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UCC

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*A Caring Church for
Thinking People*



***“God
Is Still
Speaking”***

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7th & 8th Grade Education: Desiree Guzman
9th–12th Grade Education: Lesley Myers
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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

Moderator: Bart Grometer
Moderator-elect: Josh Ream
Treasurer: Andy Sprau
Clerk: Ida Dunham

New England
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Aurora, Illinois



TIDINGS

Volume 93, Number 4

April 1, 2022



MUSINGS

Dear Friends,

I have to admit, I've never been much of a fan of Spring. The calendar always says that it's here before mother nature acquiesces! Spring months are long and grey and filled with rain and occasional hope-filled, sun-filled days. And then summer hits with a smack! So far, Spring 2022 has been no different. And yet, deep down I know that winter—deep winter—is over and warmer temperatures, greener grass, and sweet-smelling spring flowers are really just around the corner.

In so many ways, the almost-but-not-yet of spring is reflected in our liturgical life as well. Lent is in its 5th week and Palm Sunday with its joy-filled music, palm branches, and shouts of “Hosanna” is just around the corner. But then comes Maundy Thursday and Good Friday and Holy Saturday. They interrupt the happy procession toward Easter with an almost unwelcome return to the somber and purple-filled days of the Lenten journey. And yet, the truth is, Easter Sunday, Resurrection Sunday, just doesn't feel quite as jubilant without going through those more somber days.

This year, I'd like to invite you to remain with us in the pre-Easter darkness a little longer. We'll be coming together for a special service on Maundy Thursday, April 14, at 7:00 p.m. This will be a service of Tenebrae, a service of shadows. Marked by the extinguishing of lights and candles, this ancient form of worship leads us deeper into the shadows and sets the stage for a dramatic return to light on Easter morning. Punctuated by a variety of special music, Communion, and readings from Jesus' final 24 hours, this deeply moving service is sure to be one you'll remember throughout the year. I hope you'll consider joining us.

This Lenten and Easter season, my personal hope for you and for us is summarized beautifully in this brief quotation from author Molly Fumia:

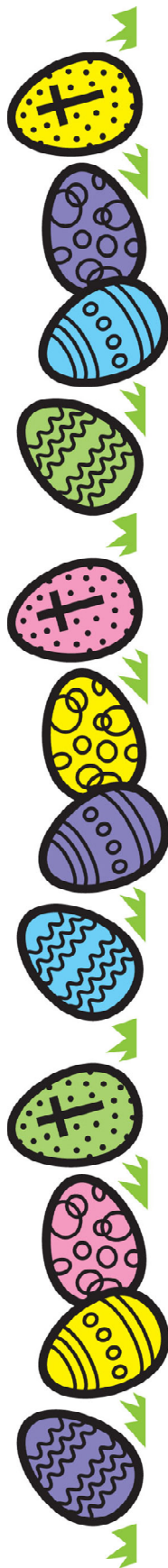
Resurrection. The reversal of what was thought to be absolute. The turning of midnight into dawn, hatred into love, dying into living anew. If we look more closely into life, we will find that resurrection is more than hope, it is our experience . . . We have come back to life, not only when we start to shake off a shroud of sorrow that bound us, but when we begin to believe in all that is still, endlessly possible.¹

We remain in the shadows together only a little longer. A new hope is on the horizon.

Blessings and peace,

Brandon Perrine
Senior Minister

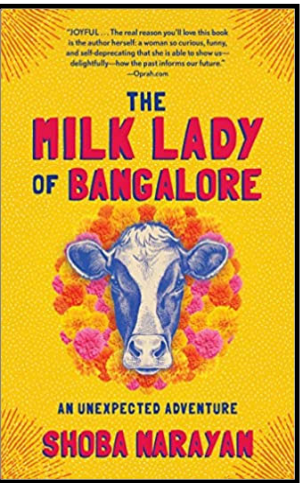
¹Fumia, Molly. “Safe Passage.” San Francisco: Conari Press, 2012.



Books of Note

April 19, 2022 at 7:00 pm on Zoom only.
Contact Sue Reimer for a Zoom invitation.
"The Milk Lady of Bangalore"

The elevator door opens. A cow stands inside, angled diagonally to fit. It doesn't look uncomfortable, merely impatient. "It is for the housewarming ceremony on the third floor," explains the woman who stands behind the cow, holding it loosely with a rope. She has the sheepish look of a person caught in a strange situation who is trying to act as normal as possible. She introduces herself as Sarala and smiles reassuringly. The door closes. I shake my head and suppress a grin.



When Shoba Narayan—who has just returned to India with her husband and two daughters after years in the United States—asks whether said cow might bless her apartment next, it is the beginning of a beautiful friendship between our author and Sarala, who also sells fresh milk right across the street from that thoroughly modern apartment building. The two women connect over not only cows but also family, food, and life. When Shoba agrees to buy Sarala a new cow, they set off looking for just the right heifer, and what was at first a simple economic transaction becomes something much deeper, though never without a hint of slapstick.

