

OUR STAFF & CHURCH OFFICERS

Visit us on the web
at
www.newenglandchurch.org

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A Caring Church for Thinking People

*“God
Is Still
Speaking”*



Senior Minister: Brandon Perrine
Office Administrator: Shelley Lund
Director of Children’s Ministries: Desiree Guzman
Director of Youth Ministries: Becky Y’israel
Chancel Choir Director: Paul Laprade
Organist: Marsha Foxgrover
Assistant Organist: Marilyn Parolini
Handbell Director: Cathy Canfield-Jepson
Director of Community Life: Kimberly Adams
Wedding Coordinator: Nancy Richmond
Nursery Attendant: Charlotte Adams
Custodian: John Hett
Building Maintenance: Todd Jones

Moderator: Josh Ream
Moderator-elect: Heather Azem
Treasurer: Andy Sprau
Clerk: Ida Dunham

New England
Congregational Church
UCC
Aurora, Illinois



TIDINGS

Volume 94, Number 9

September 1, 2023



Dear Friends,

Fall, Rally Sunday, and Fall Festival are just around the corner! We really can’t wait to welcome you back to New England Church for a year of engaging programs in music and the arts, learning and volunteer opportunities for people of all ages, new directions in our ministries with children and youth, and the chance to reconnect with friends and fellow members.

We’re also excited to be rolling out our new Strategic Action Plan, adopted by the Cabinet in July. It is the culmination of a year of listening sessions, neighborhood and community assessment, and visits to other thriving churches. The result is concrete steps to become the church we aspire to be. The Cabinet is enthusiastically sharing the plan with boards, committees, and members of the congregation. Already their creative thinking is laying out steps toward becoming the church we feel called to be in this time and place.

This work will take all of us. It will require us to stop doing some things, to start doing others, and to use new approaches to what will continue in place. It will require an investment of heart, time, creative energy, and dollars.

This good work will change us. Just as New England Congregational Church has embodied a spirit of adaptability from its beginning, we are evolving to meet the needs of the present day. Our community needs New England Church now more than ever. We are committed to being and becoming that church anew.

With anticipation and hope, we look forward to reconnecting on Rally Day and walking together into New England Church’s best future.

Blessings and peace,

Brandon

Brandon Perrine
Senior Minister



An Open Door: the Sanctuary Choir Invites You to Join Us!

Although this edition of Tidings will arrive after our Sanctuary Choir begins its rehearsals, we have an 'open door' approach to choir members. Some might compare us to the experience of obtaining a car rental on vacation. How so?

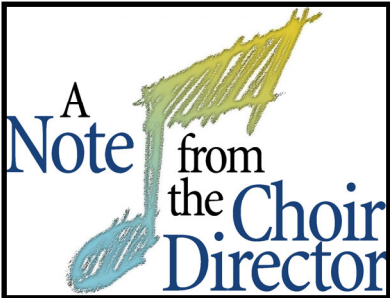
- You can test us out before signing the purchase agreement (aka committing to singing with us);
- Our rehearsals always have directions and will take you from one place to another (musically);
- If your voice does not feel comfortable in one vocal section, you can test drive another;
- We sometimes take detours when the music isn't going according to plan;
- The vista from our perspective is wonderful;
- Even though we consider ourselves a premium label organization, anyone can enjoy our luxury seats; and much more.

Nonetheless, there are also significant differences:

- God gave you the license needed to participate;
- God gave you the tools (voice);
- God gave us the road (music); and
- God is the reason for the journey.

Join us on Wednesdays, 7pm in the Sanctuary, for a journey through prayer, articulated in music. You never know: you may like it so much that you might believe you are on vacation!

Your choir director,
Paul



ORION ENSEMBLE CONCERT



After concluding its 30th anniversary season with spectacular performances of Schubert's Octet in F Major last May, the Orion Ensemble will begin its 2023-2024 concert season of top-notch chamber music at New England Church on Sunday, September 24, at 7:00 pm. Brochures highlighting their entire 4-concert season are available in the Marketplace. The program on the 24th will feature works of composers who seem like old friends:

Brahms: Trio in A Minor for Clarinet, Cello and Piano
Scherzo in C Minor for Violin and Piano
Mozart: Duo in G Major for Violin and Viola
Quartet in E Flat Major for Violin, Viola, Cello and Piano
Orion musicians—violinist Florentina Ramniceanu, cellist Judy Stone, clarinetist Kathy Pirtle and pianist Diana Schmuck—will be joined by frequent guest violist, Stephen Boe. All who attend are invited to a reception in the Narthex following the concert. Tickets may be purchased online at www.orionensemble.org or at the door.



