



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
Director of Youth Ministries: Katie Jepson
Chancel Choir Director: Paul Laprade
Organist/Pianist: Daniel Segner
Assistant Pianist: Marilyn Parolini
Organist Emerita: Marsha Foxgrover
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



TIDINGS

Volume 96, Number 1

January 1, 2025

MUSINGS



Dear Friends,

When you read this, it will be 2025. However, writing it now, it's still December 18, 2024. In the throes of holiday preparation, having planned five services this week, and with an extra sermon to write for Christmas Eve, it's hard to think too much about January! Honestly, though, I think that's okay.

Sometimes, our expectations for a new year are simply too high. We think: this will be the year I lose weight and get in shape; this will be the year when work finally lets up and I can spend more time with my kids; this will be the year when all the house projects are complete; this year my stock portfolio will outperform all others; this will be the year when *that* war ends and there's peace at last... That's a lot of pressure to put on a new year. Maybe it's okay not to think too much about it quite yet.

I did read a poem recently though that puts the new year into perspective and I'd like to share it with you. It was written by Jackie Kay, former *Makar* (poet laureate) of Scotland. It's called "Promise."

Remember, the time of year
when the future appears
like a blank sheet of paper
a clean calendar, a new chance.
On thick white snow

you vow fresh footprints
then watch them go
with the wind's hearty gust.
Fill your glass. Here's tae us.
Promises made to be broken, made to last.

Blessings this new year,

Brandon

Brandon Perrine
Senior Minister

Reminder:

The newsletter deadline for submitted articles is the 15th of every month.



The deadline for the weekly Sunday bulletin is the Monday preceding the affected Sunday. Please have your announcements worded the way that you want them to be and e-mail to shelley@newenglandchurch.org. Thank you!

December in the narthex was well-received by the Aurora community. Thank you to the Loyola University Museum of Art for loaning us their creches.

Looking back at year's end, our Committee has begun to transition its focus. The October Listening Session made it clear that we need to reach into the community and embrace a broad set of diverse populations. Consider where your life intersects with diversity and tell us what you see.



January honors Martin Luther King, Jr. The City will sponsor Aurora's 40th annual celebration the week of the 20th. Date TBD. Last year it was an evening of excellent talent.

In the coming year may we earn the right to say, "Somos la luz del mundo." (We are the light of the world.)

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.



JANUARY, 2025

ALL-GRADES BINGO BASH!

On Sunday January 19th during the 10:00 service, all students PK-12th Grade will enjoy our BINGO-BASH with fun prizes and treats. Children PK-5th grade will begin in the sanctuary as usual, so youth will get some time on their own before the younger kids join them in the Alive Center Art room. This week will be all about fun and connecting with other kids, so it's a great week to invite a friend or neighbor. Hope to see you there!

YOUTH CALENDAR

JAN 5TH	Intergenerational Service with Pop-up Choir/Youth Helper Opportunities Confirmation 5-7 PM
JAN. 12TH	Youth Group Joy Ringers Youth Bell Choir Rehearsal 9:00AM
JAN. 19TH	ALL GRADES BINGO-BASH (MLK Weekend) Joy Ringers Youth Bell Choir Rehearsal 9:00AM
JAN. 26TH	Youth Group Joy Ringers Youth Bell Choir Rehearsal 9:00AM Lunch & Annual Meeting after 10:00AM Service

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation is available to all 7th and 8th graders. Confirmation will continue to meet on the first Sunday of each month, this month on January 5th, from 5-7 p.m. This year, Confirmation students will be participating in service projects and exploring various faiths by traveling to different places of worship within our community. On January 5th, the Confirmation students will be traveling to the Sri Venkateswara Swami(Balaji) Temple to learn about Hinduism. Expect more information on these experiences throughout the school year.

VOLUNTEERS MAKE EVERYTHING WORK!

We are SO grateful for all the volunteers who served in nursery, kids & youth group in 2024! We couldn't do what we do without you. Some of our volunteers have been serving for many years and some were brand new this fall. Because we have an active church full of busy people with changing seasons of life and because we are all human and sometimes get sick or need a break, we are always looking for caring adults who are interested in volunteering in our classrooms once every few weeks. Sharing the load makes the burden lighter for everyone. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact desiree@newenglandchurch.org to learn more.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Annual Meeting Luncheon Fundraiser



All are welcome and encouraged to attend the 2025 Annual Meeting and Luncheon, held on Sunday, January 26 in Friendship Hall after the 10:00 am worship service.

This year Books of Note will be helping to prepare and serve a delicious hot lunch for our annual meeting as a fundraiser. As always, our annual meeting lunch is free for everyone, but we invite anyone who is willing and able to consider supporting Books of Note by making a donation that day.



