

OUR STAFF & CHURCH OFFICERS

Visit us on the
web
at
[www.newengland
church.org](http://www.newenglandchurch.org)

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Congregational Church
UCC

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*A Caring Church for
Thinking People*

 **“God
Is Still
Speaking”**

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*
Custodian: John Hett
Facilities Engineer: Todd Jones

Moderator: Laura Pittman
Moderator-elect: Maureen McKane
Treasurer: Andy Sprau
Clerk: Sue Hard

New England
Congregational Church
UCC
Aurora, Illinois



TIDINGS

Volume 96, Number 9-11

Fall Edition 2025

MUSINGS



Dear Friends,

Physician and author Dean Ornish once said that, “The need for connection and community is primal, as fundamental as the need for air, water, and food.” Frankly, I couldn’t agree more. Fall at New England Church is a veritable celebration of community! We kick things off with Rally Sunday and Fall Festival on September 7 and continue with our annual Blessing of the Animals on October 5, Trunk-or-Treat on October 26, All Saints Celebration on November 2, and Interfaith Thanksgiving service on November 23.

Peppered throughout are music-making opportunities, Women’s Circle of Friends functions, Sunday night card club, Books of Note, Friday Night at the Movies, play groups for families, Kids’ Zone, youth programs (Youth Group, Alive!, and Scouts), volunteer opportunities, boards and committee service, and so much more! Fall at NECC is all about rekindling the spark of community and fanning it to flame.

We really do need connection and community, just like we need air, water, and food. Sometimes, we can get all of them at the same time! And that’s the focus of a new program we’re launching this fall: Peace Table. Peace Table is a monthly second Sunday supper experience unlike anything we currently offer at NECC. Intentionally intergenerational, Peace Table invites folks of all ages to gather for a homecooked meal and combination learning/worship experience on the second Sunday of each month from 5:30—7 pm.

We know that Sunday mornings can be a difficult time for families and that not everyone, regardless of age, is a morning person. Peace Table is for everyone, whether you or your family worship at NECC every Sunday, or you’re looking for a non-morning option to nurture your spirit and connect with faith community every month in a meaningful way. We hope you’ll give it a try and invite friends, family, and neighbors to join you for a non-traditional way of doing church at a non-traditional time of day!

We really do need connection and community. That’s why I’m so excited to be going into fall this year with all of you at New England Church. Together, we are the church in this time and place!

Blessings,

Brandon Perrine
Senior Minister

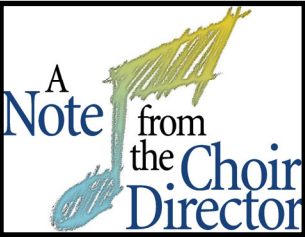
Join the Choir!

NECC Bell Choirs begin the Fall season: The New England Carillon (adult bell choir) rehearses Tuesday evenings from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm, and plays in church approximately once a month. The first rehearsal will be September 2. The Joy Ringers (youth bell choir) rehearses Sundays from 9:00 am to 9:45 am, and plays in church on the first Sunday of every month. The first rehearsal will be September 14. Both groups have extra performance opportunities during the year, especially during holidays (Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter). New members are always welcome!



The Argument for Joining Choir in September:

The benefits of being a member of a church choir (or many) are well-known. One can cite the health benefits (including lower cholesterol, according to one study), the improvement in social connection, the insight that it can provide to experiencing religious texts, and more.



Nonetheless, we often forget that the writers of sacred Christian texts consistently emphasized the need to sing—in fact, we are at times almost commanded to sing! Note the following, one of many psalms which tell us to raise our voices in praise: “Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts.” (Psalm 68:4–6) It almost seems that there is no option but to consider singing or being in a choir.

Let us take a look at other perspectives in Christian texts. “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.” (James 5:13–14) James emphasizes the role of singing in praise and encourages us to sing when we are filled with joy. St. Augustine of Hippo takes this further, saying, “Qui cantat, bis orat” (‘He who sings, prays twice’). If singing is praying twice, then it seems that we might offer the audience who read James’s passage the possibility of singing in the face of even suffering, such as Paul and Silas did when they became prisoners. We are encouraged to sing because singing is prayer, intensified through its setting in a musical composition.