A JOYFUL PATH

NEW ENGLAND FAMILY REGISTRATION 2023-24 (NURSERY - 12TH)

CHILDREN'S NAMES	DATE OF BIRTH	AGE	GRADE	PRONOUN	ALLERGIES
1. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Y N
2. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Y N
3. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Y N
4. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Y N
5. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Y N
6. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	Y N

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME/S	PHONE NUMBERS
_____ Home _____	Cell _____
_____ Home _____	Cell _____

MAILING ADDRESS	E-MAIL ADDRESS
_____	_____
_____	_____

EMERGENCY CONTACT	PHONE
_____	_____

SPECIFIC CONCERNS: MEDICAL/ALLERGIES/BEHAVIOR/LEARNING

Do any of your children receive special services? Yes No (Circle one)

If yes, please share anything that would help us assisting your child or children in Church School.

PERSON COMPLETING THIS FORM _____

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILDREN: _____

PLEASE LIST ANY DIETARY PREFERENCES. EX. VEGETARIAN, VEGAN, ETC. _____

ARE YOU WILLING TO VOLUNTEER (SERVICE OR FUN)? Yes No

Classroom helper _____ Classroom teacher _____ Chaperone events/or trips _____

Please check all that apply:

_____ I give permission for my children's photo to be used on the NECC website and/or Facebook page.

_____ I give permission for my children's photo to be used in our monthly NECC newsletter (Tiny/Youth Tidings).

Signature: _____

Questions: For questions about infants - 5th grade contact Desiree Guzman desiree@newenglandchurch.org
For questions about 6th -12th grade contact Becky Visrael becky@newenglandchurch.org

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE CHURCH OFFICE BY: AUG. 28TH.



SEPTEMBER, 2023

SEPTEMBER YOUTH GROUP (6TH-12TH GRADE) CALENDAR

- SEPT. 3RD** Labor Day Weekend
Intergenerational Service
- SEPT. 10TH** Fall Festival - Youth Group-
Meet our new Director of Youth
Ministry, Becky Yisrael
- SEPT. 17TH** Youth Group
- SEPT. 24TH** Youth Group

YOUTH GROUP:

Beginning Sept. 10th, all students 6th-12th grade will meet together at 10:00 in the youth room for activities, games, and discussions with our new Director of Youth Ministry, Becky. The first Sunday of every month is intergenerational worship. On first Sundays, our whole church family will celebrate communion together. Joy Ringers Youth Bell Choir will play and services will be designed with young people in mind. There will be no separate youth group on these weeks.

YOUTH VOLUNTEER TEAM:

Each week, we need a second adult to volunteer with Becky in our youth room. Ideally, we would have a team of 5-6 consistent volunteers who help 3-5 Sundays a year, support our events, and give us regular feedback. Having a regular team instead of just random volunteers all year would mean that our volunteers can know and build relationships with our youth, be more familiar with our routine and safety procedures and provide critical feedback to help us continue to improve our program. If you are interested in learning more about this volunteer opportunity, please contact Becky Yisrael: becky@newenglandchurch.org

CONFIRMATION:

Confirmation is one of the single most significant things that we do as a church. The importance of creating space for exploration and discovery, relationship-building, and personal growth in the context of caring Christian community cannot be overstated. This year we have transitioned to a two-year cohort model, which means that students who are 6th & 7th graders this year will spend this school year and next digging into deeper conversations of faith with Rev. Brandon Perrine and Youth Ministry Director, Becky Yisrael. These gatherings will be held once a month on Sunday evenings and will begin in October. More specific details will be sent out in the coming weeks. If you have questions, please contact Rev. Brandon Perrine: Brandon@newenglandchurch.org

Welcome Back!
We've missed you!

