



MUSINGS



Dear Friends,

It seems like just a few Sundays ago that we were grooving to the sounds of the Papadolias Trio, stuffing ourselves with chocolate, and waving palm branches in the air with every mention of 'Jesus' in worship. I can't believe that it's time to burn those palm branches now in preparation for our Ash Wednesday service on February 14! Those branches have performed an essential task over the months since Palm Sunday: filling an otherwise purposeless vase in my office! Ready or not, Lent is just around the corner. If you're not feeling particularly Lent-y this year, these words of author Madeleine L'Engle may resonate with you:

*It is my Lent to break my Lent,
To eat when I would fast,
To know when slender strength is spent,
Take shelter from the blast
When I would run with wind and rain,
To sleep when I would watch.
It is my Lent to smile at pain
But not ignore its touch.*

*It is my Lent to listen well
When I would be alone,
To talk when I would rather dwell
In silence, turn from none
Who call on me, to try to see
That what is truly meant
Is not my choice. If Christ's I'd be
It's thus I'll keep my Lent.*

We'll be gathering for our Service of Ashes on Ash Wednesday, an adult Lenten study series on Wednesday evenings throughout the season, and following Jesus' Jerusalem journey as it unfolds on Sunday mornings through the lectionary. But if you're not feeling particularly Lent-y this year, that's okay. Perhaps this is the year to break your Lent and focus on simply living like Jesus, day to day.

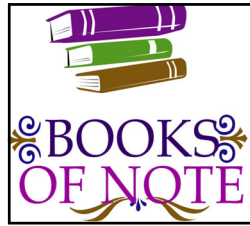
Blessings on your Lenten journey,

Brandon Perrine
Senior Minister

¹Madeleine L'Engle. *The Ordering of Love: The New and Collected Poems of Madeleine L'Engle*, New York: Crown Publishing, 2005.



BOOKS OF NOTE



February 20- "To Kill a Mocking Bird" by Harper Lee. The unforgettable novel of a childhood in a sleepy Southern town and the crisis of conscience that rocked it, *To Kill A Mockingbird* became both an instant bestseller and a critical success when it was first published in 1960. It went on to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 and was later made into an Academy Award-winning film, also a classic.

Compassionate, dramatic, and deeply moving, *To Kill A Mockingbird* takes readers to the roots of human behavior - to innocence and experience, kindness and cruelty, love and hatred, humor and pathos. Now with over 18 million copies in print and translated into forty languages, this regional story by a young Alabama woman claims universal appeal. Harper Lee always considered her book to be a simple love story. Today it is regarded as a masterpiece of American literature. Ross Ament to lead the discussion.

Friday Night At The Movies

February 9 at 7:00 pm: Selma (2014)

Friday Night at the Movies in February is a joint presentation with NECC's Students of the Beloved Community committee. A Soul Food Tasting will start at 6:30 pm, followed by the movie at 7:00 pm, both in Friendship Hall. "Selma" chronicles the 1965 voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, which became a defining moment in the Civil Rights movement. Ellen Bonewitz will introduce the movie and lead a short discussion afterward.

The dinner menu will include catfish nuggets, dirty rice and collard greens with smoked turkey. The tasting and the film presentation are free of charge and no sign up is necessary.



Pancake Breakfast



Boy Scout Troop 3 will be hosting a pancake breakfast on Sunday, February 4, in Friendship Hall from 8:30 am until 12:30 pm.

There will be raffles for a queen size afghan and a Dick Butkus signed and framed jersey. There will also be a bake sale. Tickets are \$8 per person and \$25 for a family.

AURORA AREA INTERFAITH FOOD PANTRY

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 at 1110 Jericho Rd. Aurora.



Join us this
Ash Wednesday,
February 14, at
7:00 pm in the
Sanctuary for our
Service
of
Ashes.

This special service marks the beginning of the Lenten Season and will feature rich and meaningful liturgy, meditative music, a brief meditation, and the imposition of ashes.

Lasting under 30 minutes, this is an appropriate service for people of all ages.

We hope you'll join us.



'Fat Sunday' Celebration

Please join us on February 11, the last Sunday before Lent, for our 'Fat Sunday' Celebration! Fat Sunday will be a morning full of joyous music and delicious treats. Please join us for the Chocolate Festival in Friendship Hall after the 10:00 am worship service for a delicious, decadent, and yummy good time! Partake in scrumptious cookies, brownies, cakes, and liquid chocolate fountains. We need your help to make this event happen - please sign up in the Marketplace or online to bake and share some chocolatey sweets. Dessert donations can be dropped off on the carts the morning of Sunday, February 11 as you enter church.

WOMEN'S CIRCLE OF FRIENDS



This is an important notice about the February Women's Circle of Friends meeting. Circumstances have made a change of schedule necessary.

