

Cross Currents

Newsletter of the Haydenville Congregational Church
November 2008 *Open Hearts & Open Minds & Open Doors*

FROM THE PASTOR

It is November and we have launched our ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN--with boats in the Sanctuary, "Stewardship Moments" offered by parishioners at the beginning of each worship service, inserts in the Bulletin, pie charts showing our annual budget, and other reminders that we are currently asking you to make your Annual Pledge to support our Church in 2009. A story I heard recently will help us think about the call and the impulse to be generous.

A man was walking through the woods, praying. As he walked, he stubbed his toe and looked down to see a huge, sparkling emerald gleaming on the forest floor. Giving thanks to God, he picked up the jewel and continued walking, holding the emerald with care. A little while later, he heard a beggar by the side of the pathway calling out for someone to help. Soon the beggar was in sight. He looked hungry and homeless. He asked for food or for money. The man on the path walked over to the beggar and gave him the emerald. The beggar was amazed, and practically danced away in gratitude. A little while later, though, the beggar came back and found the man on the path still walking. "Here," said the beggar. "Take this back. What I want from you is something even more valuable." "What else do I have?" said the man, whose pockets were empty and who was still far from home. "What I want from you," said the beggar, "is whatever it is that allowed you to give that jewel away."

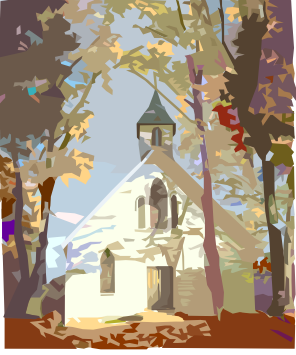


We are not asking you, and would not ask you, to give away your most priceless possession or to give until your pockets were empty. But, as I spoke about in a Sermon in October, we are asking you to think about your giving to the Church not as parting with your hard-earned dollars but as redirecting them to another part of the whole. If

the Church feels vital to your spiritual, emotional and intellectual health, then help us fund this place--God's home--to keep us all well, secure and thriving. Just as the heart pumps blood to the legs and arms, fingers and toes, we direct some of our own money to another part of the whole so that our faith community can remain sufficiently strong and vibrant to offer each one of us the sustenance we need in our daily lives.

I know you to be a remarkably generous people. I also know we are living through a hard time with the economy in a serious downturn. Please pray on and then settle on what you would like to pledge for 2009 to this Church, being aware that we want you to make sure you and your family are safe and have what you need. The letters from the Stewardship Committee will be available in red envelopes with pledge forms inside on Stewardship Sunday, November 9th. You'll bring your completed forms back to Church to be received with gratitude and blessed with reverence on November 23rd. The Stewardship Committee and I thank you sincerely for your support.

NOTE FROM MATILDA: CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Children's Church: Throughout the fall we have been "beginning at the beginning" in Children's Church. We began our Children's Church year by learning the story of the "10 best ways" which is the Godly Play Story of the 10 Commandments. Each Child's Church class made their own Covenant of our "Ten Best Ways" for

Children's Church, and life in general! We have looked at the story of Creation and we have also learned about the Great Family, begun by Abraham and Sarah wandering in the desert, finding a home, and beginning their family with their son Isaac. Our Godly Play story tells us that we all go back to the "Great Family," and we are now as many as there are "stars in the sky" and grains of sand in the desert."

At the beginning of the month the Children's Church Coordinators, who have been teaching all fall, will step back and make room for a new teacher rotation. Thank you to all the teachers who will be working with the kids over the November to Advent rotation.

Please note the names of our Children's Church Committee for the 2008-2009 Year:

Co-chairs: Annie Culver, Julie Elias, and Regina Kaufman
Committee members: Melissa Adams, Dave Avakian, Margaret Chappuis, Karen Guiel, Karla Hathaway, Dawn Orluske, and Dale West.