New Director of Youth Ministries

We're excited to announce that we have completed our search for a new Director of Youth Ministries!

Becky Yisrael started her position at New England Church on August 1, 2023.

Becky earned her Master's degree in Social Work Healthcare from Aurora University. Her area of expertise includes ADHD, Anxiety, Addictions, Grief, and Depression. Becky works with all ages across the lifespan. While completing her undergraduate degree at Elmhurst College, Becky choreographed, taught, and competed competitively in dance. Witnessing firsthand the effects of anxiety, burnout, and body dysmorphia is what sparked her interest in mental health and advocating for youth. Becky's experience includes Therapist, Social Work Director, Care Counselor, and Youth Mentor.

As a Director of Youth Ministries, Becky believes in youth-led conversations, active listening, and validating all points of view. Creating a welcoming environment of trust, understanding, and willingness to learn is the motto she governs her professional leadership by. Becky's favorite scripture is Philippians 3:13 "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." This reminds her that life is continuous: it is best to keep moving forward with the lessons learned than to stay struck in regrets. It also reminds her daily there is more to learn—she does not know all the answers to all the problems, there is still room to grow! Becky enjoys cooking with her husband and children. She loves to laugh by watching movies and stand-up comedy. Becky enjoys writing and performing poetry and spoken word. Although Becky is bad at driving, she enjoys road trips!

Join us after worship for the Community Fall Festival on September 10th for an opportunity to meet Becky in person.



NECC'S COMMUNITY FALL FESTIVAL

Join us Sunday, September 10, for an Outdoor Community Fall Festival Luncheon on the South Lawn (if raining, we will be in Friendship Hall), following our 10:00 am worship Service. We will provide the table service. roasted chicken breasts, sloppy joes, beverages, and delicious root beer floats will be provided by the Board of Community Outreach.

There will be a bounce house set up on the church lawn for the children to enjoy and fun glitter tattoos provided by Dots and Splashes. This year we will have NEW games and activities for all ages to enjoy.

We invite everyone to join the celebration and please bring a neighbor, a co-worker, and a friend along.

This event can't happen without your support!

We do need your help with donations of side dishes, condiments, and desserts!

You can sign up online to bring a food item on Sunday, September 10 by going to newenglandchurch.org and clicking on the orange clipboard.

You can also sign-up in person after church in the Marketplace area during the few Sundays leading up to our big event.



The NECC Giving Bus is gearing up for its traditional shoe drive that serves our community partner elementary schools, Greenman and Hall. This drive helps provide students in need of shoes as they start the year and helps keep extras on hand for students who need them during the year. PLEASE select a ticket from the Giving Bus in the Marketplace from September 17 through September 24. Purchase a pair of athletic shoes to match the ticket and return them to church by October 1.

We are also collecting school supplies for the children of Greenman School through October 1.

Supply List
#2 pencils sharpened
Solid color 2-pocket folders
24 count boxes of crayons
Scissors
Packs of washable markers
Glue sticks
Wide ruled one subject spiral notebooks
Please help us show NECC cares about our neighbors.



Help support the Aurora Area Interfaith Food Pantry!

Volunteers are needed to re-stock the shelves.

NECC Volunteer Days are:

The 1st and 3rd Monday of each month.

From 3:00-4:00pm
No Sign-up required-
Please arrive on-time at 1110 Jericho Rd. Aurora

Women's Circle of Friends will start out the 2023-24 season by going out to eat. We will gather at Lumes Pancake House and Restaurant at 1902 W. Fabyan Parkway in Batavia at 9:30 am on September 9. All women of the church are welcome to attend. You can sign up online at the Sign Up Station on the NECC website or in the church office. We hope to see some new faces as well as those who normally attend.



The Students of the Beloved Community

Fall brings us back to school, back to church with new energy. For The Beloved Community Committee that means a new focus on efforts to be New England's yeast for leavening awareness of all that social justice means. We will be working behind the scenes with other committees and boards this year. We want to meet the congregation's needs, knowing that there are many different ideas about what it means to be black, white or brown, poor or rich. Opening our minds together means learning about others and learning what is in our own hearts.

