MATTAPOISETT ongregational Church



27 Church Street, PO BOX 284 Mattapoisett, MA 02739 (508) 758-2671

mattapoisettcongregationalchurch.org mattcongchurch@gmail.com



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

January-June 30 Mon-Fri 8:15 am-12:15 pm July 1--Sept 6

Mon 8:30-10 am,

Tues-Fri 8:15 am-1:15 pm

Sept 9-Dec 31 Mon-Fri 8:15-12:15 pm

THE TIDEINGS

DECEMBER 2019/JANUARY 2020

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As we approach the last month of the year, let us come together and celebrate the holiday season together with our many scheduled events of Advent on page 4 and check out all the great photos from Ora et Labora in November on page 9!

Wishing you a joyous Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

Pasfor's Page

The Monday before Thanksgiving, I looked out of my study window to see a rafter of turkeys making their way down the gravel drive to the parsonage. In their unique lurching strut, they veered onto the front lawn, calling out *glou-glou-glou-glou-glou!*

The lead turkey spied the holly berries on the bush by the front door and headed there. Soon they all were clustered underneath the bush, and along the front of the parsonage. But turkeys seem always to be on the move; by the time the final tom had reached the house, the leader was headed toward the garage. Within minutes, all of them had strutted past the garage, and were picking their way into the conservation woods behind the house, toward the Mattapoisett River. Soon, they were out of sight.

It all seemed a little random, yet they appeared to know exactly where they were going. It crossed my mind that, just a few days before Thanksgiving, perhaps they were seeking sanctuary at the minister's house!

The word "sanctuary" comes from the Latin sanctus, which means "sacred." Hence, the place where we worship God is called a "sanctuary." It a sacred, holy place where we pray, take communion, baptize babies, exchange life-long vows – encountering and participating in the deepest things of life. A sanctuary is also a place of protection and refuge, such as an animal sanctuary where animals cannot be harmed or hunted. The commonality is that a "sanctuary" is a place set apart, removed from the day-to-day threats and onslaughts – whether that threat is to life itself, or to our very soul.

We can seek and find spiritual sanctuary anywhere. We can find refuge in ten minutes of quiet first thing in the morning, or 20 minutes of meditation at the end of our work day. There are all kinds of aps for your phone to remind you throughout the day to take a moment to breathe, be mindful, to pause. These are opportunities to remove yourself from the daily pressures, and re-connect with God, and with your deepest self.

This Advent, the church is providing another tool to help you face the hustle and bustle of holiday preparation, and find time to keep connected with God. Let the Heavens Be Glad is a booklet of Advent devotions, inspired by the great spiritual writer Henri Nouwen. For each day in Advent, there is a scripture, an excerpt of Henri Nouwen's writing, a brief reflection, and a short prayer. From the introduction to this devotional: "In this Advent season, setting aside a time to sit quietly with God and pray is an ideal way to prepare ourselves to welcome Jesus at Christmas." The devotionals are on the little round table right outside my office door.

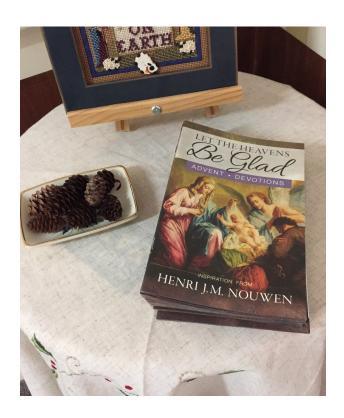
Please take one and read it every day through Christmas Day. Every day, between now and Christmas, set aside at least 10 minutes to set yourself apart from the world and re-connect. It takes just a few days to create a life-giving habit. In your internal sanctuary, you'll be able to regain clarity of thought, reset your priorities, and relax into the loving arms of God. It's a healthful way to recalibrate. (This is especially important during this season, which on one hand bids us to be religious and/or spiritual, and on the other hand besets us with unrelenting commercialism and materialism.)

I'm reminded of a favorite modern hymn called, appropriately, "Sanctuary": Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true. With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you."

