There are two events in April at New England Church that are both exciting and important in the life of our congregation.

The first is the Heritage of Harmony festival on Sunday, April 17 at the 10:00 service (the only service that day; the 8:30 service is cancelled to accommodate this event). Former choir members will join with our Chancel Choir and Plymouth Rock Singers for a service of great choral music. Ina Heup, our Minister of Music, will conduct this event, and you know that anything Ina is involved in is always top drawer!

New England Church has a special choral music heritage in Aurora. Our roots go back to 1838 when our ancestors formed one of the first churches in the community, and as First Congregational Church, we erected the first church building (built entirely without nails) and had the first church choir in Aurora. In 1858, when 31 people from that congregation organized New England Church on the west side of town, the music tradition continued. Special concerts were sponsored, a children’s choir sang at the railroad depot on Sunday afternoons, and a chancel choir are all part of our musical heritage. You can read more about this in the book I wrote—Through These Doors—for our 150th anniversary; copies are in the narthex as well as on our website. We are proud to have been a part of great music-making in Aurora for these many years. Today we are one of only a few churches in town that has a classical, traditional choir so all the more reason to be in church on April 17.

On Sunday, April 24 at 11:00 a congregational meeting is being called to consider a new mission outreach project with Emmanuel House. At this meeting, a presentation will be made by Rick Guzman, a member of our church and the founder of Emmanuel House. With the generous gift from Caryl & Paul Herwick of the “white house” that is contiguous to our parking lot, we have an opportunity to partner with Emmanuel House to provide people in Aurora the opportunity to purchase their own home. Their purpose is to transform lives through home ownership by disrupting the cycle of poverty for the working poor through a program whereby a family, through network savings, pay rent while saving enough money for a down payment on a house of their own in 18 months. After the presentation and questions from the congregation, we will vote to pursue this project. I’m excited about the prospects of using this house for a very worthwhile investment in helping families in Aurora find stability through home ownership. Check out their website at www.emmanuelhouse.org before the meeting.

New England Church is an exciting place to be these days. There are lots of good things happening, lots of new faces in the congregation, and an esprit de corps that is unparalleled in our recent history. This is because you are part of the church and taking an active part in keeping it alive and well. Thank you in advance for participating in both of these inspiring events.
Women’s Fellowship

Women's Circle of Friends will be meeting in Friendship Hall at 9:30 am on Saturday, April 9 for breakfast. Following breakfast we will enjoy a hymn sing lead by Marilyn Parolini. Please share a favorite hymn or two with Marilyn during the next three weeks. All women of the church are invited to join us; please sign up in the church office. Come sing with us!

Film Series

April 8: Secondhand Lions (2003)
This coming-of-age story is about a shy, young boy sent by his irresponsible mother to spend the summer with his wealthy, eccentric uncles in Texas. With Michael Caine, Robert Duvall and Haley Joel Osment. Presenter: Nancy Hopp

Men’s Fellowship

Men’s Fellowship Poker Night:
Friday, April 29, 7:00 pm at Chestnut House (19 South Chestnut Street).
Enjoy a fun night of men's fellowship and some good-natured competitive poker. If poker isn’t your thing, please join us anyway for some laughs and fellowship.
An RSVP would be helpful but not required. Email Mike Daly, mike@newenglandchurch.org, or sign-up in the church office.
CareGivers

Did you know that we have a group in our church called CareGivers? This group serves those who are not able to get to church on a regular basis. Once a month, a CareGiver calls that person, sends a card or note, or delivers cookies from the Cookie Walk or chocolate from the Chocolate Festival.

We are looking for:
1. People to serve as CareGivers.
2. Someone you know who cannot get to church on a regular basis who would appreciate NECC reaching out to them in this way.

If you know someone who needs a CareGiver or if you would like to become a CareGiver, call Barb Vavrinek (630-554-9633) or email bvavrinek@ameritech.net for more information.

'Conversations with Gary & Mike'

Join us at Ballydoyle Irish Pub in downtown Aurora for conversations on the subjects you wish to discuss. Everyone buys their own food and drink.

LUNCHTIME at 11:30 am
Monday, April 4
Tuesday, April 12
Wednesday, April 20

EVENING at 7:00 pm
Thursday, April 28

"Heritage of Harmony"

Heritage of Harmony Sunday: On Sunday, April 17 at the 10:00 service, we will celebrate the powerful music ministry that has brought beauty and meaning to New England Church since 1858. Current and former members of the Chancel Choir and Plymouth Rock Singers will present several anthems that day, accompanied by Marilyn Parolini, Arlene Thurow, Gary McCann, and the New England Carillon. In addition, the woodwind quintet Quintessence will offer special music to grace our worship on that day.

