



MUSINGS

Dear Friends,

I love to read. In fact, I'm somewhat of a voracious reader—consuming books as though they were popcorn or, better yet, Raisinets. I love fantasy, sci-fi, poetry, and (eye roll) theology. One of my all-time favorite authors is J.R.R. Tolkien. In the sixth grade, we were required to read *The Hobbit*. I fell in love with Middle Earth and the mountains and shires, elves and dwarves and hobbits who called it home.

As I look out this morning at the fresh-fallen snow, I'm reminded of these words of Tolkien:

All that is gold does not glitter,
Not all those who wander are lost;
The old that is strong does not wither,
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.
From the ashes a fire shall be woken,
A light from the shadows shall spring...

Originally from *The Fellowship of the Ring*, these verses speak to me as I write. Sometimes the most precious things in our lives lack the luster of lesser things. Sometimes, it's good to be on a journey without knowing the destination. Sometimes we need to be reminded that wisdom is as potent today as it was yesterday and still will be tomorrow. And in the depths of winter, be it a season in earth's natural cycle or a personal season of the soul, sometimes it's good to be reassured that no matter how cold it gets, the spark at the center stays warm; that ashes will in time turn again to flame; "that light from the shadows shall spring."

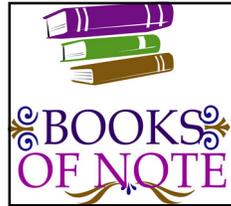
Thinking of New England Church, these words take on new meaning for me. Here, relationships are valued above all else; the journey of faith is not about the destination; elders and traditions are the deep roots that have supported us, ground us still, and will guide us into the future; the spark at the center of our life together glows, come what may; and on the other side of whatever winter we may find ourselves in, our light will shine bright from this place, for our world.

These are words of hope for me today and I pray that as these long days of winter persist, they will encourage you. Remember that when all our lights are brought together, we are a dazzling aurora, dispersing the gloom of the season and of the seasons of our lives. Let's keep shining bright together!

Blessings and peace,

Brandon Perrine
Senior Minister

BOOKS OF NOTE



February 15, 2022, "Dutch House" by Ann Patchett.

At the end of the Second World War, Cyril Conroy buys the Dutch House, a lavish estate in the suburbs outside of Philadelphia. The story is told by Cyril's son Danny, as he and his sister are exiled from the house where they grew up by their stepmother. The two wealthy siblings are thrown

back into the poverty their parents had escaped from and find that all they have to count on is one another. It is this unshakeable bond between them that both saves their lives and thwarts their futures.

Set over the course of five decades, *The Dutch House* is a dark fairy tale about two smart people who cannot overcome their past. Despite every outward sign of success, Danny and Maeve are only truly comfortable when they're together. Throughout their lives they return to the well-worn story of what they've lost with humor and rage. But when at last they're forced to confront the people who left them behind, the relationship between an indulged brother and his ever-protective sister is finally tested.

Film Series

February II: Moonlight (2016)

Three defining chapters in the life of Chiron—a young black man growing up in Miami—are explored, including his struggles with poverty, a drug-addicted mother and his sexual identity. Presenter: Nancy Hopp



'Fat Sunday' Celebration

Please join us on February 27, the last Sunday before Lent, for our 'Fat Sunday' Celebration! Fat Sunday will be a morning full of joyous music and delicious treats. This year our Chocolate Festival will look a little different; but it will still be absolutely delicious! We will gather in the Narthex, on Sunday February 27, after the 10:00 am service to feast our eyes upon a variety of delicious confections and take home a goodie bag of assorted chocolate treats and sweet delights.



THANK YOU!



Special thanks to Pastor Matt Mull and Chairman of the Board Sandy Mulligan of Advent Christian Church for their gift of the following items for our New England handbell choirs: melody chimes, wind chimes, tables and table covers, handbell music and music binders, and gloves.



The Beloved Community

Last month we introduced Students of The Beloved Community: Social and Racial Justice Committee of NECC. The name bears further explanation. In our all-inclusive aspirations at New England Church, we are guided by the messages of Jesus. Jesus envisioned a Kingdom of Heaven on earth, where love and peace prevail. Using the same principles, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Envisioned The Beloved Community, where everyone lives in peace, without poverty, bigotry, hunger or homelessness.

In the Jesus message we are told: love our enemies; give from our abundance to those without; don't throw that stone, but instead know our own failings. He wanted us to draw together, to break down old divisions. Dr. King reminded us of all this with his Beloved Community. It is natural to humans to seek relationships. Divisiveness erodes souls. In the Beloved Community, reconciliation and redemption heal souls.

Bringing together the message of Jesus, so well-known to all of us, and the same message spoken by Dr. King, known more to African Americans, reminds us that we all want the same things in this world. We want security, a decent life for our families, nourishing food and the same chance at happiness as everyone else. We recognize at New England Church that many in our community and our country do not have these. Our Social and Racial Justice Committee has adopted Dr King's phrase for our name because we believe The Beloved Community is a reachable concept once we learn to overcome prejudices at home and embrace needed changes. Where better to start change than here.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Women's Circle of Friends will not be meeting in February, but will return on March 12 when we will enjoy a shared breakfast and a musical program presented by Ina & Jim Heup. WCOF is open to all women of the church. Come join us for a fun morning.



Tiny Tidings

FEBRUARY, 2022



CHURCH SCHOOL CALENDAR

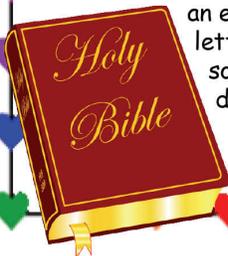
- FEBRUARY 6 Prayer
FEBRUARY 13 Valentines Lesson
FEBRUARY 20 Caring Kids Challenge & Gift Card Drawing
FEBRUARY 27 Mardi Gras Sunday-All in Church

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Although these last couple of years have been different in so many ways, it was wonderful to see several of our church school children on Christmas Eve. In addition, your willingness to dress up in costume to assist in telling the Christmas story was priceless. After not being able to have an in person gathering for Christmas in 2020 it was great to be able to bring back this beloved NECC Christmas Eve tradition.