What we often need to be reminded in turn is that God sings for us: “The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.” (Zephaniah 3:17) If singing is an activity that God has chosen, and if the Bible is consistent in its exhortations regarding singing, then it might not be too difficult to suggest that it is something you should choose to do...at NECC. Consider joining our community within a community, our Chancel Choir. We meet on Wednesday evenings to rehearse (beginning on September 3), and we praise God with joyful voices on Sundays. We hope you will join us. (P.S. Another reason for joining choir is: we have fun, but that is a topic for another time.)

POP-UP CHOIR Dates for FALL 2026: October 12 and November 16

Please invite neighbors, fellow congregants, acquaintances, relatives, friends, and even strangers to sing with our Pop Up choir this Fall. There are no requirements, and all we need to do is meet at 9:15am on the day of the service. Please mark down these dates and join us in singing a joyful song to the Lord.

Paul Laprade

PRIDE SUNDAY



GETTING READY FOR THE PARADE



AT THE PARADE



TEEN TALK

FALL 2025

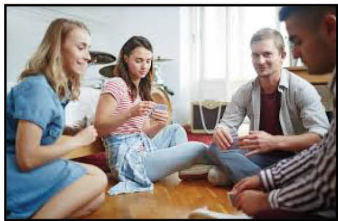


FALL KIDS' ZONE HIGHLIGHTS

- SEPT. 7TH - First week of Youth Group/Fall Festival
OCT. 5TH - Blessing of the Animals
OCT 26TH - Halloween Party/Trunk-or-Treat
NOV. 30TH - Christmas Ornament Workshop
DEC. 7TH - Hanging of the Greens/Cookie Walk
DEC. 24TH - Family Christmas Eve Service

YOUTH GROUP:

Youth Group is for students in middle school and high school. Students begin in the youth room (not the sanctuary) and start their sessions with informal conversation and games before they jump into the week's lesson. The main goal of youth group is that our youth feel welcomed, loved, supported, and heard as they also learn more about our faith tradition and the faith traditions of others. Youth Group meets weekly during the 10:00 service from the Sunday after Labor Day Weekend until the Sunday before Memorial Day Weekend -with the exception of a one week break the Sunday after Christmas. Youth Group participates in Intergenerational Worship and communion on first Sundays in the sanctuary with their families. Youth can also sign-up to be youth helpers on first Sundays. Students who have been confirmed or are in high school may also apply to be occasional volunteers in the nursery. Youth Group is run by staff and volunteers. We always have two background-checked adults in the room. If you have questions or are interested in volunteering, please contact katie@newenglandchurch.org



JOY RINGERS YOUTH BELL CHOIR:

Joy Ringers Youth Bell Choir rehearses weekly on Sundays at 9:00AM beginning September 14th. This group is open to students in 3rd-12th grade and typically plays in church on first Sundays. Not only is this a great opportunity for students to learn musical skills and contribute to the life of New England Church, It's also a fantastic way to get to know other students and build a sense of belonging, team-work, and cooperation. If you are interested in learning more, please contact cathy@newenglandchurch.org



CONFIRMATION/PEACE TABLE:

New England Church offers a two-year Confirmation program for cohorts of students in 6th, 7th, or 8th grade, or who are in high school but haven't participated in Confirmation yet. This year our program will run in tandem with a new Intergenerational Second Sunday Supper gathering that we are calling "Peace Table." Like past confirmation programs, we will meet one Sunday evening per month for dinner, discussion, games and relationship building. More specific information about confirmation and Peace Table will be coming out soon. Our first confirmation gathering will be in October. If you have a child or grandchild interested in participating in confirmation, please contact katie@newenglandchurch.org



NECC POKER GAME NIGHT!