Karla, along with Danielle Poudrier, has become the official Parent Nursery Coordinator, so if you have questions about children ages 0-3 and their participation in CC, please see Karla.

Youth and Confirmation Group: Our Youth Group and Confirmation Class are a wild, unique and spectacular bunch. The Monday afternoons I spend with the Youth Group and the Confirmation Class are one of the highlights of my week. The Youth Group is **Hayley Hemminger-Martin, Ileana Fournier, Emily Ryan-Biggs, Will Hathaway, and Reilly McQueston**. Right now in this group of wonderfully questioning believers we are making collages representing our faith, which will soon be displayed in the fellowship hall. The Youth did both the Crop Walk and Shelter Sunday, and a special thanks to Will, Ileana, and Reilly who "walked their talk" and put their faith into action by raising money for local homeless and global hunger. The Confirmation Class is **Danielle Poudrier, Anthony Tortoriello and Shelby McQueston**. The kids are learning

about world religions, the history of the Protestant Faith, prayer, worship, and Scripture, and all the while having conversations that are helping prepare them to write their Statement of Faith and decide if they will choose to be confirmed in June 2009. I am so proud of and impressed by these young people, (never mind the fact that they have endless hours of mirth at my expense...) by their questions, their growing faith, and their refusal to accept the injustices of the world or take consumerism, greed, and conventional wisdom at face value. They struggle, they play, they love, and they pray, all in their own wonderful unique way. We are looking forward to more service opportunities and exploring what it means to give to others in the upcoming season of Thanksgiving and Advent.

In Faith and Gratitude,

Pastor Matilda

ALTERNATIVE HOLIDAY GIFT FAIR



Want to give more meaningful gifts to family and friends instead of simply more gifts? Here's your chance to do just that with one-stop shopping! At our fair, you'll be able to choose from hundreds of gifts ~ everything

from a hive of bees (Heifer International) to seeds and tools (Church World Service) to a basket of food for school children (Amherst Survival Center) to fair trade items such as coffee and crafts ~ and lots more choices from lots more national and local organizations!

You'll find all these gifts from the heart ~ gifts that honor your loved ones and lend a hand to families near and far ~

at the Alternative Holiday Gift Fair
North Congregational Church Parish Hall
Saturday, November 8
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

1195 North Pleasant Street, Amherst
corner of Pine and N. Pleasant Streets, at the traffic light in North Amherst

Call Barbara at 253-2929 for more information.

A LESSON IN COMMUNITY FROM THE BIRDS

By Sally Lemaire

I have an electric awning over my kitchen windows. Every spring the birds and I compete for the space. If their nests are built before I catch the construction, they can stay. If I keep it open, they go elsewhere.



One Saturday noon I started to show two friends how the awning worked. The moment I pushed the start button there was a panic stricken bird fluttering its wings and fleeing the nest (it must have felt like an earthquake to the birds). I immediately stopped the movement and thought—Oh my God, there is a nest I didn't know about.

I was wondering if any of the birds were injured and how could I know? I didn't want to move the awning again so I left it opened a few inches. After deciding to leave it alone, my friends and I sat down for lunch. We were looking out of the kitchen windows and then we saw the most wonderful scene of community building.

The birds had sent out an S.O.S. and twenty to thirty "friends" came to help repair the nest. Back and forth, back and forth, back and forth--these allies would fly to the nearby woods and come back with a small piece of wood, a leaf, a feather, and pine needles. For over three hours they worked. Then they left as suddenly as they appeared.

Still not knowing if anything else was in the nest meant I had to wait for some sound or movement to know the results. Two weeks later the peep-peep-peep of baby birds thrilled me. The community repairs to their home held them safely until they were ready to join us as co-inhabitants of this earth.

