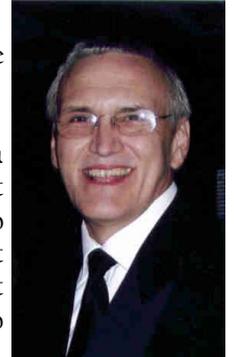




MUSINGS

This edition of Tidings is late because I wanted to wait until after the Annual Meeting to give the congregation an update.

Thanks to all who could be with us for this meeting. For those of you who couldn't make it, here's a quick update. We, like most churches today, are in a budget crunch. In order to balance the budget for 2016, we had to borrow heavily from our reserve fund. And to balance our 2017 budget, we had to include the possibility of a sizeable amount from our reserve fund. This is difficult news, of course, but I'm encouraged with the response of those who were at the meeting. There was a very positive spirit that wants to get behind the church to erase this shortfall. And when this church sets its mind to something, we do it!



Our new moderator, Cheryl Vonhoff, is making this the focus of her leadership this year, and to that end, is challenging the congregation to make a pledge of \$25 per month this year and next so we can end the last year of my time at the church and begin the first year with the new Senior Minister with a budget completely supported by contributions from the congregation.

There were many at the meeting who made that extra pledge; we collected over \$12,000. Cheryl compared \$25 a month with a night at the movies, with popcorn and a drink. Can we give up one such event a month to support our beloved church? It seems easy enough to do! If all 200 of our pledging units would do this, we would be able to eradicate the need to borrow from our savings account this year and next. It's a great idea, and one to which I hope all of you will respond positively.

Our difficulty is not in overspending; we have a very lean budget, and expenses were under budget for 2016. Boards and committees continue to provide us with quality programs on a very small budget.

The difficulty is in our income. Out of a membership of nearly 1,100, we have only 200 giving units. We had a significant increase in new pledges this year, but we lost people who pledged in 2016 who did not pledge for 2017. That puts a strain on those who carry the load. We hope to follow up with those who haven't pledged in 2017 to encourage you to make a pledge.

To attract the very best candidates for Senior Minister, we need to be financially solvent. We have many wonderful assets in our building, our staff, our programs, and our mission outreach programs. But if we can't carry the budget from contributions, it doesn't bode well for the future. Hence, our desire to make an extra effort this year and next to remedy the situation.

Thanks to all who made the pledge at the Annual Meeting. Thanks to all who follow their lead to make this effort. If you can give an extra \$25 per month, please add it to your pledge contribution; it will be a great encouragement as we enter into this new year of ministry.

I appreciate the leadership of this church, and the commitment to keeping our ministry strong and vital. We need your help to do it. Thanks in advance for making this final year of mine an extra special one!

Gary



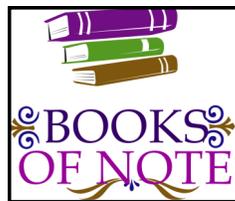
Thank you for your warm generosity! Once again, the response for donations to The Youth Mitten Tree was overwhelming! We collected hundreds of winter wear items such as mittens, gloves, hats, socks, scarves and more. These items were distributed to local organizations (Mutual Ground, Life Spring, Hessed House, Greenman School, Dietrich school and Bardwell School). Just a reminder, the Mission Board does have year round collection for children's sizes sweatpants, underwear, and socks for Greenman, Dietrich, and Bardwell Schools. Those items can be dropped off in the church office anytime.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

We would LOVE to have you join us for breakfast at Jan Mamma's house, at 9:30 am on Saturday, February 11, as Women's Circle of Friends celebrates an early VALENTINE'S event. Please sign up in the church office and maybe ask another NECC women to join you! Jan's address is: 1636 W. Downer Place. There will be a prize for the woman wearing the most HEARTS!