This year we will alert you to annual events including *World Nativities: Beyond Europe*, and *Aurora's Juneteenth Celebration*. The Books of Note book club's list for the year has two selections that will add to your dialogue. Our collaboration with *Friday Night at the Movies* including a Soul Food Supper returns in February. First, on October 14, comes Women's Circle of Friends together with our committee presenting Connie Martin, *Pre-Civil War Quilts: Hidden Codes to Freedom on the Underground Railroad*.



Are you interested in traveling with New England Church? We're meeting on Sunday, October 15 at 3:00 pm to discuss a 2025 European Viking cruise. Everyone is invited to explore the possibilities. Contact Gary McCann with questions. 630.643.4925.

Books of Note

The Books of Note book discussion group is open to all. New members are welcome at any time. Attend via Zoom on the third Tuesday of the month from 7:00- 8:00 pm. Read one book or all. It's up to you! Books are suggested by participants and voted on twice a year. Contact Sue Reimer to obtain a book and the Zoom link.

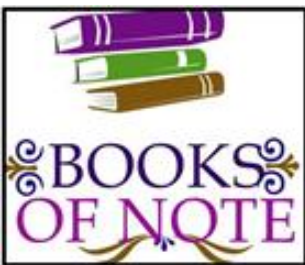
September 19, 2023

"Mercy House" by Alena Dillion.

Diane Hienton to lead discussion.

Inside a century-old row house in Brooklyn, renegade Sister Evelyn and her fellow nuns preside over a safe haven for the abused and abandoned. Gruff and indomitable on the surface, warm and wry underneath, little daunts Evelyn, until she receives word that Mercy House will be investigated by a man with whom she shares a dark history. In order to protect everything they've built, the nuns must conceal many of their methods, which are forbidden by the Catholic Church.

Sr. Evelyn confronts a gang member, defies the church, challenges her own beliefs, and faces her past. She is bolstered by the other nuns and the vibrant, diverse residents of the shelter whose differences are outweighed by what unites them: they've all been broken by men but are determined to rebuild.



At the Kane County Cougars game with New England Church on Aug. 4th



Children's Time at outdoor worship on Aug. 6th

Sneak peek photos of our reimagined "Kids'Zone" church school classroom with new educational toys and equipment inherited from the former New England Preschool



Sneak peek photos of our refreshed nursery space



Tiny Tidings

SEPTEMBER, 2023



CHURCH SCHOOL CALENDAR

- SEPT. 3RD** Labor Day Weekend -
Intergenerational Worship
- SEPT. 10TH** Fall Festival - Lesson: Jesus
Welcomes the Children (Nursery reopens)
- SEPT. 17TH LESSON** - The Big Wide Welcome:
Jesus, James, and a Church that Learned
to Love All People
First Week of the Joy Ringers Bell Choir
Practice @ 9:00 for 3rd-12th grade
Email Cathy Jepson for more info:
blondcathy@yahoo.com
- SEPT. 24TH LESSON** - St. Jerome: Forgiveness &
Healing

KIDS' ZONE:

We are beginning our second year of using and adapting Church School lessons from a Progressive Christian Curriculum called "A Joyful Path." Using Bible stories, folk tales, biographies, and wisdom teachings from multiple traditions and cultures, we will inspire kids to grow in wisdom, compassion, and gratitude as they follow the loving example of Jesus. Our multi-age classroom for Pk-5th, now called, KIDS' ZONE, has been reimagined and upgraded this year with fresh educational toys and equipment inherited from the former New England Preschool. We're sure that kids and parents alike will love this refreshed environment!

Children Pk-5th grade begin each Sunday in the sanctuary and are dismissed to KIDS' ZONE after Children's Time. Every first Sunday of the month is Intergenerational Worship. On those weeks there is no church school or youth group. Our whole church family is together for those Communion Sundays. Activity bags and folders will be provided and services will be planned with young people in mind. Nursery care for 0-3 is still available.

THREE KEYS WORDS FOR FAITH FORMATION IN KID'S ZONE THIS YEAR:

1. **Welcome** - We can practice welcoming people like Jesus did.
2. **Wisdom** - We can grow in God's wisdom.
3. **Wonder** - We can experience the wonders of creation.