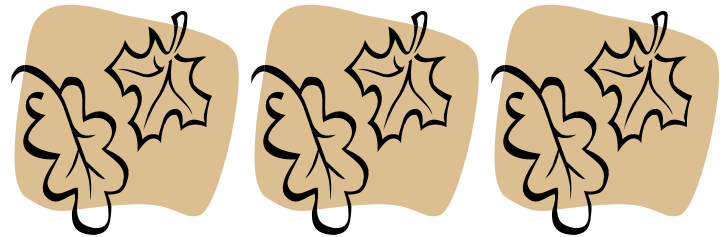
THANKSGIVING DINNER AT THE CHURCH

Members of the Diaconate have decided that the Church will offer a full Thanksgiving Dinner at noon on Thanksgiving Day for anyone who would like to attend. If you are by yourself, if you were wondering where you might spend Thanksgiving, or if you would like to bring your entire family, **YOU ARE WELCOME HERE.** Please let Pastor Andrea know if you would like to attend, or if you would like to contribute any item to the meal. Members of the Diaconate will prepare the dinner. Everyone is most welcome to join us.

"i am a little church"

by e.e. cummings

i am a little church (no great cathedral)
far from the splendor and squalor of
hurrying cities
i do not worry if briefer days grow briefest,
i am not sorry when sun and rain make april
my life is the life of the reaper and the sower;
my prayers are prayers of earth's own clumsily striving
(finding and losing and laughing and crying) children
whose any sadness or joy is my grief or my gladness
around me surges a miracle of unceasing
birth and glory and death and resurrection:
over my sleeping self float flaming symbols
of hope, and i wake to a perfect patience of mountains
i am a little church (far from the frantic
world with its rapture and anguish) at peace with nature
i do not worry if longer nights grow longest;
i am not sorry when silence becomes singing
winter by spring, i lift my diminutive spire to
merciful Him Whose only now is forever:
standing erect in the deathless truth of His presence
(welcoming humbly His light and proudly His darkness)



GOD'S GLORIOUS AUTUMN

By Mae Emerson Smith



Today I saw God's Glory
'Twas ablaze all around my world
The maple leaves some red some yellow
The poplar twinkling gold
The oak just turning rusty brown
The foliage 'gainst an azure sky
As blue as blue could be -
What splendor to behold!
It's magical that leaves so green
Turn bright colors throughout the night
I like to think each tree was Blessed
By God's All Loving Hand
And hope that every observant eye
Will enjoy and appreciate His Colorful Heavenly Plan!

SABBATH ECONOMICS

By Mae Emerson Smith

As I listened to the Scripture reading Matthew 20:1-16 this morning and later to the Sermon, I couldn't help relating this to our Haydenville Congregational Church. I do not mean to be presumptuous or smug, but I humbly feel that this is the way we relate to each other - whether we have been members for years or whether we just happened off the street this morning. Our love and concern and thoughtfulness is sincere and the same and our joy of being together in this place. "So the last will be the first, and the first last."

MEN'S LAY LED SERVICE

By Pastor Andrea

A huge thank you to the men in our church family who spent months organizing a worship service which was led with grace and beauty by a whole team of them on October 18, 2008.

The entire service was touching and meaningful and our Church family extends the warmest words of praise and thanksgiving for their work. Robert Davis merits special mention because his remarkable sermon stirred our hearts and taught us much about war and peace, active nonviolence and Jesus' radical message of love. Robert's sermon truly was a pastoral, confessional, social and political message braided into one beautiful and seamless whole.

We are blessed to have the leadership, gifts and talents of wonderful, caring, gentle, wise and loving men in our Church family and appreciate the service they organized and led. It was a great gift to us all.



ANNOUNCEMENT FROM JACKIE CLOONAN

I have a 4-wheel **WALKER** with seat and brakes available to anyone who might need it on loan or on a permanent basis. Please call me: Jackie at 586.0315. Thank you!

SABBATH ECONOMICS

By Sally Lemaire

As I listened to the sermon on September 21 and reflected on the message of "The last shall be first and the first shall be last," I wanted to share a personal perspective. I was still formulating my thoughts when the post-sermon discussion ended so I am writing this now.