We will still meet for breakfast on February 10 at 9:30 am in Friendship Hall, but our program will be one on Bee Keeping, with guest lecturers Karen and Chuck Lorence. They live locally and have been bee keeping for about 50 years. They lecture often in the area and are very

informative and entertaining. So bring a dish to share and for this meeting, please invite family and friends to join us. Just remember to sign up online or in the office (indicate how many guests you will be bringing). Please note that Karen and Chuck will have Bee products for sale - all kinds of candles, and lots of local honeys!

Sync Our Church Directory to Your Mobile Device

Now you can sync our church directory directly to your Apple, Android or Kindle Fire device with a FREE app!

Search for other members, and then email, call or text – right from the directory app.

It's Easy!

1. Go to your device's App Store.
2. Search for Instant Church Directory.
3. Enter your email as it's listed in our church directory.
4. Follow the directions on screen to complete the login process.



BOARD GAME NIGHT

Our Board Game Night is BACK! Join us for an evening of fun board game playing with other adults in the church.

Saturday, February 24 from 6:30-9:00 pm

This event will not be your average board game playing - you will enjoy a variety games that are competitive, cooperative, silly, skilled based, luck based, and just plain fun to play. Come and learn some new games and make new friends!

\$5/person to cover event expenses.

Games will be provided, tableware and non-alcoholic beverages provided.

Please Bring a Potluck-style appetizers and BYOB or wine.

6:30-7:00 Eat/Socialize and 7:00-9:00 Game Time

Prizes will be given out for various goals achieved during the evening. Contact Kimberly Adams at kimberly@newenglandchurch.org for more information.



Adult Lenten Study



Mark your calendars:

Our Wednesday Evening Lenten Study will begin on February 21 with dinner at 5:30 pm and the study from 6:00-7:00 pm. Sign up on the website!

Easter Basket Project

Now that we have rejoiced in the season of Christ's birth, we look forward to proclaiming, "Christ is risen!" To share that joy, NECC will be donating Easter baskets to the Aurora Area Interfaith Food Pantry as we did last year. Please sign up to donate candy, small toys, and basket stuffers downstairs at the tables or online.

Donations need to be brought to church by February 18. Children and families in our community continue to be the priority of the Board of Community Outreach, and we are grateful for the support of the congregation.





On Friday, February 9 at 7:00 pm, our organist, Marsha Foxgrover, will join the Concert Band of Westminster Christian School, Palmetto Bay, Florida, for a concert directed by Seth Carlson at First Covenant Church, 316 Wood Road in Rockford. The organ will be featured on "The Great Gate of Kiev" by Mussorgsky and "The Lost Chord" by Arthur Sullivan. The concert is free and open to the public.

**Candlelight Aurora:
Featuring Vivaldi's Four Seasons & More
Friday, February 16 at 6:30 pm and 8:45 pm**

Candlelight concerts bring the magic of a live, multi-sensory musical experience to awe-inspiring locations like never seen before in Aurora. Get your tickets now to discover the music of Vivaldi at New England Congregational Church under the gentle glow of candlelight.

Program

The Four Seasons. Violin Concerto in G Minor. Op. 8 No. 1 RV 269: "Spring" – Vivaldi
The Four Seasons. Violin Concerto in G Minor. Op. 8 No. 2 RV 315: "Summer" – Vivaldi
Thaïs: Méditation – Jules Massenet
Recomposed by Max Richter: Vivaldi. The Four Seasons: "Spring 3" – Max Richter
The Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas: Verano Porteño – Astor Piazzolla
Libertango – Astor Piazzolla
The Four Seasons. Violin Concerto in G Minor. Op. 8 No. 3 RV 293: "Autumn" – Vivaldi
The Four Seasons. Violin Concerto in G Minor. Op. 8 No. 4 RV 297: "Winter" – Vivaldi

Performers—Listeso String Quartet

For tickets, go to <https://feverup.com/m/127500>



Do you need help getting to appointments or running errands? Do you have a car and like to help others? We're considering starting a volunteer pool to assist NECC folks with challenges in getting to appointments and running errands. As we try to assess the needs of our community, if you need help, or if you're willing to be listed as a volunteer, please contact Pamela Edmonds at pedmonds@prodigy.net or 708-987-0066.



Tiny Tidings

FEBRUARY, 2024



FEBRUARY KIDS' ZONE CALENDAR

- FEB. 4TH Intergenerational Service with Joy Ringers Youth Bell Choir
- FEB. 11TH FAT SUNDAY Intergenerational Service - Chocolate Festival to follow
- FEB. 18TH Lesson: The Daring Escape of Ona Judge (Black History Month Stories)
- FEB. 25TH Lesson: George Washington Carver (Black History Month Stories)
* Youth Mega Fun Park Outing
5th- 12th grade.

PARENT/CHILD PLAY GROUP RESUMES FRIDAY FEB. 2ND:

Parents or caregivers with children ages 0-5 are invited to join us Fridays from 9:30-11:00 in the KIDS' ZONE room for a multi-cultural playgroup. Stories. Music. Art. Friendship and play. This group is a partnership between New England Church, World Relief, & SPARK (Strong. Prepared. And Ready for Kindergarten.) This is a great opportunity for New England Church families to connect with other Aurora families who come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. If you are interested, contact Desiree desiree@newenglandchurch.org

YOUTH MEGA FUN PARK OUTING:

NECC students in grades 5-12 are invited to join us for an outing to Mega Fun Park (1971 W. Galena Blvd. Aurora) on Sunday February 25th after the 10:00 service. Watch your email for more details!