BOOKS OF NOTE



February's Books of Note selection is Kristin Hannah's "Home Front", a rich, multilayered reading experience looking at modern marriage and an exploration of the price of war on an ordinary American family. Wife and mother, Jolene, is a woman like so many of us, busy as a mother and a wife, with smarts and potential that might never be fully explored, if only because of the priorities in her life. Her selfless act of enrolling in our National Guard hints at that and her selflessness, and that act alone changes both her life and that of her family, forever. This story points out how much training goes into preparing for war and how little is done to teach returning soldiers how to be parents again. Please join us in the parlor for discussion on February 21 at 7:00 pm.

Film Series

Film Series-February 10: Searching for Sugar Man (2012)
Though he faded into obscurity in the U.S., an early '70s musician known as Rodriguez became a huge hit in South Africa and was widely rumored to have died. Two obsessed fans set out to learn the man's true fate in this Oscar-winning documentary.
Presenter: Elaine Ross



Dear NECC Family-

We want to thank all the wonderful people who helped out on the weekend of Alex's memorial visitation and service. Many thanks to all of you who gave so generously of your time and care to help us through those challenging days. We are humbled and grateful beyond expression.

Chris, Steve and Nick Kierstead

Thank You!

Thank you for supporting our work with Hesed House! Over winter break, 15 youth and 2 adults served hot meals, organized “the store”, cleaned mats, and helped organize clothes and linens. Thank you to all who made very generous food donations, it was much needed and very appreciated! While working there, we learned that on Mondays and Fridays Hesed House offers a soup kitchen open to the community. We also learned that they will open a new thrift store in the near future. Hesed House always needs donations, from powdered drink mix and peanut butter to personal size toiletry items and paper products. To learn more check out their website, www.hesedhouse.org.



Boy Scout Troop 3 will be hosting a pancake breakfast on Scout Sunday, February 19, in Friendship Hall from 8:30 am until 12 noon. There will also be a bake sale and raffles for a quilt and a Patrick Kane signed Blackhawks jersey along with two game tickets. Ticket prices are \$8 per person, \$24 for a family.



There are two openings for the Ireland trip (September 16-30, 2017). Call Gary if you are interested. 630.897.8721.

FREE CONCERT



There is an exciting concert at New England Church on Sunday, February 19 at 3:00 pm given by AnDréa James, Soprano, and Fareed Haque, classical guitarist.

Fareed Haque is a modern guitar virtuoso. Steeped in Classical and Jazz traditions, his unique command of the guitar and different musical styles inspire his musical ventures with tradition and fearless innovation. In this concert series, he is joined by AnDréa James, soprano, whose versatile and expressive voice has been enjoyed in operatic, oratorio, choral, and folk performances throughout the US and Europe.

This current collaboration, born of their shared interest in classical Latin music, has inspired them to select and arrange gems from the Spanish repertoire. This program will include original arrangements of works by Granados and Obradors, which bring guitar and voice together in ways that are ancient but never old. With precision and passion, this concert brings fresh life to traditional folk and classic art songs alike.

The concert is free and open to the public. Please invite your friends to this exciting concert.



Please know how much we appreciate the prayers, wishes of good will and expressions of concern from the church family occasioned by Joe's hospitalization, Thank you.

Joe and Ida Dunham





New England Preschool is now accepting registration for the 2017-2018 school year!

We offer classes for children ages 2 ½ -5 years old.

Registration forms with class times and prices are placed outside of the church office.

Tours are available by calling the preschool.

A public registration evening will be Tuesday, March 7 from 6-7pm at the preschool.

For any questions or to schedule a tour, please contact Jacquie May, 630.897.8731.

'CONVERSATIONS WITH GARY & MIKE'



Join us at Ballydoyle Irish Pub in downtown Aurora for conversations on the subjects you wish to discuss. There are both lunchtime and evening times. Everyone buys their own food and drink. **LUNCHTIME** at 11:30 am: Monday, February 6, Tuesday, February 14, Wednesday, February 22.