When I was in elementary school and then through college I was frequently one of the "team captains" picking those who would play on my teams. Even as a child I knew that I was always going to pick or be picked among the best student athletes. I was blessed with a love of sports, a family who encouraged sports, and a natural ability to play many sports. At the same time I was active in a church youth group and conscious of issues of inclusion, diversity, fairness, and valuing each person.

There was a tension and sense of responsibility I struggled to balance. Winning at any cost? Losing while doing what was right/ good? Being a "good sport" or a "good Samaritan"?

My decisions varied but often I would select "the worst player" as my first pick knowing that the relief of that individual was so rewarding to feel that it made me want to do it again. I still wanted to win the game being played but I also wanted to win the game of life.

Now that I have Parkinson's Disease I am grateful to all those who know that inclusion of "the worst" can bring out "the best." Thank you for the reminder.

COFFEE HOUR FOOD

The following is line-up for folks to bring goodies for Coffee Hour during the month of November. The calendar goes by last name. Thank you contributing to our famous Coffee Hour after Church each Sunday: When it is your week to bring goodies, you also help set up and clean up.



November 2: K, L, M, N, O

November 9: P, Q, R, S, T

November 16: U, V, W, X, Y, Z

November 23: A, B, C, D, E

November 30: Blue Moon Sunday, No Coffee Hour

SEASONS OF OUR LIVES

Thoughts from the “elders” in the group
Mae Smith, Beth Howland & Phil Hall



As we age, we are all more apt to talk about our religion. Sometimes young folks hesitate to mention God even though it's part of their being.

The withdrawal of religion in our culture has made us feel helpless and angry, but has also given folks an “everything goes” attitude. As we age we feel freer to “tell it like it is” our spirituality is much more important to us – we're not ashamed to show it, we've finally lived long enough to see the changes.

Death and loss have shaped our spirituality in our senior years.

As we age, we are still who we are, but what we feel is important is different. As the mystery deepens, His Greatness becomes reality. He is more a Force in our lives. We know less for sure, but we are more certain. God's Greatness is unsearchable.

The older I get the more I am aware that God is watching over me. God works in wondrous ways.

Things don't always work out the way you want but they'll be fine – you'll see.

INSPIRING NUMBERS!

Here are some numbers that will inspire you and reveal to you once again what an active, caring and generous congregation we are:

Raised for Shelter Sunday in our "Shelter Sunday House" after Church in September: \$754.50

Raised for a family in need in Amherst in a basket after Church in October: \$700.00

Raised at the Annual Church Fair in October: \$4364.91

Raised for the Crop Walk in Chester in October: \$1863.00



GRASSHILL GALLERY CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR

By Trish LaFreniere

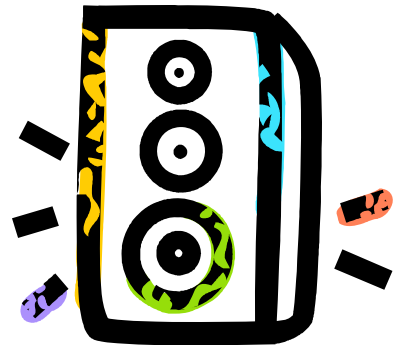


Grasshill Gallery's Spectacular Christmas Craft Fair will be held in the Church Dining Room on Saturday, November 29, from 9 AM to 3 PM. Local crafters offer their best for your one-stop Christmas shopping. Many Church members participate in this great event - this is our 15th year! Organized by sisters Trish LaFreniere and Shirley Warner, the Craft Fair is friendly, warm and laid-back. Wander around the 20 or so tables of fine crafted items including original paintings, fine photography, sparkling jewelry, handmade pottery, warm and fuzzy knitted things and quilted items, decorations for your tree, homemade fudge...do I need to go on? Well, I could mention the homemade muffins and sweetbuns, corn chowder, (secret family recipe), sandwiches, and fabulous desserts offered for sale in the kitchen. I could tell you that this is the nicest place to linger on a cold November day when everyone who doesn't know better is at the Mall. Any questions? Call Trish (268-7254) or Shirley (268-7016).

