	26 5 to 6:30 PM "Living the Questions" series Class #3 (see article in this issue of the newsletter)	27	28



Haydenville Congregational Church

United Church of Christ
143 Main Street, PO Box 257
Haydenville, MA 01039

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS!

February 1 Brigham Martin
February 8 Valerie Hooper-Lindros
 Michelle Letendre
February 9 Judy Haigler
February 10 Abigail Pollard
February 12 J. Elizabeth Brewer
February 14 Cate Wilson
February 15 Matilda Cantwell
February 23 Barbara Estes
February 24 June May
 Morton Stowe
February 25 Marylee Trettenero
February 26 Diane Scott

REDUCING FRAGRANCES AT OUR CHURCH

By Pastor Andrea

When we say, at the beginning of every worship service, "Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!" we need to include those with chemical sensitivities and we need to do more to make sure those folks ARE welcome and safe in our church. One in five people in the population overall experience health problems when exposed to fragrances. Because our Church strives to be a welcoming place for everyone, the Board of Trustees has decided to issue a call to the congregation: please refrain from using fragrances on the days you are coming to worship or to a church event. We know that everyone inhales fragrances, whether or not we individually use them (like inhaling secondhand smoke) and fragrances cause some people with chemical sensitivities to cough, sneeze, wheeze, feel fatigue, have eye irritation, develop a headache and have changes in blood pressure. Although we do not believe we can become a totally "fragrance-free zone," we do believe we can reduce people's exposure to fragrances (colognes, perfumes, highly

scented soaps, scented shaving lotion/cream, strong shampoo and body powder) by raising everyone's awareness of this issue. Thank you for making an effort in the new year to reduce your use of fragrances so that all members of our congregation and all visitors can breathe easily in our church and experience the warmth and the extravagant welcome that we are known to extend.