The Milk Lady of Bangalore immerses us in the culture, customs, myths, religion, sights, and sounds of a city in which the twenty-first century and the ancient past coexist like nowhere else in the world. It's a true story of bridging divides, of understanding other ways of looking at the world, and of human connections and animal connections, and it's an irresistible adventure of two strong women and the animals they love.

FILM SERIES



Film Series-April 8 at 7:00 pm: *Soul* (2020)
Joe is a middle-school band teacher whose life hasn't quite gone the way he expected. When he travels to another realm to help someone find their passion, he soon discovers what it means to have soul in this award-winning animated film.
Presenter: Maureen McKane



Desiree lead the confirmation and high school students in a discussion about the Netflix series Amend The Fight for America.



High School youth hosted coffee fellowship.





APRIL, 2022

UP AND COMING FOR HIGH SCHOOL

Spring is finally here!! This month the high school students will be focusing on helping the church prepare for the annual NECC Easter Egg Hunt. Classes on both April 3rd and April 10th will be spent stuffing the Easter Eggs and helping with any other preparations that may be needed for the fun event. Sunday April 17th is Easter Sunday therefore we will not have class as I hope you will enjoy the day with your families. The last Sunday of the month, April 24th, will be our final gift card drawing.

5TH & 6TH GRADE

Bible Sunday would not be complete without the Bible games! **THANK YOU TO ALL THE 5TH & 6TH GRADERS** who helped our younger learners connect with the Bible through fun and engaging games. I'm sure we all can agree that when learning is FUN, we all absorb more. In addition, it was so nice to bring back this traditional event for the 3rd and 4th graders. It is hard to believe that it's been 3 years since our last one! During March, the 5th and 6th graders spent a lot of time learning about the Bible so they could confidently lead the Bible games for the 3rd and 4th graders. Some of the favorite games were the Old Testament Bean Bag Toss and the New Testament Twister. It was exciting to watch the 5th and 6th graders interact with the younger students while taking an active role in leading.

COMING UP: In April, the 5th and 6th graders will be hosting a read-in for the Pre-k-2nd grade students.



A huge thank you goes out to those who assisted with the coffee fellowship on March 13th! Your presence at these events is always greatly appreciated.

CONFIRMATION CORNER

In March our 8th grade students met with their mentors for a second class session in preparation for Confirmation Sunday (May 22nd). They discussed deeper issues of faith and started thinking about the faith projects they will share with our congregation this spring. On Saturday April 9th we will meet again to finalize their project titles and descriptions, and make sure they have a plan in place to accomplish their goals. Our students also enjoyed a Rock-Climbing trip with 5th-12th grade on March 20th, and a spring-themed combined class with 5th & 6th graders on March 27th.

April Calendar:

SUN. APRIL 3RD Students in Church for Communion Sun.
SAT. APRIL 9TH Morning Mini-Retreat for 8th graders and their mentors.
SUN. APRIL 10TH Class @ 10:00 Topic: Stories of Holy Week
SUN. APRIL 17TH Easter
SUN. APRIL 24TH Class @ 10:00 Topic: Resurrection Stories

CALLING ALL GRADUATES

Do you have a high school student graduating this school year or who possibly graduated in December? If so, we would like to recognize them by including their name and information in the New England Church Tidings/Church Bulletin. Please respond to Lesley Myers at skidder2009@gmail.com with the following info: Full Name of your student and the high school they graduated from or will be graduating from.



Church School Family Picnic (Prek-12th)-Sunday, May 15th @ 3:00 PM at the Darché residence.

*April 14***Maundy Thursday Tenebrae—Service of Shadows**

Join us on April 14 at 7 p.m. for a service of Communion and Tenebrae. This special service will feature a variety of special music, readings, and the extinguishing of candles. While meditative, it is also interactive and appropriate for people of all ages. We hope you'll join us.

*April 15***GOOD FRIDAY**

Self-directed Communion and Meditation

11:00 am-1:00 pm in Johnson Chapel

*April 17***EASTER MORNING SERVICES**

This year, we will have two Easter Morning service offerings on April 17. Our Chapel service at 8:30 a.m. will have special music, piano-led hymns, and an abbreviated version of the second service. Our Sanctuary service at 10 a.m. will feature the Chancel Choir, New England Carillon, Pipe Organ, and Children's Time. We hope you'll participate in one of these joy-filled Easter services this year.

Women's Fellowship

After a two year hiatus, Women's Circle of Friends is bringing Scrabble back. All women are welcome to join us in Friendship Hall at 9:30 am on April 9 for a shared breakfast. Then we will split up into groups to play Scrabble. You do not have to be an expert Scrabble player to join us. Just come and have fun. Be sure to sign up on the NECC website's signup station or in the church office.



