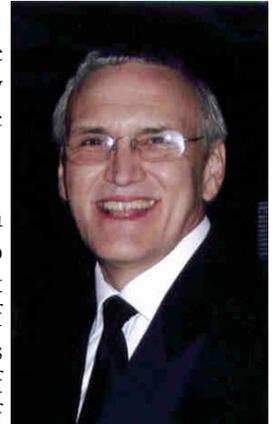




MUSINGS

February 15, 2019 will be forever etched on our minds, the topic of many a future conversation, the continued focus of our grieving, and our focus of appreciation for the first responders for many years to come in the life of Aurora. What so many other cities in our nation have had to face in the aftermath of a mass shooting has now come to live among us.

Fred Rogers, of Mr. Rogers's Neighborhood fame, reminded us that in tragedies such as this, when we can't understand the gravity of the situation, we should look for the helpers. It's a good place to begin moving forward. Indeed, there were upward of 300 helpers who stormed the building that day, the first responders arriving just four minutes after the calls for help came through. Four of those were from our congregation: Police Chief Kristen Ziman, Jeff Wiencek, Bob Jones, and Chris Tunney. A standing ovation and applause on Sunday, February 17 was the spontaneous response of the congregation as we said thanks for these who were willing to go toward the bullets instead of away from them. Their courage in the face of danger saved many lives.



Our local Aurora Police Department was joined by members of the FBI, the ATF, the Aurora Fire Department, Emergency Medical Teams, Kane County Sheriff's Deputies, and a host of others. Emergency teams at area hospitals were mobilized as were trauma centers at Chicago hospitals to care for the more critically wounded police officers. To all of these systems and individuals we offer our heartfelt gratitude for their willingness to train in advance of such a tragedy and then to implement the tactics that were so vital in saving lives.

Our prayers continue for the families who lost loved ones. Trevor Wehner, the 21-year-old HR intern who was killed on his first day on the job, was a member of New England Church in his formative years when his parents and grandmother were attending the church. It's difficult to comprehend the intense loss that comes from such a tragedy, so prayers and support are vital to the survival of all of the employees, including especially those who lost loved ones.

When there are no answers, we must remember that we are people of faith, not answers. And the best thing we can do is surround the survivors and the response teams with our love and appreciation. We must continue to live by faith even when we can't see our way through the maze of violence and senseless murders such as this. We must continue to be a community that believes love overcomes fear. We must continue to believe that walking side by side through the darkness of such days make the community stronger. We must continue to live in such a way that we are willing to walk toward the darkness and not away from it. Religion does not insulate us from the fear and anguish of life, but rather empowers us with God's grace to embrace and nurture in the difficult days.

The Christian faith is centered in the man, Jesus, who sought to love people unconditionally, bring hope to the hopeless, empower the powerless, and who was convicted of a trumped up crime and murdered for bringing the marginalized into the mainstream; but who became, through the darkness of death, the light of the world and the wounded healer who inspires us to be the body of Christ in this world. Now we are called to be wounded healers.

Gary



Volunteer to work at the Aurora Area Interfaith Food Pantry -NECC sends volunteers to work in the warehouse and/or to restock shelves every 2nd and 3rd Monday of the month from 3:00-4:00 pm. The location is 110 Jericho Road, Aurora. Thank you!

Remember to set your clocks 1 hour ahead the evening of Saturday, March 9.



Time to Spring Ahead

Exploring the United Church of Christ - *An Invitation to a church wide celebration*



Do you want to have some fun and excitement this summer as we continue exploring the many facets of our denomination? The 32nd General Synod of the United Church of Christ will be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin June 21-25. This biennial celebration calls together over 700 delegates plus visitors and friends of the United Church of Christ for a time of dynamic workshops, generative plenary sessions, inspirational worship, engaging youth activities, special banquets, and luncheons as we go about the business of being the church. Budgets will be determined and leadership elected and installed as resolutions are debated, passed and acted upon. It's a dynamic and energetic experience, and it's a great chance to meet fellow church members from around the globe. You may choose to attend for a single day; for the entire experience, or anywhere in-between. The theme for the 32nd General Synod is based on the scripture Matthew 5:16 "In the same way let your light shine before others." "When we light just one candle in the darkness, it illuminates dimly, but when many candles are lit, and all let their lights shine, together we can bring brightness to the world." - *The Rev. Franz Rigert, Wisconsin Conference Minister.*

And - so what is the General Synod? Remember our annual meeting a few weeks ago? This is the same thing on a national level and it happens once every two years. Our polity (that means "the way we are structured and governed") is congregational and the United Church of Christ places the authority for that governance directly on the local church and its lay leadership. The UCC constitution says it this way: "The basic unit of the life and organization of the United Church of Christ is the local church." It is within the local church that people are "organized for Christian worship, for the furtherance of Christian fellowship, and for the ongoing work of Christian witness."