Lenten Bible Study

Gary will lead a discussion during the Lenten season using the book *The Greatest Prayer; Rediscovering the Revolutionary Message of The Lord's Prayer* by John Dominic Crossan. The Midwest Book Review says that this book "provides a satisfying blend of history, scholarship, and theology, in researching the moral responsibilities that come with living a Godly life." Because this will be more discussion than lecture, please read the chapters in advance of the discussion. This will be a five-week series, each one-hour session being held on Sundays at 11:15 am and repeated on Thursdays at 7:00 pm. The Sunday and Thursday discussions will be identical. Session 1: March 5 and 9; Session 2: March 12 & 16; Session 3: March 19 & 23; Session 4: March 26 & 30; Session 5: April 2 & 6. Everyone is invited, even if you can't read the book.



CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL

The Annual Chocolate Festival will be held in Friendship Hall after second service on Mardi Gras Sunday, February 26. We are asking for bakers of chocolate desserts to sign up on in the Marketplace before February 26. Baked goods should be dropped off (downstairs on the stainless steel carts by the church office) on Saturday, February 25 between 10:00am-12:00pm and Sunday morning February 26. Please make a note if your dessert contains any kind of nut, for those who may be allergic. Desserts should be brought on disposable plates. Contact Mike Daly or Deena Sherman for more information.



With A Little Help From Our Friends

Thanks to the amazing volunteer efforts of numerous church members, youth and friends, Boy Scouts, and a couple of Kiwanians, the building at 15 Hawthorne Court has been transformed into a clean and comfortable environment for 3 families. The work started after the permit was issued on September 13 with three professional contractors, who were very sympathetic to the project. They were followed by 57 volunteers who provided over 660 hours of hard and dirty work that included carpentry, painting, window treatment, varnishing, cleaning, and more – clearly a labor of love. Many surprises were found behind the walls that added pressure to the budget. Overall, it was the hand of God guiding the hands of these many dedicated and talented volunteers that got the work completed: Frank Voris (a “hero” who probably painted the equivalent of one whole apartment by himself), Bill Garbe, Bob Bridgman, Dave Bohman, Suzy & Mike Daly, John Potter, Jan Mammaing, Barbara King, Kim Peterson, Laura Clem, Mike Eifler, Mike Ahasic, Jeff Butler, Nancy Hopp, Dale Myers, Janie Voris, Olivia La, Carrick Coakey (both friends of Janie), Tim Kanive, Jerry Roesner, Harriet & John Reutter, Ann & Ron Richards, Kim Groom, Paige & Bob Lundquist, Zach Lundquist, Nate Lundquist, Andy Benbow, Andrew Benbow, Harris Shafi, Annette Burkeen, Kathy Kokkinos, Chrissy Swanson (friend of Suzy’s), Nicole Sheets, Laura Raspiller, Julie Swindle, Stephanie Young, Judy Lopez, Olivia Swindle, Hunter (Olivia’s friend), Ian Swindle, Luke Swindle, Nick Kierstead, Jordan Anderson-Bush, Riley Anderson-Bush, Julianna Lopez, Ethan Young, Allysa Burkeen, Edward Burkeen, Chloe Daly, Jane Teska, Roman Medrano, Phoebe Daly, Dylan Kokkinos. When you have a chance, please thank these individuals for their outstanding service. After all, that’s what friends are for.

Jim Hopp, “Project Manager”



Mardi Gras Sunday on February 26 this year is a tradition at New England Church not to be missed.

Once again the *Mad Monks of Melody* will be here with their Dixieland music. We hope you’ll join us!

A trip to Portugal is being organized for September 13-23, 2018.

An informational meeting will be held on Sunday, February 12, 2017 at 2:00 pm for those interested in learning about the itinerary. Trip brochures are available in the literature rack by the office. If you are interested in going, call Gary: 630.897.8721.