Following the service, there will be an elegant reception in Friendship Hall to give the congregation an opportunity to thank those who have contributed to our music ministry over the years.

Ina Heup
Minister of Music
The Memorial Walk
In the Garden of the Saints

Engraved pavers in the Garden of the Saints serve as a lasting tribute to family members and friends. This summer we will be placing the order for engraved pavers to be installed in the walk. If you are interested in memorializing a family member or friend with an engraved paver, your order will need to be received in the office no later than Tuesday, May 31. Order forms are available in brochure rack outside the church office.

Confirmation Sunday

Please join us on May 1 at the 10:00 service for the Rite of Confirmation as our 8th grade youth are confirmed into full membership at New England Church. A special coffee fellowship will follow in Friendship Hall.

Spring Training for Men’s Softball!

NECC’s Men’s Fastpitch season begins in May. So men ages 14 and older, warm-up, head for the batting cages & get ready to play Monday & Wednesday evenings from May to August at Pierce Field on Jackson & Montgomery Rd. Become a part of the NECC Fastpitch Softball dynasty. Check out the display case for NECC Men’s Softball photos, trophies & memorabilia.
**Breaking Free Event**

*Breaking Free - Bon Appétit,* a tasting event from local chefs. Breaking Free provides prevention and counseling services for substance abuse, child abuse and mental health challenges in the Aurora area. The Illinois budget crisis has made it increasingly difficult to maintain services. *April is Child Abuse Prevention Month.* Your attendance at *Bon Appétit,* raffle ticket purchase or donation will ensure we can continue to protect children. Please join us at *Bon Appétit* on April 7, 5-9pm at Gaslite Manor, 2485 Church Rd. Aurora. Tickets are $60 each, $70 at the door. [www.BreakingFreeInc.org](http://www.BreakingFreeInc.org).

Phone 630.897.1003

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**Burial Plots Available**

New England was given two burial plots and a bronze headstone in the River Hills Memorial Park in Batavia. River Hills has told us that the value of each burial site is $1,050 and the bronze headstone’s value is $2,300, for a combined value of $4,400. We continue to offer these items to members and friends of New England and we will accept any reasonable offer for the plots and headstone. If you have an interest or know someone who might, please contact the church office.

---

**Boy Scout 5 B’s BBQ**

Please update your social calendar. Bob’s Hill Boy Scout Troop 3 will hold a 5-B’s BBQ fundraiser on Thursday, April 28, from 4:30-7:00 pm. A portion of the receipts will be used for camperships, Troop activities, and the cost of new equipment. Advance tickets will be on sale at the Church in April for $12. Meals will be $14 at the event. A hot dog meal is available for $5. All meals are drive-through pick-up only. Those wishing to purchase advance tickets, and are unable to do so on the Sundays in April may contact Jerry Roesner at 630 892-1904. Be there, or be hungry.
FROM THE TRANSITION TEAM

Dear Members and Friends of New England Congregational Church,

As we begin the process of searching for a new senior minister, we have some important tasks to complete as a congregation. As related in the transition team update on p. 7 of the 2015 Annual Report, we have already completed important steps in the journey. We have a Transition Team in place whose role is to guide the process and provide a liaison between the congregation and our recently selected Search Committee which was approved at the annual meeting. One of the first things the Search Committee will do is complete a local church profile which will provide potential pastors with important details of our church and community. Please help us to give an accurate and complete representation of our congregation by completing the documents as thoughtfully and thoroughly as possible. We encourage you to do these surveys online, but hard copy versions are also available in this issue of Tidings and in the church office. The links to the online questionnaire are available at:

Family:  https://niu.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_6W0p9TydOveCGk1
Individual:  https://niu.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_dbqn1Hu7PZ5326h

Also, here are some things to consider as you complete the surveys:

• Please complete one “Family Questionnaire” per family unit, and one “All Church Survey” and “Leadership Expectations: Called Pastor” for each adult and youth of confirmation age or older.

• Some questions ask about our community; we come from many communities in the greater Fox Valley, so it may be most appropriate to answer this question relative to the New England Church community, or in other words, who we are as a community of faith.

• There are two questions that ask about “faith experiences” in the life of our church; this could be defined as anything that we undertake as a church that has an uncertain outcome and requires our faith for its success. (This search process would definitely fit that description)

• Please feel free to omit any of the questions you may not feel confident in answering; for example, If you have only recently begun attending NECC or do not feel able to answer question 10 of the family questionnaire which asks about the history of the church, please omit it.

The next step of our journey will involve focus groups of 8-10 who will meet with a facilitator and a recorder. These groups will be meeting in April and sign-up sheets are available in the narthex. We thank you in advance for helping us to gather this essential survey of our unique congregation. The information you provide will allow us to present ourselves clearly for potential senior ministers and help them see the vibrant, diverse, caring and thoughtful group that we are. We look forward to talking to you in the focus groups, and please feel free to contact any one of us with questions.