As we go about our Advent journey, may we make the time to connect with God, and may that connection carry us into the New Year with hope and joy.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Rev. Amy Lignitz Harken



CONGREGATION NEWS & NOTES

ANNUAL MEETING is scheduled for February 2, 2020. Please be sure to get all Committee Reports into Tina in the church office no later than **January 13**, **2020** for inclusion into the report. Thank you!

JUST A REMINDER:

When making out checks for special programs, still make out your check to Mattapoisett Congregational Church. Things like Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing, etc should be put on the memo line so the money goes into the correct account. Thank you!





Buzzards Bay Area Habitat for Humanity has just announced that the foundation work is underway for the new Mattapoisett build! Would you like to get involved? They are also in in need of coffee break and lunch volunteers as well. Contact Executive Director, Christine Lacourse at 508-758-4517 or Sue Grosart, ggrosart@aol.com for more information on how to get involved!

WomenSpirit Cookie Swap on Dec. 11

All women of the church are invited to the annual WomenSpirit Christmas Cookie Swap, a beloved tradition for the final gathering of the year.

WomenSpirit will hold its holiday gathering at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 11, in the Living Room in the basement. (The blue room, right across from the Choir Room.) WomenSpirit is a casual, multigenerational, gathering of women. We share life's journey through the lens of faith, with much laughter and mutual support.

For more information, contact Amy Nahigyan at anahigyan@hotmail.com.

Memorials Scholarships for 2020

This year, the Memorials & Celebrations Committee has decided to offer scholarships exclusively to high school students graduating in June who are members of our Church family. Therefore, if you or a member of your family is a senior and planning to attend an institution of higher learning in the fall of 2020, please contact the Church office or a member of the Memorials & Celebrations committee who will guide you in the application process.

In the event there are no graduating seniors in 2020, the committee will assess its financial situation with an eye toward previous scholar-ship recipients who might need continuing support. These students should plan to submit a letter to the committee indicating their interest and explaining their need for additional support.

Look for more information on the process and timeline in *The Tideings*, which will be available in early spring. Members of the Memorials & Celebrations committee are Lenore Everett, Lee Heald and Cindy Johnson. Please telephone 508-758-2671 or email matteongchurch@gmail.com for the committee members' contact information.

CONGREGATION NEWS & NOTES



Advent Schedule

Dec. 1 First Sunday of Advent

10 am Worship, "Fear Not" series w/Hanging of the Greens

Dec. 7 2019 Holiday Fair

9 am-12 pm, Reynard Hall

Dec. 8 Second Sunday of Advent

10 am Worship, "Fear Not to Speak"

Dec. 15 Third Sunday of Advent

10 am Worship, "From FOMO to JOMO"

6:30 pm White Gifts Pageant, Reynard Hall

Dec. 22 Fourth Sunday of Advent

10 am Christmas Cantata w/artists from Seaglass Theater

Dec. 24 Christmas Eve

5 pm Family Service

10 pm Candlelight Service w/Harper and the Minstrel

Dec. 29 Watch Service

10 am Worship, "From Fear to Curiosity"

Advent is a time of joyful anticipation and hopeful preparation. As we await the birth of the Christ Child, we have many ways we can celebrate the season at church -- in worship, in giving, in sharing our stories -- even in shopping! Our theme this year from the message of the Christmas angels: "Fear Not!" Knowing God is with us, we can embrace life and God's creation with joy. Please invite a friend or neighbor to join you in this holiday season.

Dinner for Two books are back and will be available for purchase at the Holiday Fair and at coffee hour beginning December 8! These are perfect gift ideas for those hard to buy for people on your list or as stocking stuffers! Contact Lisa Hill with any questions at hill4747@comcast.net

The Flower Committee will be taking orders for Christmas poinsettias during coffee hour on Sunday, Dec 1 and Dec 8. Order forms will be included in the Sunday bulletins or can be ordered by calling Judy Johnson at 508-993-2536.





Thank you to everyone who helps in so many ways for the success of the church fair!