From the Students of the Beloved Community Committee



Our congregation is made up mostly of white people. We often say we welcome others. We wonder why black and brown people don't show up here. The Beloved Community Committee sees a future where walls between different colors of church will come down and we will share worship together.

First, we must come to know those other communities. It is premature to ask why they don't choose New England Church on a Sunday morning. We might as well ask, why don't the stars shine down on our noontime patios? In fact, stars are shining all day. We don't see them because our sun blots out their light.

New England is on a search to know those other stars. We must visit the night sky and its mysteries. Once we see and name the constellations, once we learn the pattern in the life of a star, its history, something important will change. We won't worship only the sun. We will know it to be one of the stars.

There is even a way to see some of the brightest stars in daytime if you know how to look.



Help support the Aurora Interfaith Food Pantry! Volunteers are needed to re-stock the shelves. NECC Volunteer Days are: The 1st and 3rd Monday of each month from 3:00-4:00 pm. No Sign-up required - Please arrive on-time at 1110 Jericho Rd.

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.



Brian Johnson leading the church school children in a lesson on the sacraments.



Nancy Hopp inscribed the Bibles for the 3rd grade students.



Third graders who received their Bibles and their families



Tiny Tidings

APRIL, 2022



CHURCH SCHOOL CALENDAR

APRIL 3	5th & 6th Read-in w/ Prek-2nd 3rd & 4th Bell Lesson
APRIL 10	Palm Sunday
APRIL 16	Easter Egg Hunt
APRIL 17	Easter Sunday-All in Church
APRIL 24	The Giving Tree

LEADERS IN TRAINING

A **BIG THANKS** goes out to Kathy Kokkinos and the 5th and 6th graders who helped teach the 3rd and 4th graders about the Bible on March 20th. The 5th and 6th grade youth led 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

Each year, the Church School program incorporates a "Life Lesson" into the curriculum to assist the children in making real world connections on how they can live the way Jesus would like us to live. Along with the lesson, the children are encouraged to actively engage in a service project. This year, the children will be collecting unused/new toiletry items for Hased House. These items will then be packaged into care packages. The church school is asking all families and members of the congregation to donate supplies for this "giving" event. All donations must be dropped off by Sunday, April 24th in order to be used in the care packages. Suggested items include: mini versions of toothpaste, toothbrush, bar soap, washcloths, deodorant, mouthwash, and sunscreen.

BIBLE SUNDAY SUCCESS

On Sunday, March 8, several of our 3rd graders received their Bible during the 10:00 AM service. Those who received a Bible were: **Jillian Brooks**, **Alexandra Johnson**, **Will O'Connell**, and **Renee Ream**.

EASTER EGG HUNT REMINDER

Be sure to mark your calendars for the annual **NECC EASTER EGG HUNT ON SATURDAY, APRIL 16TH AT 11:00 A.M.** This event will take place regardless of rain or shine for children ages 1 years old through 4th grade. Bring your children, grandchildren, neighbors, and friends! The festivities will begin in Friendship Hall (3rd floor) with some fun table activities, a selfie station, and more. Then weather permitting, the children will hunt for eggs outdoors on the church grounds. Remember to BYOB (bring your own basket) and hope you can join us for a terrific time!

SAVE THE DATE: CHURCH FAMILY PICNIC

Make sure to mark your calendars for the upcoming Church School family picnic. The picnic will take place on Saturday, May 15th at 3:00 PM at the home of Rick and Audra Darché. This will be a great opportunity for our Church School families to hang out and enjoy a fun afternoon of food & fellowship. All families with a preschool-12th grade child are welcome to this event. Keep an eye out for more details and hope you can make it! Please RSVP to Audra Darche if you are able to attend.

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.



Thank you to the Women's Circle of Friends for the beautifully created necklace representing our circle of friends at NECC.

Mary Halfvarson Covelli has designed and created such a meaningful piece. It is a treasure to wear.
Judy McCann



AURORA PRIDE PARADE



Mark your Calendars for the 2022 Aurora Pride Parade, happening on Sunday, June 12th. Our church will once again march as a colorful group in the joyous Aurora Pride Parade. Watch for more details coming soon and if you would like to join the Parade Planning Committee, please let Kimberly Adams know - we always need creative leaders.



EASTER FLOWERS ORDER DEADLINE: April 10, 2022

I would like to order Easter flowers to be used as a chancel decoration on Easter Sunday. Anyone who donated a plant, may take one home after the 10:00 am service.

PLEASE PRINT

Easter Flower _____ x \$16.00 each = _____

I have enclosed my check or cash for \$ _____

To Remember _____

Name _____