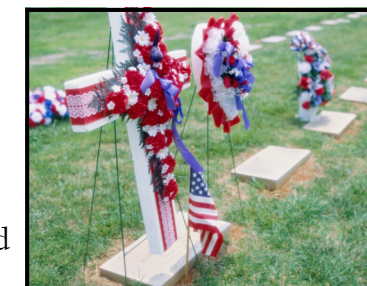
A hearty thank you to Jan Mamminga for volunteering to take care of the poinsettias during the Christmas season, keeping the plants watered during the week so they looked great on Sundays.

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.



Joy Ringers greet church members as they arrive at church

Christmas Carol Sing Along





Pop-Up Choir returns on January 5!

The first choral sound in 2025 will be the NECC Pop-Up choir! Please consider joining us on January 5 to sing a beautiful, perfect song for all ages to enjoy.

We will meet in the Sanctuary at 9:15 am to learn "When We are Singing," a lovely Spanish hymn. (We are singing it in English). As always, everyone is invited to be in the Pop-Up Choir! In past versions, we have been blessed by the addition of neighbors, acquaintances, relatives, and friends to our wonderful choir and congregational members. No singing experience is necessary.

I hope to sing in the New Year with you. May your Christmas and New Year bring moments of depth, meaning, and love to your lives.

Your Chancel Choir Director,

Paul Laprade

Friday Night at the Movies-January 10 at 7:00 pm
Murder on the Orient Express (2017)
 Agatha Christie's famed novel features eccentric detective Hercule Poirot investigating a murder on the infamous train. All-star cast with Kenneth Branagh, Judi Dench, Michelle Pfeiffer and Johnny Depp.
 Presenter: Marsha Carter



Women's Fellowship

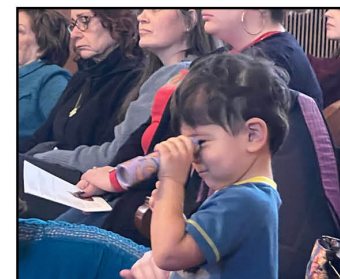


Women's Circle of Friends in January will feature Bunco, a fun, easy game to play (we'll teach you to play if you don't know how), lots of good food and plenty of time to visit with friends old and new. Bring a breakfast dish to pass and join us on January 11 at 9:30 am in Friendship Hall. All women in the church are invited and friends are always welcome. Please sign up online or in the church office.

Cookie Walk



Hanging of the Greens



Tiny Tidings

JANUARY, 2025



KIDS ZONE CALENDAR

- JAN 5TH** Intergenerational Service with Pop-up Choir. Nursery reopens.
- JAN. 12TH** Lesson: Justice Through Non-Violence - Ghandi
- JAN. 19TH** ALL GRADES BINGO-BASH (MLK Weekend)
- JAN. 26TH** Lesson: Annual Meeting - KIDS' EDITION - Lunch & Annual Meeting to follow. Childcare Provided for 0-5th grade during the meeting. (Lunch with parents)

PARENT/CHILD PLAY GROUP RESUMES FRIDAY FEB. 7TH:

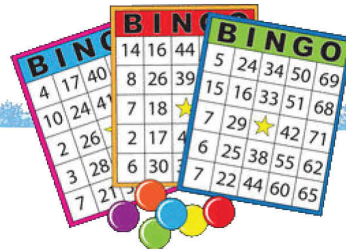
Parents or caregivers with children ages 0-5 are invited to join us Fridays from 9:30-11:00 in the KIDS' ZONE room for a multi-cultural playgroup. Stories. Music. Art. Friendship and play. This group is a partnership between New England Church, World Relief, & SPARK (Strong. Prepared. And Ready for Kindergarten.)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

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Women Volunteers Needed



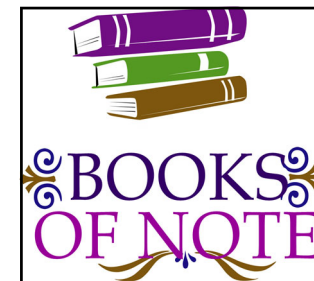
The Dominican Literacy Center in Aurora, winner of the National Library of Congress Literacy Award, will be training new tutor volunteers for its literacy program on January 18. Female volunteers (with high school diploma) are trained to help women students learn to read, write, and speak English. Tutoring sessions are 90 minutes, once a week, from September to May, at 260 Vermont St., Aurora (behind St. Therese Church).

Tutors do not need to speak Spanish or have teaching experience, but all volunteers must attend our training session in addition to viewing several training videos online.

The next training date is Saturday, January 18 from 9:00 am-3:30 pm.

To volunteer, email Alison Brzezinski at Alison@dominicanliteracycenter.org. For more information about our programs, visit www.dominicanliteracycenter.org or call 630-898-4636. The Center is not handicap accessible.

Books of Note



The Books of Note book discussion group is open to all. New members 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.

January 21: Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt. A charming, and witty exploration of friendship, reckoning, and hope that traces a widow's unlikely connection with a giant Pacific octopus.

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