A Caring Church. Mission outreach is a basic value of our congregation. NECC is very generous. In addition to making an annual pledge, our members of our congregation invest time, talent and treasure in a number of programs and organizations. Last year our mission giving totaled more than \$18,000 and over 1200

volunteer hours. During the season of Lent, we will celebrate the mission involvement of our congregation with a Mission Fair and a special giving opportunity. The Board of Missions has received funds from the Dorothy White Fund to support mission work. Because we are a Congregational Church, the Board of Missions thinks it is appropriate to invite you, the members of the congregation, to help decide how this money will be spent. We are offering a “matching funds” giving opportunity to all members of the congregation. Each individual, including children, are invited to make a donation to one of the organizations or programs that our church supports. Suitable recipients are charities or programs with which NECC has a direct connection and include: Hased House, Aurora Area Interfaith Food Pantry, mini-grants for teachers at Dieterich or Greenman elementary schools, Feed Our Starving Children and Mutual Ground. Forms for matching funds giving will be available in the March issue of Tidings and at the Mission Fair to be held on March 19. Donations of \$1.00 to \$200.00 will be matched with Board of Missions funds. Here is an opportunity for each member of our congregation to double the impact their giving will have.

...And they will know we are Christians by our love.

February, 2017
Vol. 2

Tiny Tidings

CHURCH SCHOOL CALENDAR

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| FEBRUARY 5TH | Baptism Lesson (1st & 2nd Grade) & Bells (3rd & 4th Grade) |
| FEBRUARY 12TH | Communion Lesson (1st & 2nd Grade) & Bells (3rd & 4th Grade) |
| FEBRUARY 19TH | Eternal Love |
| FEBRUARY 26TH | Mardi Gras Sunday- No Church School-All Children in Church |

THE SACRAMENTS

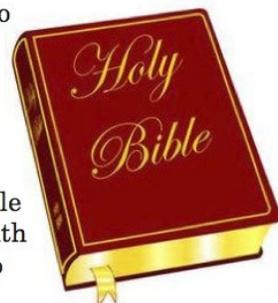


Coming up in February, the 1st & 2nd graders here at NECC, will be participating in a special Church School lesson on The Sacraments (Communion & Baptism). Each year, these lessons are taught to help the younger children understand the importance and symbolism of each of these events. This year, Suzy Daly, ordained minister and member of our congregation will be leading these important lessons.

BIBLE SUNDAY

All the 3RD GRADERS (plus any 4th or 5th graders who did not previously receive a Bible) will be receiving Bibles during the 10 a.m. worship service on Sunday, March 12th. To ensure we have the correct name to have engraved on the Bible, please email Mike Daly the exact spelling of your child's name by March 1st.

Following Church School and the 10:00 AM service, children that received a Bible and their families are invited to a lunch and short program to get acquainted with their new Bibles. This program will be held in the Friendship Hall from 11:15 to 12:15. Please keep an eye out for a letter coming home soon with all the details.



SPREADING SOME LOVE



While many of our church members attended our church annual meeting on January 29th, several children found more entertainment in the Church School classroom making Valentines for members of our congregation who are not able to attend church on a consistent basis. We all agreed that no matter our age, we all love to get something fun in the mail.

MARDI GRAS

On February 26th, we will be celebrating Mardi Gras at New England Church. The children will stay in church for this special worship service filled with song and dance. Before church we will be passing out Mardi Gras beads for everyone to wear. Following the service, our annual Chocolate Festival will take place in Friendship Hall.



THANK YOU



again to Cathy Canfield-Jepson for leading the first Church School lesson of 2017. Cathy Jepson, our hand bell director led all the classes on January 10th through a fun interactive lesson on the hand bells. Remember, our church has an amazing children's hand bell group that meets immediately after the 10:00 AM service until 12:00 PM each Sunday. The children's hand bell group is a great way for our children to learn how to read music and have fun connecting with other church friends.