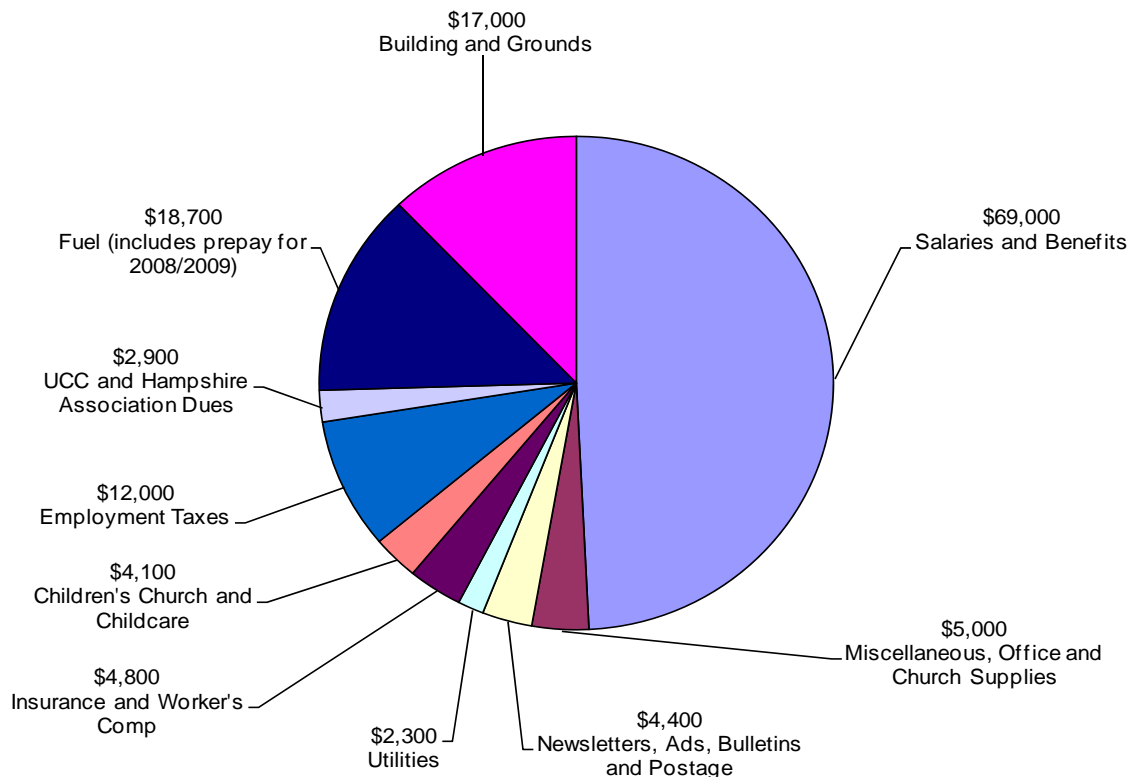
THANK YOU SOUND SYSTEM DONOR

Our beloved Sanctuary (so beautiful now with newly painted walls and gleaming woodwork) has been in need of a new sound system for some time (like years). The Trustees made

getting a new sound system a priority for 2008 and we set out to raise the \$8,000 needed for this purchase. An anonymous donor stepped forward with a gift of \$10,000 and although we cannot announce who this individual is, we can announce that we are thrilled and grateful and amazed and delighted! The new sound system has been installed and it is a dream come true. THANK YOU ANONYMOUS DONOR for your generous gift! We are so grateful! The new system is a joy for us all!



Estimated Expenses 2008 - \$140,200



BLUE MOON SUNDAY!