KIDS' ZONE & NURSERY VOLUNTEER TEAM:

They say it takes a village to support a child, and we need you as part of our village! Each week, to support our Safe Sanctuary Policy, we need a second adult in the nursery and a second adult in Kids' Zone. While we have a small group of committed volunteers, a few more hands would be greatly appreciated. If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact Desiree Guzman - desiree@newengland-church.org

NURSERY NEWS:

Please join us in offering our deepest gratitude and best wishes to **Jenni Moses** for her many years of service in the New England Church nursery. Though Jenni won't be returning as a Nursery Attendant this fall, her impact continues to show in the faces of the many kids and youth still in our program who benefited from her care. **Charlotte Adams** will continue in her role in the nursery, and we will be hiring a second attendant to work alternating weeks. Our nursery is also getting refreshed with items from the former New England Preschool and also items gifted to the church by World Relief's early childhood program that are no longer needed. We can't wait for babies, toddlers, and young preschoolers to experience the new surprises the nursery will have to offer this fall!

VOLUNTEER VORTEX

Sponsored by the Board of Community Outreach

We, at NECC who desire to make the world a better place, continue to post volunteer opportunities in this section of the Tidings every month.

This fall, **The Neighbor Project**, one of our strategic partners, is described below:

For those of you who may be unaware, the two-story apartment building immediately to the west of our church parking lot, was very generously gifted to NECC by the Herwick family in 2014. Rather than tearing it down for a few additional parking spots, we decided to partner with the then Emmanuel House organization, founded by our own Rick & Desiree Guzman in 2002, to use this property as part of a program giving working class families assistance toward the goal of local home ownership. Jim Hopp coordinated a substantial rehab project, enabling us to turn over three updated apartments. This organization subsequently merged with the Joseph Corporation, founded in 1990 by the Sisters of Mercy, and formed a new organization, now called The Neighbor Project, but retains the same purposes. i.e., to provide low and middle income families the opportunity to save part of their monthly rent in a sequestered account which then can be used as an eventual down payment on a home of their own. The organization also offers budget and credit counselling along with homeowner buyer education as part of the program.

Currently three families are residing in our Emmanuel House apartment building, and we provide each with a holiday fruit basket and a gift card from Jewel Food stores every December. However, our participation in the mission of The Neighbor Project continues throughout the year. In April, the congregation voted to lease the Chestnut House to The Neighbor Project in order to provide housing for a larger family group who is not easily accommodated with traditional apartment units. We have submitted our proposal to Kane County for review and we expect the bureaucratic wheels to turn toward approval any time now. As Paul writes in his letter to James 2:14-26, "Faith without works is dead."

For those of you interested in joining us in support of this worthy and life changing effort, please contact Mike Imbrogno at m.imbrogno@comcast.net or 630-220-6259 for more information. *And they'll know we are Christians by our love.*

The Benefits of Volunteering as We Age

An article recently caught my attention because it talked about how volunteering could increase a person's life expectancy. I decided to look into this further, having known for some time that engagement with the world enhances our well-being as we age. However, I did not realize the significance volunteering had on a person's mental and physical health.

Staying active is important as we age. Many volunteer activities require some sort of physical movement. Take for example, some of Mutual Ground's most recent volunteer opportunities. At our *Walk for Hope*, our Course Marshals needed to walk out to their designated location, help with directions, and then walk back to enjoy the event. At the annual Ms. Fannie's Yard Sale, volunteers helped us move boxes outside and set up for the sale.

Even in later life, it's never too late to learn something new. Some volunteer tasks help boost cognitive function. Solving, planning and coordination help keep the mind sharp. Learning how to check volunteers in using a new software program or helping write auction item descriptions are new tasks that can help challenge the brain! Volunteering allows you to connect with your community on a deeper level, fostering relationships with like-minded individuals, and enhancing your social network. Most importantly, contributing to a cause that one believes in can bring more fulfillment to one's life, particularly during the retirement years.

If you are interested in volunteering at Mutual Ground, sign up on our website to get a list of all current and future opportunities.

Written by Krystyna Sarrazin

Volunteer Administrator at Mutual Ground