There is a beautiful balance in our denomination between the autonomy of the local church and the covenant promises that bind us together in the fellowship with other United Churches of Christ. From the local level we are gathered in associations. New England Congregational Church is a member of the Fox Valley Association. Ordination in the United Church of Christ takes place on the Association level. Beyond the Association, we have the Conference. These are the regional gatherings of the church and are made up of the associations in their geographical area. There are 39 conferences in the UCC and we belong to the Illinois Conference. And then there is the General Synod. General Synod is the successor to the General Council of the Congregational Christian Church and the General Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. It is the national gathering of over 700 delegates from each of our conferences who in turn are responsible to set the policies and adopt the budget for work carried out by the national settings of the church. It elects national officers and an Executive Council, as well as most of the boards of other national ministries. The biennial gathering is exciting and spiritually centered, with a wonderfully diverse gathering of Christians united to serve both the local church and our world ministries.

Anyway, to sum it all up, you are definitely invited to join us in this celebration of the church and of the faithful ways in which we are called to serve in the world. For more information and registration regarding the 32nd General Synod go to the website at:

<https://live.eventtia.com/en/uccsynod2019/about>.

You may also connect from the front page of the UCC website at www.ucc.org.
32nd General Synod of the United Church of Christ, June 21-25, 2019, Milwaukee, WI.

Fred R. Krauss

'Conversations With Gary'



'Conversations with Gary'-Join Gary 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, March 4

Tuesday, March 12

Wednesday, March 20

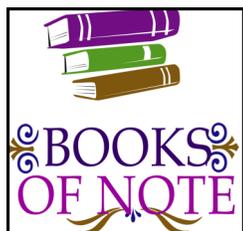
Thursday, March 28

NEW ENGLAND PRESCHOOL

All of our classes made posters for Valentine's Day and delivered them to Fox Knoll in Aurora. We always enjoy sharing our love with others!



BOOKS OF NOTE



Books of Note is reading *Small Great Things* by Jodi Picoult. This best-selling novel has been described as having, "richly layered characters and a gripping moral dilemma that will lead readers to question everything they know about privilege, power, and race," which should make for a lively and interesting discussion. Please join us on Tuesday, March 19 at 7:00pm in the parlor. Our group meets the third Tuesday

of every month from September through May. We are always happy to welcome new participants, whether you have read the book or not. Hope to see you there!



Monday, April 1 the Mission Board will host our annual fundraiser for the Aurora Area Interfaith Food Pantry at Luigi's Pizza and Fun Center from 5:00 pm- to 7:30 pm. Tickets will be on sale in the Marketplace on March 17, 24 & 31 and at the event. Join us for pizza, pasta, and a great cause.

Men's Poker Game Night!
Friday, April 19
7:00-10:00 pm
at Chestnut House
Organized
Tournament,
\$20 buy-in - bring cash that evening, BYOB and Pot Luck style foods
Don't miss this fun evening - Sign up in the Marketplace.



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP



This year's Christian Service Awards went to Jim & Betty Carson and Jim & Ina Heup. We appreciate all you do for New England Congregational Church.

Women's Circle of Friends



As spring is just around the corner, so is Women's Circle of Friend's annual Scrabble tournament! We will be gathering for a potluck breakfast on Saturday, March 16 at 9:30 am in Friendship Hall. (Note that this is the 3rd Saturday of the month!) Following breakfast, we will play Scrabble in teams of four. We encourage all to join us, even if you have never played. Our purpose is to have fun and enjoy meeting other women from NECC! Please sign up on the church website or in the church office.

FILM SERIES

FILM SERIES-MARCH 8: Local Hero (1983)

An American oil company sends a man to Scotland to buy up an entire village where they want to build a refinery. But things don't go as expected. With Burt Lancaster and Peter Riegert. Presenter: Gary McCann



Want to learn more about New England Church?

An Inquirer's meeting will be held in the church Parlor on March 10 following the 10:00 am service. Childcare is available.



There will be a service in Johnson Chapel on Wednesday, March 6 at 7:00 pm. Please join us.

HAVE A GUY'S NIGHT OUT!

NECC Men's Dinner will be on Tuesday, March 19.

Social time: 5:30 pm

Dinner ordered: 6:00 pm

At the Blackberry Oaks Golf Course in Bristol, IL. in the Kennedy Pointe Restaurant.

Separate Checks/ Cash Bar/ Special Menu Options

Don't miss this fun evening - Sign up in the Marketplace or on the church website.