Our next Blue Moon Sunday, November 30th will be fast approaching. It falls again this time on a holiday weekday, so for those of you who are planning on being at Church that day, please consider participating in one of our community service projects.

Although the entire list of projects has not yet been finalized, we currently have the following three projects planned for the 30th.

Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity

We will participate in a House Build at 18 Stanley Street in Amherst. Primary activities are drywall installation, mudding and taping, so please dress appropriately. This project will be limited to 10 people and would require a 12 PM – 4 PM time commitment.

Vespers at Rockridge Retirement Community

We will be offering a worship service at 7PM to the residents of this retirement community.

Garden Party II @ Ann Podolske and Linda Small's House

We will be raking leaves and doing other outside jobs to assist Linda and Ann in beautifying their wonderful yard. Come join the party.

Stay tuned for additional upcoming projects for our November 30th Blue Moon Sunday. Mark your calendars – more to follow shortly!



THE MEN

By Annie Harrison



The Men's Lay Led Service on October 12th was a true testament to the gifted and thoughtful men in our congregation. The service developed a theme of peace based in Scripture, experience, and reflection. From the opening welcome

given by Ernie and Tony to the benediction spoken by strong male voices around the sanctuary, a spirit of prayerful gentleness and peaceful purpose was palpable.

Phil's reading of a poem by a Sufi poet expressed, for me, the very essence of a dream for humanity that was woven throughout the service:

*men so true to love
they would rather die before speaking
an unkind
word,
men so true their lives are His covenant-
the promise of
hope.*

Tobias Davis's selection of the picture book Ferdinand for the children's message set the stage perfectly for the message to follow. In the classic children's book, Ferdinand is a Spanish bull who refuses to fight, much to the dismay of the embarrassed matador. The book is a wonderful metaphor for peace-loving men who chose gentleness over violence, often defying cultural norms and gender stereotypes.

The concept of strong, gentle men was continued in Robert Davis's sermon titled "Fathers and Sons: At War and In Search of Peace," in which Robert described his personal and spiritual journey from an "army brat" aspiring to West Point and a military career (like his father) to a becoming a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War, completing his service to our country in a non-combatant role in Germany. Deeply moving, Robert's sermon wove together interpretation of Scripture, a personal struggle grounded in faith, and a challenge to all of us to reflect more deeply on peace and peace-making. Pastor Andrea said it best when she commended Robert for combining the pastoral, the political, and the personal in one sermon – a challenge for even the most accomplished divinity school graduate.

Thanks, admiration, and appreciation go to Ken (Forfia), Ernie, Tony, Phil, Jim, Tobias, Robert, Russell, Doug, Mike, David, Rick, Fred, Sean, Gary, Anthony and Ken (Nichols) for an inspiring gift to their church community.

TOWARD DEEPER ENGAGEMENT IN REDUCING POVERTY IN OUR COMMUNITY

Please come to this event on Saturday, December 6 from 9-12 noon in the Dining Room of our Haydenville Congregational Church. The workshop will explore the connections between poverty, faith, class and justice issues. There will be a discussion on how we move from charity to change, we will be learning about class, poverty, survival and community and we hope to reflect together on how our own class backgrounds influence our actions today.

As Chair of the Leadership Team, my experience of this project has been two fold. On a personal level, I have been reminded of the impact that the "first" great Depression had on my parents as they were growing up. The fear created by this time in history left an indelible impression on them in terms of their working class position in society, their overriding caution and their sense of self-esteem. I see the shadow of this fear in the advice I give, unconscious or otherwise, to my own children. I love them and want the best for them but I hold back when it comes to believing that all is possible for them and feel protective of them in this highly capitalistic and class-conscious society in which we live.

The second aspect of this experience is my interest in social activism. The awareness generated by this workshop may enable us to help folks in our own congregation who have been held back due to issues of poverty, low self-esteem and overall lack of opportunity.