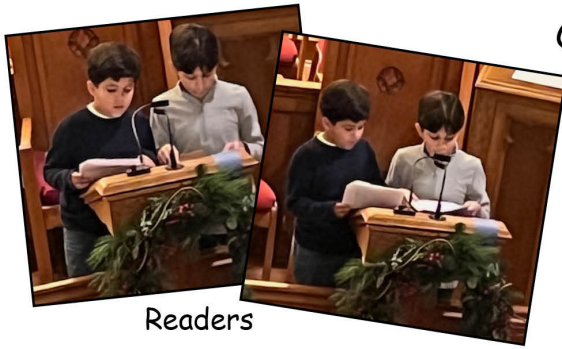
BOARD OF EDUCATION:

The Board of Education is beginning a new season of rebuilding and growth under the leadership of our new Board Chair, Marie Wendt, and these amazing members who have agreed to serve: Katie Johnson, Judy Lopez, Emily Morales, Karen Ronan, and Ana Ybarra-Rojas. We look forward to all the ways that their leadership, guidance, and creativity will help us sustain, improve, and stretch our programs for children and youth. If you have ideas or volunteer energy you'd like to share, please contact a member of our board or our Director of Children's & Intergenerational Ministry, Desiree Guzman.

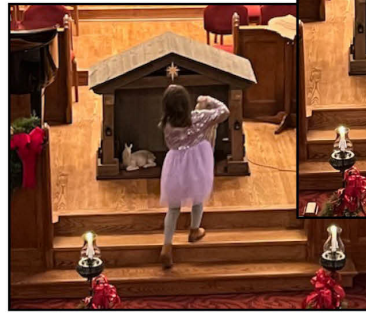
NURSERY STAFF & VOLUNTEERS:

Thaise Rodriguez and Josely Hernandez are both doing a wonderful job as our staff nursery attendants. And we greatly appreciate all the volunteers who have been serving alongside them to meet our Safe Church policy of having two unrelated adults in all our classrooms. Even though our nursery has a very small population in this particular season, and some weeks we have had to release staff and volunteers when no children were present, it is still so important to keep this vital service open and available to parents who need it, both our regular attenders and any potential visitors. If you are interested in volunteering to help care for our littlest attenders, please contact desiree@newenglandchurch.org

CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY SERVICE



Readers



Creating the
Manger Scene



Bringing up gifts
for Hesus House





Kid's Zone kid's acting out the nativity story



Youth play games from around the world





FEBRUARY, 2024

FEBRUARY YOUTH CALENDAR

- FEB. 4TH** Intergenerational Service with Joy Ringers Youth Bell Choir
Confirmation Dinner Gathering 5-7PM
- FEB. 11TH** FAT SUNDAY Intergenerational Service -
Chocolate Festival to follow.
- FEB. 18TH** Youth Group @ 10:00
- FEB. 25TH** Youth Group @ 10:00
Youth Mega Fun Park Outing 5th- 12th grade.

SUNDAY MORNING YOUTH GROUP LEADERSHIP:

Katie Jepson is doing a great job leading our Sunday morning youth group sessions! If you see her around church, I hope you take the time to thank her for her efforts. Each week she needs an adult volunteer helper in the room with her. If you are interested in helping, please contact desiree@newenglandchurch.org

BOARD OF EDUCATION:

The Board of Education is beginning a new season of rebuilding and growth under the leadership of our new Board Chair, Marie Wendt, and these amazing members who have agreed to serve: Katie Johnson, Judy Lopez, Emily Morales, Karen Ronan, and Ana Ybarra-Rojas. We look forward to all the ways that their leadership, guidance, and creativity will help us sustain, improve, and stretch our programs for children and youth. They will also be working in partnership with our Senior Minister and Director of Children's & Intergenerational Ministry to update the job description and make hiring plans and decisions for the position of Director of Youth Ministries for the 2024-25 ministry year.

YOUTH MEGA FUN PARK OUTING:

NECC students in grades 5-12 are invited to join us for an outing to Mega Fun Park (1971 W. Galena Blvd. Aurora) on Sunday February 25th after the 10:00 service. Watch your email for more details!





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

OUR STAFF & CHURCH OFFICERS

Senior Minister: Brandon Perrine
Church Administrator: Shelley Lund
Director of Children's Ministries: Desiree Guzman
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 Attendants: Charlotte Adams,
Thaise Rodriguez, Josely Hernandez
Custodian: John Hett
Facilities Engineer: Todd Jones

Moderator: Heather Azem
Moderator-elect: Laura Pittman
Treasurer: Andy Sprau
Clerk: Ida Dunham