NEIGHBORS: ONE SCHOOL, ONE CHURCH

Christ commanded us to love our neighbors as ourselves. NECC joyfully embraces that commandment. One of our most rewarding engagements with our neighbors is our partnership with Greenman Elementary School. Greenman is located less than one mile from our church. It has a large population of Hispanic students (74%). Thirty-nine percent of the students are English learners, 12% are students with disabilities and 2% are homeless. Ninety-five percent of its students come from low-income families. Like many schools in SD 129, it has limited financial resources but dedicated teachers and staff.

Six years ago, a group of seven volunteers were welcomed to Greenman through the KIDS HOPE USA program to mentor at risk students. The program continues today and over the last six years 11 different mentors have mentored two dozen students for one or two years each.

In 2013 we became further involved with Greenman by inviting the school to become part of our Giving Bus and Angel Tree programs. Each of the last five years we have provided 40 pairs of shoes, a supply of sweatpants, underwear and socks, and 40 Christmas gifts to Greenman students. Through the mini-grant program 13 different teachers have received awards of up to \$300 to enhance student learning. Money has been used to develop reading and math centers, create informal reading areas in the classroom, implement new curriculum, fund an afterschool book club, help pay for a trip to the DuPage Children’s Museum, provide books for in class enrichment and provide digital technology for several classroom projects. In 2019 we were able to provide \$930 to the library to upgrade the non-fiction collection and expand the fiction collection. Greenman’s principal, Dr. Cliff English Harden, has been overwhelmed and extremely grateful for our support.

The congregation of NECC has been enormously generous in supporting Greenman teachers, staff and students. The financial support makes a huge difference to the students of the school. Some of the things we provide leave with the students at the end of the year. But students will enjoy some of our investments for many years to come. The volunteers who work at the school have the opportunity to get to know the staff and students. We are uniformly impressed with the dedication of the staff and the spirit of the students and are grateful for the opportunity to make a difference in the school. It is a joy to be a good neighbor.

And they know we are Christians by our love.



Mardi Gras Sunday on March 3 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. No communion on March 3 due to Mardi Gras Sunday. Communion will be served on Ash Wednesday, March 6. We hope you’ll join us!

The Annual Chocolate Festival will be held in Friendship Hall after second service on Mardi Gras Sunday, March 3.



March, 2019
Vol. 3

Tiny Tidings

CHURCH SCHOOL CALENDAR

- MARCH 3** Mardi Gras Sunday-Reminder: No Church School
*We want everyone to enjoy the music performed during the church service
- MARCH 10** Bible Sunday
- MARCH 17** Exploring the Bible
- MARCH 24** Emergency Evacuation
- MARCH 31** Art of Giving-Service Project-3rd & 4th Package Baskets
Baptism and Communion Lesson-1st & 2nd
Special Read-In Day with 5th & 6th-PreK and K

BIBLE SUNDAY

On March 10th, our 3rd graders, along with some of our 4th-6th grade children will receive their Bibles during the 10:00 AM worship service. Recently, a letter was sent home inviting the children and their families to this special service and to the luncheon following in Friendship Hall. Please remember to RSVP your confirmation or regrets for lunch and the exact name you want printed on the Bible to Audra Darche by March 1st.
audra@newenglandchurch.org



EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILL



On March 24, all of the church school children (Pre-school- 4th grade) will run through our emergency drills to ensure they all understand the protocol in the event of an actual emergency here at church. The children will review where to go if there was a tornado and where to go in the event of a fire. Please share with your children that this practice is not to scare them but to help them be prepared for an emergency here at church.

BASKETS OF FUN

Over the past 3 years, the Church School children have collected toiletry items and created care packages for Hesus House. This year, the children will be reaching out to another organization and putting together 15 Easter baskets for families at the Ronald McDonald House. Many times, these families are under a lot of stress trying to navigate appointments and how to best support their sick child. It is our hope that this Easter basket filled with items for the entire family, will bring a smile to their faces while also providing some things that they may need. Coming up on Sunday, March 31st, the 3rd & 4th grade children will be stuffing the baskets with the items donated. To ensure we can fill all 15 baskets, we are asking families and members of the congregation to sign-up for an item or two to donate. Please select an item to donate on the form in the church school hallway and drop off any items by March 30th to Audra Darche or in the basket located in the church school hallway.

Sample items will include: **CHAPSTICK**, **UNO CARDS**, **PLAYING CARDS**, **HAND SANITIZER**, **MINI-PACKAGES OF CRACKERS/COOKIES**, etc. See form in church school hallway for more options.