This congregation is so compassionate, savvy and powerful. Most of us are already aware of class distinctions in our society and its hurtful ramifications. Please join our wonderful team to overcome these barriers and create change that matters.

Your prayers are my prayers,
Susan Farrell



TAKING HEART IN TOUGH TIMES

By Lisa Hall

The first weekend in October I went to Rowe Conference Center for a workshop with Joanna Macy, called "Taking Heart in Tough Times". Joanna's work stems from the distress we all feel, facing the uncertainty of the future. How will we live with Global Warming, our weakened Global Economy, the political strife in our country, the war in Iraq? How can we face our feelings of frustration, grief, fear, rage, etc. without becoming overwhelmed, and paralyzed? In response, Joanna led us through a process called The Work that Reconnects. We began by talking of our gratitude for the rich and amazing natural world, and all the people and things we love about this beautiful creation we have been given. Then, together, we allowed the pain of our world to wash over us. With stories, songs, poems and sharing, we reached into the strength and the depth of those feelings of frustration, grief, fear and rage. Then Joanna helped us to see our situation with new eyes. Sharing the perspective of ancient wisdom traditions, and mindfulness practice, Joanna helped us to find new courage, creativity and passion to go forth into this moment and our future, rededicating ourselves and each other to our vision of the world we want for our children, grandchildren, and all future generations. It was amazing how a room full of strangers could find such deep connection so simply. How close we felt in just three days. How heartening it was to feel part of a community of people who care about the world our children will inherit, and who are looking for and seeing ways we can make it more sustainable, and more possible. I left Rowe wanting to share this experience with everyone I know, and especially with my church community.

Then, the next weekend, was the Men's Lay-led Service. When Phil Hall read the Hafiz poem "...every song by hill and field and tree and woman and child...." I again felt grounded in gratitude for this beautiful creation we have been given. I was so touched by the willingness of these strong men to be vulnerable and speak from their hearts. And in that service about non-violence, was a vision of a better world for us to build for our children and all the future generations. I felt the same close connection I had felt at Rowe. It was heartening to find such connection and community, in this service, here at our church. I look forward to sharing more of the strength and creativity that lies within each of us in this church community, as we face our uncertain future together.

For more information about Joanna Macy, and The Work That Reconnects, see: <joannamacy.net>

I SIT HERE WHISTLING

By Sarah Leboeuf

I sit here whistling,
my tune matching a bird's song.
The leaves are changing colors, then falling to the ground,
blanketing the green grass.

I notice my breath.
It is steady and I can see it each time I exhale.
In my breath,
I see all that bothers me.

My struggles, my heartaches, my worries,
all bouncing around in the fog of my breath.
I breathe in the fresh air of the park,
and breathe out the stresses of my life.

I release the burdens of my existence,
and the peace of the nature replaces them.
A weight is lifted off my chest,
that floats in the air away from me.

A smile arises on my lips,
for that is all I feel at this time:
complete peace and serenity.
My worries have all evaporated along with my breath.

I sit here whistling,
with nothing left in my body,
but a smile and a tune.



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

11/01— Ruth Jacobson-Hardy

11/08 — Ruth Beebe

11/10— Danielle Poudrier

11/11— H. Alan Kellogg

11/17— Mary Lee Satterfield

11/18— George Henry Jr.