Both men and women are welcome to participate Friday, October 17 from 7:00-10:00pm in Friendship Hall. Organized Tournament, \$20 buy-in - bring cash that evening. \$20 gets you \$1,000 worth of chips to play with. BYOB and potluck style snack foods. Sign-up in the Community Corner on September 28, October 5 or 12. You can also sign-up online at the church's website. Get your Poker Face ready - Don't miss this FUN evening.



WOMEN'S CIRCLE OF FRIENDS



September - We will be eating out at Double Yolk Pancake House on Butterfield Rd.
October - We will be playing Bunco.
November - We will be making sandwiches for the homeless as our service project.

Our October and November meetings will be in Friendship Hall with a shared breakfast before them. More detailed information for each event will be on signs at the church and in the Sunday bulletin for the two weeks preceding the event. We look forward to seeing you.

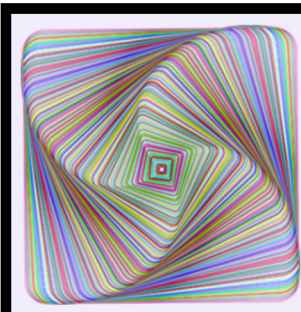
FRIDAY NIGHT AT THE MOVIES

Join us at 7:00 pm in NECC's Source Theatre!

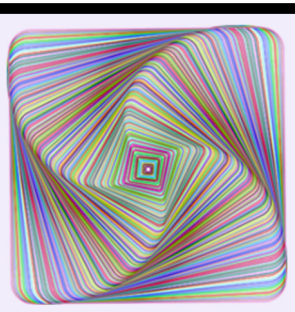
October 10: Wicked (2024)
Elphaba and Glinda's destinies collide in Oz's magical world. Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande shine in this powerful tale of friendship, identity and courage (with part two being released in November 2025). Presenter: Marsha Carter



November 14: The African Queen (1951)
In war-torn Africa, a spirited missionary and a gruff boat captain join forces to survive aboard the African Queen. Katharine Hepburn and Oscar winner Humphrey Bogart star. Presenter: Diane Ellis



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. Actions speak louder than words. If you have some time and would want to donate your energies to a worthy organization this fall, we offer a number options to you:

We will be collecting shoes for our annual Giving Bus along with school supplies again this September for **Greenman and Hall Schools**. We are also adding the *Alive* Organization that share our church space to serve young people in the neighborhood, When you see the store shelves begin to fill with endless rows of paper, colorful, folders, crayons and pencils, all at sale prices, please consider picking up a few extras to donate. A list will be posted on the bulletin board.



Aurora Food Pantry
2025 Holiday Food Drive - Bag Promotion
We are looking for volunteers to give out flyers and promote the sale of pre-packed bags at a few local grocery stores. All purchased bags of food come directly to the Pantry.
Cermak Produce (1250 N. Lake St.)
Prisco's Fresh Market (1108 Praire St.)
La Chiquita Food Market (1525 Douglas Rd.)
Our 18th annual Holiday Food Drive will run from November 1 – 26. During that time, three local grocery stores will be selling pre-packed bags of groceries. We're looking for volunteers to sign up for shifts to 'work' at the grocery stores to promote the sale of bags and hand out flyers about the food drive to customers. We have found that these volunteers make a **big impact** on the success of this food drive.

Also in late November, we will begin selecting "angels" specifying requested gifts for the children from local grade schools. The staff will distribute these gifts to the parents, so that their children will have something to open at Christmas.



Maddie's Mitten March

We will also facilitate any donations of new or gently used, clean coats, hats, snowpants, gloves, boots, and the like, will be delivered to Maddie's Mittens who in turn provides them to homeless or anyone in need this holiday season.
You can drop off your donations in the "Big Box" near the parlor beginning the month of October.
Thank you in advance for your generosity.