Stewardship Silent Auction

The Stewardship Silent Auction is in full swing! The Auction is open every Sunday in Reynard Hall during coffee Social Hour and will conclude on Sunday, December 8th at 11:30AM sharp. We have 25 fantastic items to bid on ranging from gorgeous artwork and photographs to piano lessons, symphony tickets, YMCA memberships and an Amelia Island getaway. Support MCC and take home a unique treasure for the holidays. It's a good thing!

Sermon recordings are now available on our website! <u>Click here</u> or go to http://mattapoisettcongregationalchurch.org. Click on WORSHIP, then SUNDAY SERMONS and click the sermon you would like to hear!

FAITH FORMATION/MISSIONS

Confirmation 2020

Attention all Youth (and parents)!

Rev. Amy Lignitz Harken and the Faith Formation Committee are starting to plan for Confirmation 2020. Confirmation for youth seventh grade and up will begin Jan 26, and culminate in a glorious confirmation service on Pentecost Sunday, May 31.

During the course of the program, we will explore our spirituality, deepen our Christian faith, learn about other traditions, talk about our church, share thoughts, ask questions, and have a lot of fun. If you or your youth plans on being a part of the 2020 Confirmation Class, please notify Rev. Amy or a member of the Faith Formation crew.

FOR ALL PARENTS OF LITTLE ONES

There are children's activity packets in the basket by the door leading into the sanctuary along with weekly worship bulletins. The nursery down the hall is always available for restless children as well. There is a fold-out baby changing station mounted to the wall in the downstairs bathroom in Reynard Hall.

Immigrant assistance

Brian Pastori of the CEDC (Community Economic Development Corp.) is organizing a new group of volunteers. This would be to provide local transportation for our new immigrant neighbors. For example, it might be to drive to a medical appointment or to a grocery store. This would NOT be for rides to ICE. It is hoped that perhaps meaningful relationships might even develop over time. At the very least, it is a way to show our new neighbors that there is a supportive community group here. If you have any interest in volunteering to provide local rides (usually New Bedford) Please contact Brian Pastori at Briancedc@gmail.com or 508-979-4684

Keep an eye out for Spiritually Speaking for more details about White Gifts on December 15 at 6:30 pm!

YOU ARE NEEDED:



Volunteers are the success of this important outreach to the homeless. We need you!





Winter is coming and the Shelter at Sister Rose House will soon activate the Extreme Weather Overflow Shelter. The Overflow opens when temperatures drop below 28 degrees.

Guests will be arriving for a warm Meal, shower and a safe place to sleep.

Volunteers are needed to:

- *Assembling cots with pillows/blankets 4-5 p.m. 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.
- *Serve shelter guests and residents 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.
- *Monitoring Bathrooms and Sleeping Hall, assisting staff. 2-4 hr. shifts 6-10 pm

Volunteers can sign up alone or sign up as a team of co-workers, church group, families, friends, (over 18 please). Many hands needed. Hours between 3:00-10 p.m. (Time depends on job volunteering for)

Contact Robin Muise to volunteer 774-553-5490 muiserobin@comcast.net

Sister Rose House/ Extreme Weather Overflow Shelter 71 Division Street, New Bedford MA

Scouting News



Andy Crain is the new Charter Organization Representative for Boy Scout Troop 53 and Cub Scout Pack 53. As C.O.R., Andy serves as the liaison between the troop and BOY SCOUTS the church, coordinating activities, OF AMERICA working out schedules with the church, etc. His and Mary's son,

Matthew, is a member of the Cub Scout Pack.

Andy is taking over the role that was held for many years by Jodi Bauer. Thank You, Jodi for your years of dedicated service!

Thank You, Andy, for stepping into this important role! It's an honor and a privilege for our church to be home to Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts, and we couldn't do it without adult volunteers like Jodi and Andy.



MISSIONS/STEWARDSHIP

In the spirit of Advent our church is once again participating in the PACE family Season of Hope. We are sponsoring 3 New Bedford single mom families with a total of 8 children ages 1-9 years. Each mom gets a \$50 Market Basket grocery gift card. The children each get a toy from their wish list. We will look for help wrapping our church presents for the kiddos in Reynard Hall after worship on Sunday, Dec 8th.