WELCOME

Hannah Watkins is our new nursery attendant who will be working alternate Sundays with our nursery director, Jenni Moses. Hannah grew up in North Aurora and graduated from Aurora Catholic High School. She is currently a sophomore nursing student at Aurora University. She recently obtained her certification in CPR and first aid and is so excited to be helping out in the nursery. We invite everyone to stop in the nursery to meet Hannah.

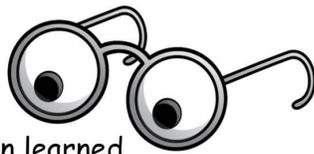




During the Annual Church Meeting the children made Valentines for shut-ins.



1st - 4th graders engaged in an activity that tied into the lesson on the miracles that Jesus did. The children learned about the miracle of when Jesus healed a blind man and later helped him to see. During the lesson, the children had to draw a selected item blind folded and then, they heard the story and then created their own glasses using pipe cleaners to symbolize seeing clearly.



Children singing in church



YOUTH TIDINGS

MARCH, 2019

99TH EDITION

5TH & 6TH GRADE

THANK YOU to all the 5th/6th grade students and their families that helped with coffee fellowship on Sunday, Feb. 10th. The students always enjoy this event and it's a great way for the students to meet and interact with the congregation.

UP & COMING 5TH & 6TH

At the end of the month, the 5th and 6th graders will host a read-in for the preschool and kindergarten students. During this time, the 5th & 6th graders will select some books from our library and spend the entire class time reading and interacting with our younger children. Over the years, we've noticed

that the little ones really enjoy having the big kids read to them. Don't tell anyone, but I think the big kids enjoy it just as much. Everyone loves a good book!



HIGH SCHOOLERS, TIME TO SPARE?

FUNWAY

On March 17th we will meet up at Funway in Batavia for bowling from 4-6pm! Food will be served. Please RSVP by March 15th. Cost: \$10.00 per child and will include bowling and food. As always, friends are welcome to attend along with your child. Oh, and since this event will be on St. Patrick's Day – the kids can wear green if they would like!!

SAVE THE DATE

AUGUST 9-11TH
CONFIRMATION SUMMER TRIP
LAKE MICHIGAN/TOWER HILL/
WARREN DUNES STATE PARK

Contact Desiree Guzman for details.
desireeguzman@sbcglobal.net or 630-564-1849.

CONFIRMATION

IN FEBRUARY Confirmation students learned about the Golden Rule and the power of words to hurt or heal. **IN MARCH** we will focus on the inclusive love of God and reflecting on our own personal faith journey and beliefs.

EXCITING THINGS ARE SPRINGING UP THIS SPRING IN CONFIRMATION!

TAKE A LOOK:

SUN. MARCH 17TH – ART INSTITUTE TRIP

SUN. MARCH 31ST – CHURCH VISIT – Community Christian Church- Aurora Campus

SAT. APRIL 6TH – MINI RETREAT for Confirmands & Mentors (9-NOON)
Lunch & Afternoon Trip to

FUNWAY

for all confirmation students

H.S. MOVIE NIGHT RECAP

Thank you to all the kids that attended movie night on February 17th! We watched a movie, ate dinner then munched on snacks that the kids brought to share. A fun time was had by all. This month we have another great outing planned.



HIGH SCHOOL REMINDER



Please save the dates for our
HIGH SCHOOL
APRIL OVERNIGHT EVENT

at Hoover Forest Preserve
on April 13th & 14th.

More info to come!

5TH & 6TH GRADERS SERVE COFFEE FELLOWSHIP



FUN AT SKY ZONE



**“God
Is Still
Speaking”**



New England Congregational Church
-UCC
406 W. Galena Blvd. Aurora, IL. 60506
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

Hospitalized:

Judy Vargas, Katie Jepson, Gary Blocker,
Lee Marr, Pat Beebee, Dave Siegfried



OUR STAFF & CHURCH OFFICERS

Senior Minister: Gary L. McCann
Assistant to the Minister: Martin Forward
Office Administrator: Shelley Lund
Preschool Director: Jacquie May
Director of Education Ministries: Audra Darché
5th & 6th Grade Education: Kathy Kokkinos
7th & 8th Grade Education: Desiree Guzman
9th–12th Grade Education: Lesley Myers
Chancel Choir Director: Jon Warfel
Children’s Choir Director: AnDréa James
Organists/Pianists: Marilyn Parolini, Arlene Thurow
Handbell Director: Cathy Canfield-Jepson
Director of Community Life: Kimberly Adams
Wedding Coordinator: Nancy Richmond
Nursery Care: Jenni Moses, Hannah Watkins
Custodian: John Hett
Building Maintenance: Todd Jones

Moderator: Brian Kleemann
Moderator-elect: Judy Lopez
Treasurer: Andy Sprau
Clerk: Sally Floyd