"Faith without works is dead." James 2:26



A JOYFUL PATH

NEW ENGLAND FAMILY REGISTRATION 2025-26 (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

Home

Home

PHONE NUMBERS

Cell

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 Katie Jepson katie@newenglandchurch.org

26



Kids' News

FALL 2025

FALL KIDS' ZONE HIGHLIGHTS

- SEPT. 7TH** - First week of Nursery & KIDS' ZONE/ Fall Festival
OCT. 5TH - Blessing of the Animals
OCT. 26TH - Halloween Party/Trunk-or-Treat
NOV. 30TH - Christmas Ornament Workshop
DEC. 7TH - Hanging of the Greens/Cookie Walk
DEC. 24TH - Family Christmas Eve Service

NURSERY:

Nursery at New England Church is designed for children ages 0-3. Space permitting, 4 year-olds may also be cared for in the nursery, or float between the nursery and KIDS' ZONE space if parents and church staff think it's best for the individual child. Our nursery is open weekly during the 10:00 service from the Sunday after Labor Day Weekend until the Sunday before Memorial Day Weekend -- with the exception of a one week break the Sunday after Christmas. Our nursery is staffed by two unrelated background-checked volunteers and is located within the KIDS' ZONE room for extra flexibility to meet children's needs and for easy staff oversight and direction. For parents who prefer to keep their children in the sanctuary with them, we also provide a young children's area with quiet, age-appropriate toys, activity bags, and coloring pages. If you are interested in volunteering to help in the nursery, please contact desiree@newenglandchurch.org

PARENT CHILD PLAYGROUP
 for kids 0-5 meets Fridays
 from 9:30-11:00 in the
 KIDS' ZONE Room.
 Begins Sept 12th.

KIDS' ZONE:

KIDS' ZONE is a program designed for children preschool - 5th grade. Kids in this age group begin in the sanctuary with their parents and are dismissed after Children's Time. KIDS' ZONE meets weekly during the 10:00 service from the Sunday after Labor Day Weekend until the Sunday before Memorial Day Weekend -with the exception of a one week break the Sunday after Christmas. KIDS' ZONE kids also remain in the sanctuary on first Sundays for intergenerational worship and communion with their families. Our program is run by staff and volunteers. We always have two background-checked volunteers in the room. If you have questions or are interested in volunteering, please contact desiree@newenglandchurch.org

FALL LESSON PLANS:

This fall our Sunday morning lessons will focus on stories about Abraham & Sarah and their covenant with God, along with learning a few stories from other spiritual traditions including from the Cherokee people and the Hindu faith. Our goal is to teach respect and point out similarities we have with other traditions. Our guiding ideas for this year come from Micah 6:8. Act justly. Love Mercy. Walk Humbly with your God.

MOM'S COFFEE
 meets second Tuesdays
 at Society 57 9:30-11:00.
 Begins Sept. 9th.

NECC COMMUNITY FALL FESTIVAL

Join us for an outdoor Community Fall Festival and luncheon on the south lawn (if raining, we will be in Friendship Hall), Sunday, September 7 following our 10:00am 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, balloon twisting, and we will have lawn 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 7 by going to our website and clicking on the orange clipboard or donate money towards this fun event. You can also sign-up in person after church in the Community Corner area during the Sundays leading up to our big event.

NECC BOARD GAME NIGHT IS BACK



Join us for an evening of fun board game playing with other adults in the church.

Saturday, November 15, 6:30-9:00pm

This night will not be your average board game playing - you will enjoy a variety of 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 appetizer to share and BYOB.

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

Prizes will be given out at the end of the evening.

Sign-up in the Community Corner or online at our church website.

From the Students of the Beloved Community Committee

Brandon's summer classes taught us the history of Congregationalism's work to make the world safe and inclusive for everyone. We hope to help New England live up to that model. The Social and Racial Justice Committee is planning to broaden its focus for the coming year. Look for an informational meeting this fall to plan a family pilgrimage trip to Memphis in 2026. Then check out the Mobile Museum of Tolerance when it accompanies the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service. After that we are open to your ideas as we plan. Do you have a connection to neighbors with disabilities? Seniors in need? Refugees? Other groups? Let us know.