Thanks to Lenore Everett we are also providing \$250 of food items for the Hayden MacFadden holiday food baskets. Last year was the first time we participated and Lenore said it was greatly appreciated. There are many needy families who benefit.

We continue to collect warm clothing, gloves and hats for Mercy Meals, warm coats for the Greater New Bedford Health Center and shoes for Dr Fogg's foot clinic.

The Mattapoisett Habitat build is underway. Watch for information about that coming soon. If anyone has an interest in helping please talk with Dennis Desrosiers or email Lynne Nahigyan at nahigyan@Comcast.net.

Neighbors in Need has been ongoing throughout November but it's not too late to donate. Just be sure to mark your check NIN. As of Nov 6th we had collected \$683. A final report on the collection will be included in the January Tidings.

The cold weather is here so Sister Rose's emergency overflow shelter is once again in operation. Please check out the notice below and contact Robin Muise 774.553.5490 if you would like to volunteer there.

The missions committee is so grateful at this time of year—and all year long— for all you do to help those in need. Truly the spirit of the season is alive and well at MCC!

It takes a village... At the time of this writing, we have received approximately 60 pledges to support the activities of the church in 2020. This is significantly fewer pledges than we historically have received. To provide our community with a healthy, full ministry, we need everyone to participate. We are looking to rebuild our pledging level to 125 pledges. If you have not yet turned in a pledge card with your financial commitment to support our 2020 programming (see next page), please do so. It does, indeed, take our entire church village to serve God's people.

Every pledge is an important part of our village, no matter what the amount. In the houses below you see the range of our pledging levels. You are encouraged to pledge at a level that is comfortable, but also enlarges your heart to imagine all the possibilities of what our church can provide. To everyone who has pledged, and who is about to pledge, thank you, and God bless you!



STEWARDSHIP

Gratitude, Mission, and Church Finances – A Stewardship Update...

As we approach the end of our Annual Stewardship Drive, I would like to talk to everyone about the mission that we share, and the importance of The Mattapoisett Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in our lives, and the life of our community.

Money is something that we do not want to talk about; however, it is expensive to fund a Church as vital as ours. Simply put, our church is about ministry, and ministry costs money. Just to recap a few of the many ministry programs that are supported by your pledges to the General Budget of the church:

- Church activities: High-quality weekly worship; a growing, talented Senior Choir; funerals; baptisms; mission trips; retreats; the Beacon of Light to honor and celebrate loved ones.
- **Education:** Faith formation for children and adults; Bi-annual Confirmation Classes; Interfaith Bible studies; book studies; special series for Lent, and at other times all of which are open to the entire community.
- Support of Activities Beyond the Church Walls: Collection for local first responders and emergency personnel; funeral and memorial support for non-members; White Gifts to families in need; scholarships; administration of special missions collections such as Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing and Gifts to Give; Support for those in need and companionship to members who can no longer come to church; facilities upgrades and maintenance to keep our building safe, comfortable and accessible; administrative and facility support for our incredible Missions Committee and all their good works.
- **Church groups**: WomenSpirit prayer/share/care group; Gather Round Circles discussion groups; Tuesday morning prayer group; Wednesday afternoon crafters' group.
- Community Worship and Spiritual Support: Four community worship services: Easter Sunrise at the Gazebo; Blessing of the Animals at Munro Preserve; Homecoming at Ned's Point; the Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service at the Mattapoisett Museum. Additionally, our pastor frequently provides support and guidance to members of our community who do not attend church.
- Space for community activities and groups: Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts; Woman's Club; Catelli Dance Classes; Showstoppers; Council on Aging yoga classes; recitals; larger programs of the COA and the Mattapoisett Free Public Library.
- A safe meeting place: AA; ACA; Al-Anon; grief support groups; baby-sitter training.
- **Open Table** A hot, nutritious meal to approximately 100 people every month, who gather for fellowship, music, and dinner. Many youth experience service, and our crew is spiritually nourished in collaborating to serve a community need.
- Creating ministers Three of our members have pursued a degree in Divinity in the past 15 years: Jaime Bonney, Liz Brimm, and Patricia Berry, all of whom received scholarship funds.