UP AND COMING BIBLE SUNDAY

All 3RD GRADERS (plus any student 4th grade or older who did not previously receive a Bible) will be receiving Bibles during the 10 a.m. worship service on Sunday, March 13th. To ensure we have the correct name to be written in the Bible, please email Audra Darche the exact spelling of your child's name by Feb.27th. Please keep an eye out for a letter coming home soon with all the details about this special day.



STARTING THE NEW YEAR OFF RIGHT

Thank You again to Cathy Canfield-Jepson for leading the first church school lesson of 2022. Cathy Jepson, our hand bell director led the PreK-6th graders through a fun interactive lesson on the hand bells and everyone had a great time. Remember, our church has an amazing children's hand bell group that meets each Sunday from 9:00-9:45 AM. If your child is interested in participating in the children's hand bell group, please contact Cathy Canfield-Jepson.



MARDI GRAS

On February 27th, we will be celebrating Mardi Gras at New England Church. Prior to church beginning on this festive day, Mardi Gras beads will be passed out for everyone to wear. As a reminder, all children will stay in church for this special worship service. Following the service, delectable treats will be provided to all. Make sure to mark this on your calendars as a service you won't want to miss.



POP TAB COLLECTIONS CONTINUE

The entire Church School program is inviting children, families, and members of the congregation to help collect pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. The Ronald McDonald House provides support to families who have a sick child. Such support could be assistance with housing for the family near the hospital and/or even furnishing a place to rest at the hospital while the child is receiving treatment. By simply donating the tabs we pull to open various soda, soup, beans, and other aluminum cans, we can help support this amazing organization. Various baskets will be stationed throughout the church for easy drop off. We invite everyone to join us in collecting these tiny tabs, and ultimately, making a big difference in the lives of others.



CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY SERVICE



Bells played before the service



Holding up signs for the congregation to read

Choosing a part to play in the nativity story



Acting out the nativity story



Singing Silent Night



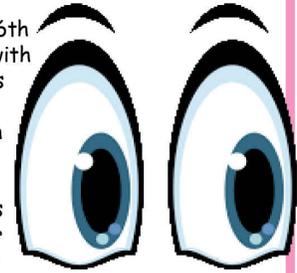
FEBRUARY, 2022

UP AND COMING FOR HIGH SCHOOL

High School youth will continue to meet immediately after church in the youth room on February 6th and 13th for our regular check-in/class. Then, on February 20th, we'll have another combined hangout with the confirmation class. As a quick reminder, high school youth will not have class on February 27th since this is Mardi Gras Sunday.

5TH & 6TH GRADE

Music was in the air as the 5th and 6th graders enjoyed a few bell lessons with Ms. Jepson in January. The students really seemed to enjoy their bell time. Coming up in February, the 5th and 6th graders will be learning about the history of the UCC and New England Church. Keep your eyes peeled as you may see several of our 5th & 6th graders roaming the halls and exploring all the nooks and crannies of this amazing building.



Coffee & Fellowship



COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

Be sure to visit coffee fellowship on February 13th. The 5th and 6th graders will be hosting coffee fellowship. To ensure safety, all treats will be individually wrapped and provided to the congregation as a snack to go after the 10:00 AM service. **To make coffee fellowship a success, bakers will be needed.** Keep an eye out for a sign up coming out soon.

CONFIRMATION CORNER

This month we begin our modified mentor program for 8th grade students who wish to be confirmed in the spring. Mentors will meet with students for two Sunday morning class periods (Feb. 13th & March 13th) and one Saturday morning mini-retreat on April 9th. The goal of the program is for students and adults in our congregation to get to know each other, and for students to receive guidance as they plan and create the faith projects that they will share with our congregation on Confirmation Sunday. (May 15th) We are very excited to be able to offer this program again after having to cancel it last year.

February Calendar:

- SUN. FEB 6TH Students in service.
- SUN. FEB 13TH 8th grade class with mentors @10:00 (7th graders will join the 5th/6th grade class)
- SUN. FEB. 20TH YOUTH HANG-OUT High School & Confirmation students and their parents are invited to join us in the youth room after the 10:00 service to view and discuss a short clip of the Netflix series: AMEND - an exploration of how the 14th amendment has made a big difference in the struggle for freedom and civil rights in America.
- SUN. FEB. 27TH Students in church for "Fat Sunday" -Madi Gras service.

CONFIRMATION & HIGH SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Just a reminder: every week to comply with our church's safety policy we need a second adult present in every classroom, including confirmation and high school youth group. Helpers are not required to teach, just to participate and enjoy. If you are interested in assisting in confirmation, please contact Desiree Guzman at desireeguzman@sbcglobal.net or our high school youth leader Lesley Myers at skidder2009@gmail.com





Happiness is...

RINGING
HANDBELLS



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Need help or have questions?

Please contact : shelley@newenglandchurch.org



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OUR STAFF

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Office Administrator: Shelley Lund
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: Mark Plummer
Organist: Marsha Foxgrover
Assistant Organist: Marilyn Parolini
Handbell Director: Cathy Canfield-Jepson
Director of Community Life: Kimberly Adams
Wedding Coordinator: Nancy Richmond
Nursery Care: Jenni Moses, Charlotte Adams
Custodian: John Hett
Building Maintenance: Todd Jones



**“God
Is Still
Speaking”**

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