The Transition Team—Kathi Limoges, Bob Lundquist, Jim Mamminga, Rose May, Gary McCann, Maureen McKane, Laura Pittman, Cheryl Vonhoff, and Scott Voris
NECC INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

The following questions should be answered by each adult or teen in the household. After one adult finishes the survey, another adult may start the survey at the same link.

Please indicate your assessment of the church’s life and work by marking the number most closely approximating your opinion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Very True</th>
<th>Moderately True</th>
<th>Not at All True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in terms of fellowship, I see my church as Warm and Personal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in terms of worship, I see my church as Alive and Compelling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in terms of its commitment to Christ, I see my church as Very Dedicated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in terms of knowledge of the Bible, I see my church as Knowledgeable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in terms of its program of education, I see my church as Effective and Innovative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in terms of its evangelism, I see my church as Fortright and Clear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in terms of stewardship, I see my church as Generous and Self-sacrificing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in terms of its service to others in the community, I see my church as Active and Concerned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in terms of its emphasis on youth needs, I see my church as Invested</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in terms of its knowledge of the UCC, I see my church as Knowledgeable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in terms of its unity, I see my church as Cooperative and Trusting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in terms of communication with/among itself, I see my Church as Open and Clear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in terms of having clear goals, I see my church as Well Focused</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NECC INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

Read through the list below and mark only 12 of the items that you think are the most important qualities for our senior minister. If you do not see one you would like included, mark other, and when you move forward it will ask you to fill in your other response(s).

- is an effective preacher/speaker
- continues to develop his/her theological and biblical skills
- helps people develop their spiritual life
- helps people work together in solving problems
- is effective in planning and leading worship
- has a sense of the direction of his/her ministry
- regularly encourages people to participate in United Church of Christ activities and programs
- helps people understand and act upon issues of social justice
- is a helpful counselor
- ministers effectively to people in crisis situations
- makes pastoral calls on people in hospitals and nursing homes and those confined to their homes
- makes pastoral calls on members not confined to their homes
- is a good leader
- is effective in working with children
- builds a sense of fellowship among the people with whom he/she works
- helps people develop their leadership abilities
- is an effective administrator
- is effective with committees and officers
- is an effective teacher
- has a strong commitment to the educational ministry of the church
- is effective in working with adults
- inspires a sense of confidence
- works regularly at bringing new members into the church
- regularly encourages support of Our Church's Wider Mission
- reaches out to inactive members
- works regularly in the development of stewardship growth
- is active in ecumenical relationships and encourages the church to participate
- is a person of faith
- writes clearly and well
- works well on a team
- is effective in working with youth
- organizes people for community action
- is skilled in planning and leading programs
- plans and leads well organized meetings
- encourages people to relate their faith to their daily lives
- is accepting of people with divergent views
- encourages others to assume and carry out leadership
- is mature and emotionally secure
- has strong commitment and loyalty
- maintains confidentiality
- understands and interprets the mission of the church from a global perspective
- is a compassionate and caring person
- deals effectively with conflict
- Other
NECC FAMILY SURVEY

This survey should be completed once per family unit. You may want to gather as a family to discuss some of the open ended questions asked after this demographic section. Remember after completing this survey, there is also a short survey that each teen and adult should complete individually.

Please take a moment to respond to the following confidential questions. Responses will help the Pastoral Search Committee create a Local Church Profile for our church. This profile will be used to describe our church to potential pastors.

Indicate the total number of members in your household that are in each age group including yourself:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–5 years</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–18 years</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19–34 years</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–49 years</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–64 years</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65–74 years</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 years or older</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indicate the number of adult members of your household with each level of education:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not complete high school</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college/vocational</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indicate the best description of your family unit in the household:

- o Couple with children at home
- o Couple without children at home
- o Single
- o Single parent with children at home

Please indicate the current employment information for each adult in your household:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer/Rancher</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborer/Manufacturing</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradeperson</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate how many of the adults in your household have the following occupation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not currently employed</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NECC FAMILY SURVEY

PLEASE RESPOND TO ANY QUESTIONS YOU WISH

Describe three distinctive attributes of our community:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Identify major trends you envision in our community during the next five years:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

List three or four problem areas confronting our community that you feel our church should address:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Identify major trends you envision in the next five years:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Identify the three most important faith experiences or events in the history of our church:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
NECC FAMILY SURVEY