11/22— Nancy Demarais

11/23— Leah Kellogg

11/25— Jacquelin Ann Cloonan

11/30— cmoore

November Calendar

- November 1:** Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ Annual Meeting in Worcester, MA. For more information: www.macucc.org or see Pastor Andrea
- November 2:** Daylight Saving Time Ends~~Change your clocks!
- November 2:** 10:00 AM Worship Service with celebration of Communion
Youth and Confirmation Class young people invited to work with the Prison Book Project. See Tobias Davis or Pastor Matilda for more information
- November 3:** 4:00 PM Youth Group Meeting
5:30 PM Diaconate Meeting, Church Dining Room
- November 4:** Election Day! Remember to VOTE!
6:30 PM Low Carbon Diet program, Church Dining Room
- November 5:** 9:00 AM Active Non-violence Study Group, Church Dining Room
- November 9:** **Stewardship Sunday**~~Stewardship Letters and Pledge forms distributed! Pick yours up at the close of worship!
- November 10:** 4:00 PM Confirmation Class Meeting
5:15 PM Trustees Meeting, Church Dining Room
5:30 PM Green Task Force, Children's Church upstairs
- November 16:** 9:30 AM Meeting of the Cross-class Leadership Council, Church Narthex
10:00 AM Worship Service
- November 17:** 4:00 PM Youth Group Meeting
- November 18:** Low Carbon Diet program, Church Dining Room
- November 19:** 9:00 AM Active Non-violence Study Group, Church Dining Room
6:30 PM Children's Church Committee Meeting, in Children's Church
- November 20:** 1 PM Ladies Aid Meeting, Church Dining Room
- November 23:** 10:00 AM Worship Service~~Thanksgiving Sunday
Stewardship **PLEDGE ENVELOPES DUE!** Bring your pledge forms in the envelopes to Church—they will be collected and the full baskets blessed.
- November 24:** 4:00 PM Confirmation Class Meeting
- November 25:** 7:00 PM Safe Church Committee Meeting in Pastor's Study
- November 27:** **Thanksgiving Day Dinner served at the Church at 12 noon.** All Welcome.
To let us know you are coming, to sign up to help, or to contribute an item to the meal, please see Pastor Andrea.
- November 29:** 9 AM to 3 PM Grasshill Gallery Christmas Craft Fair, Church Dining Room (see article this newsletter)
- November 30: ADVENT I** 10:00 AM Worship Service **BLUE MOON SUNDAY!** No Coffee Hour after worship, we will fan out in teams and do community service projects.
- November 30:** Our Church is providing the evening meal at the Interfaith Cot Shelter in Northampton. Nancy Desrosiers needs volunteers to cook/serve the meal. Please call her if you can help: 268.3159.



Haydenville Congregational Church

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

FEEDING THE CARAVANNERS AT THE HABITAT SITE

By Ruth Beebe

THANK YOU to Cora and Esther Warner, Ruth Loomis, Connie Fender, Deb Edwards, Kate Davidheiser and Lois Beaty for helping put together lunch on September 26th for Volunteers and Caravanners working at the Habitat site, Stanley Street, Amherst where the second home is under construction. Ruth Loomis and I arrived with our bountiful lunch in the midst of a torrential downpour. Thank goodness they had a roof overhead. It was a joy to see their pleasure in choosing from sandwiches (all labeled for easy selection), fresh fruit, cookies, zucchini bread, brownies,

iced tea, Sprite, and cold fresh water. The “Wet Ones” we provided were a hit, of course (no running water yet). There were about a dozen workers. One was Mrs. Perry who already owns the first house here. Cynthia Wade, our local liaison for the Caravanners with Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity, and I met for coffee another day. She brought two women from the Caravanners. One gal (Peg) told me their RV is their home. She came down from northern New York State. They do not own a residence and she and her husband arrange to visit Habitat sites lending their skills in home construction along the way. Betty, another volunteer from Georgia says she and her spouse keep track of family long distance and arrange to be near loved ones for holidays and birthdays of grandchildren.

On site, what do volunteer Caravanners do? A short list might include: framing a dwelling, putting up sheetrock, hard or vinyl siding, caulking as necessary, applying primary or finish paint, installing windows or doors, applying insulation, or finishing woodwork. They might be uneasy about climbing ladders or working on staging, but there are always clean-up tasks or “go-for” trips to be done. It was evident that they enjoy a camaraderie and share recreation as well as sightseeing along with construction tasks.