Handbells



YOUTH TIDINGS

FEBRUARY, 2017

77TH EDITION

5TH & 6TH GRADE CLASS

FEBRUARY 5TH Class
FEBRUARY 12TH Class
FEBRUARY 19TH Class
FEBRUARY 26TH Mardi Gras Sunday
 Chocolate Festival (No Class)

CONFIRMATION

FEBRUARY 5TH Class
FEBRUARY 12TH Ushering and Fellowship
 (11:15 – 1:00)
FEBRUARY 19TH Class
FEBRUARY 26TH Mardi Gras Sunday
 Chocolate Festival (No Class)

SENIOR HIGH FELLOWSHIP

FEBRUARY 4TH Assemble Pizzas TBA
FEBRUARY 5TH Pizza Pick-up in the morning,
 Fellowship 11:15 to 1:00
FEBRUARY 26TH Youth Ushering



Our **PIZZA SALE** is February 5th, please keep taking orders. Remember, our pizza sales help support our summer work tour trips. This year we have another amazing destination. We are going to Biloxi, Mississippi to serve at Back Bay Mission.

A WORD ABOUT THE TRIP TO BACK BAY MISSION

Mississippi is the poorest state in the nation. This includes the Mississippi Gulf Coast and the communities that Back Bay Mission serves. Poverty rates in the neighborhoods that the Mission serves range from 31% to 46.5%. These rates are even higher for children. More than 71,000 in the three counties that make up of the Mississippi Gulf Coast live in poverty. Back Bay Mission serves the poorest among them.

THANKS

to everyone for another big collection of winter wear items on the Youth Mitten Tree!

WE COLLECTED OVER 200 ITEMS.

BOWL FOR KIDS SAKE

COMING SOON

All Youth
BOWL FOR KIDS SAKE
 to support
 Big Brother Big Sisters is coming up in March.



POP TOP TABS

Youth Ministry collects pop top tabs to support Ronald McDonald House. Our last donation was over 20 pounds! Pop tabs can be dropped-off in the box outside the office at church. Thank you!

Stay tuned, the youth groups will be working on ways to welcome the residents of our Emmanuel House. Start working on your ideas now. For example, we could throw a welcome to the neighborhood BBQ! Also, we will do some more yard clean-up over there in the spring.



(NOT SO) FUNNY JOKE

How do you define "farmer"?
Answer: a man, outstanding in his field

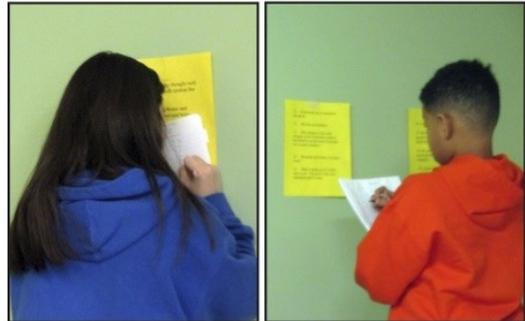


Youth painting at Emmanuel House

At Brookfield Zoo



Working and Playing at the Confirmation Retreat



Youth Christmas Party

**“God
Is Still
Speaking”**



**New England Congregational
Church-UCC**
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Phone: 630.897.8721
Fax: 630.897.8744
Email: office@newenglandchurch.org
A Caring Church for Thinking People

**Visit us on the web
at
www.newenglandchurch.org**

Joys & Concerns

Births:

Audrey Marie Doornbos born to Eric & Ryan Marie Doornbos on December 31. Proud grandparents are Bill & Shauna Wiet.

Baptisms:

Emmet Jackson Ream, son of Josh & Jana Ream.

Hospitalized:

Jim Hopp, Pat Beebee, Beth Ann Miller, Ruth Harding, Joe Dunham, Dave Schramer, John Roesch, Paul Herwick.

Deaths:

We offer our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Cathy Bemis and Udho Igwe.



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
Chancel Choir Director: Jon Warfel
Children's Choir Director: AnDréa James
Children's Choir Accompanist: Beth Ann Miller
Organists/Pianists: Marilyn Parolini, Arlene Thurow
Handbell Director: Cathy Canfield-Jepson
Wedding Coordinator: Nancy Richmond
Nursery Care: Jenni Moses, Susan Kleinwachter
Custodian: John Hett
Building Maintenance: Todd Jones

Moderator: Cheryl Vonhoff
Moderator-elect: Scott Voris
Treasurer: Andy Sprau
Clerk: Judy Lopez