Identify the most challenging faith experience or event in the life of our church in the last three years and what you believe we learned from that experience:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Describe the strengths or positive qualities of our church:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Describe the style and content of preaching which you value:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for filling out the survey for your family’s household. Your responses will provide important information to the Search Committee related to who makes up our church and what we value in a senior minister. If you have not already done so, don’t forget to also have each teen and adult in your household fill out the individual survey.
April, 2016
Vol. 4

Tiny Tidings

**PREK - 4TH GRADE CHURCH SCHOOL CALENDAR**

- **APRIL 3RD**: The Art of Giving
- **APRIL 10TH**: Emergency Evacuation
- **APRIL 17TH**: Earth Day Project
- **APRIL 24TH**: Paul

**BIBLE SUNDAY**

_Congratulations!_ to each child who received a Bible on March 13th (Bible Sunday). Those who received a Bible were: Joshua Fusek, Matthew Gordon, Mitchell Grometer, Devon Landeros, Abigail Lechocki, Hannah Lindgren, Jack Myers, Natalie Myers, Dylan Kokkinos, Casey Roney, Luke Svendsen, and Alexia Viren.

**THANK YOU TO OUR 5TH & 6TH GRADERS**

A big thanks goes out to Jean Carson and the 5th and 6th graders who helped teach the 3rd and 4th graders about the Bible on March 13th. The 5th and 6th grade youth lead the children in various activities and games that provoked interest while encouraging the use of their new Bibles. Not only was the lesson fun, but it was great to see our youth as leaders in our church.

**THE ART OF GIVING**

The Art of Giving event is approaching quickly for our 1st through 4th grade children. On Sunday, April 3rd, all 1st through 4th grade children will be practicing the “art of giving” while putting together mini-care packages for Hesed House. A sample care package will include: toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, washcloth, and deodorant. To ensure we can donate 50 mini care packages, we are continuing to ask for donated supplies for this event. All supplies can be dropped off to Audra Darche or in the basket located in the Church School Hallway.

**SUGGESTED DONATIONS:**

TOOTHPASTE, TOOTHPASTE, SOAP, WASHCLOTH, DEODORANT, MOUTHWASH, AND SUNSCREEN

*Mini versions of the above products are encouraged as they are easier to assemble, package and transport.

**VOLUNTEERS**

The church school needs your help! If you are willing to give your time and talents to help teach our pre-school-4th grade children for 45 minutes on Sunday mornings, it would be so much appreciated. The lessons are prepared and provided to you prior to teaching, so there is no planning on your part. Right now, we are short on volunteers and would like our church school program to run smoothly. So if you are able, please contact Audra Darche to sign up for a week or two.

**SAVE THE DATE**

**CHURCH SCHOOL FAMILY PICNIC**

**SUNDAY, MAY 15TH**
Learning to play bells

Learning about Baptism

Learning about Communion

Bible Sunday

These third graders received Bibles on Bible Sunday.
Thank you Boy Scouts for another wonderful Boy Scout Sunday and Pancake Breakfast!

The Confrmands with our new Chestnut House sign! Thank you Scott Voris and Kelmascott
AVANTI'S FAMOUS GONDOLA & Deluxe GONDOLA Sandwich Sale

7th & 8th Grade Confirmation Class
To raise money to support
Youth Ministry at NECC
Pick-up at Chestnut House on Saturday, May 14th from 2 to 3 p.m.

______________________________
ORDERS DUE BY May 9th       THANK YOU

______________________________
Order form

Name: ___________________________ phone #: ___________________________

Email: ____________________________

“Classic” Gondolas: ________ $7 each = ________________

“Deluxe” Gondolas w/ extra meat ______ $8 each = ________________

Loaves of Gondola bread: ________ $3 each = ________________

Total = _______________________

☐ Pay on pick-up date
☐ Paid with order form
☐ No Gondola, but here’s a donations of $________________

______________________________
Joys & Concerns

Hospitalized:
Linda Weglarz, Carol Teska, Mary Jane Ditzler.

Deaths:
We offer our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Bee Murray and Nancy Kelm.

Our Staff & Church Officers

Senior Minister: Gary L. McCann
Assistant Minister: Joe Dunham
Minister of Education & Mission: Mike Daly
Office Administrator: Shelley Lund
Preschool Director: Jacquie May
Director of Children’s Ministry: Audra Darché
Minister of Music: Ina Heup
Children’s Choir Accompanist: Beth Ann Miller
Organists/Pianists: Marilyn Parolini, Arlene Thurow
Handbell Director: Cathy Canfield-Jepson
Wedding/Funeral Coordinator: Nancy Richmond
Nursery Care: Jenni Moses, Susan Kleinwachter
Custodian: John Hett
Building Maintenance: Todd Jones
****************
Moderator: Bob Lundquist
Moderator-elect: Cheryl Vonhoff
Treasurer: Andy Sprau
Clerk: Judy Lopez