We come together in the name of God to befriend our friends and neighbors in love -- without prejudice and without fear. May we continue our mission as a full-time, vibrant church, fully engaged in our community, for generations to come. May God bless you in this season of giving,

Paula Bonney, Church Treasurer



GATHER ROUND CIRCLES GROUP



Gather Round Circles Project Update

For the last several weeks, members of our congregation have been exchanging ideas and reflections through the Gather Round project. We've been getting to know each other as we've shared our stories, our challenges, our hopes and joys.

Using a Talking Circles format, we have explored issues related to the church and social justice, and have told person-

al stories from faith and life. Circles ranged from 6 to 10 participants, meeting in the Gather Round room in the basement. We honored the time, starting at 6 p.m. and ending at 7:30 p.m. sharp. Circles were "kept" by one of the Gather Round Team: Tracy Djerf, Karen Gray, Phil Jackson, Rev. Amy Lignitz Harken, and Tara Rajaniemi.

Participants said they found the Talking Circle process empowering and enjoyable, and having the potential to help the church make important decisions together, while enhancing our connections to one another.

Here's a recap of our Gather Round Circles:

"Immigration: A Faithful Response" on Oct. 24 – People talked through their feelings about immigration, and talked about the challenges on global, regional, and local scales. Some shared stories about how their lives were greatly enriched by encounters with people from different nations.

"Sharing Stories of Faith" on Oct. 28 – Participants told faith-filled stories, springing from involvement in churches from childhood and adulthood. They also shared particular insights they had learned along their faith journey.

"Matt Congo's Next Big Thing" on Nov. 4 – A vibrant discussion yielded concrete, do-able ideas. Some of those ideas – such as allowing beer and wine at certain fundraisers – were brought to the Executive Committee for discussion and possible future action. The Circle concluded that perhaps the "next big thing" is to nurture the small things we already do well, so they might grow into big things.

"Inequality: A Faithful Response" on Nov. 18 – Circle participants explored concerns about the inequalities so apparent in the world, including in our local community. We also shared examples of the ways we see the people around us working to make things better.

"Sharing Stories: Loss & Transition" on Nov. 21 – Participants opened their hearts to tell stories of losing someone or something that was important. The stories were not only about the personal effects of loss, but how our losses can transform our lives forever.

"Gratitude, Stewardship & Church Finance" on Nov. 25 – This Thanksgiving Week Circle was a vibrant exchange about experiencing gratitude, what "stewardship" means to us, and the various challenges the church faces in sustaining a budget for a full-time ministry. Participants are eager to learn how the church can best serve the evolving needs and desires of the wider community, and hope all members will join together in thinking "outside the box" to serve those needs in new, non-traditional ways.

"Sharing Stories: Season of Advent" on Dec. 2 (yet to be held at the time of this writing)

An important note: Before the official Gather Round Circles were held, the Faith For-

mation team held a Talking Circle to discuss the primary challenges of serving our children, and come up with potential solutions. These ideas have been implemented, and have proven effective! Thanks to parents and the FF team for your willingness to try a new way of discussing our common challenges.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in a Circle this fall! The Gather Round Team is considering a second round of Circles in the coming months. If you have ideas for a Circle of which you'd like to be part, please contact one of the team members.





NOVEMBER ORA ET LABORA



Inside and out, many hands made light work! Thank you to everyone who helped organize this event, and who helped rake leaves, plant bulbs, sort books and myriad other things for a fall cleanup!



PHOTOS



November Open Table was another success with approximately 85 people attending! A special thanks to the Ackermans who provided dinner for everyone with delicious chicken parm! Thank you, Ken and Liz, as always!



So you've never been to a **New Bedford Symphony Orchestra** concert?

Why not try it for FREE?

We are offering 2 complimentary tickets to anyone that has not previously purchased tickets with us!

To get your tickets, simply call the office at 508-999-6276 or email us at asmith@nbsymphony.org and mention the Ambassador Tickets Program.

Mozart & Mahler October 5, 7:30pm and

October 6, 2:30pm **Prokofiev Rules**

November 2, 7:30pm Peter & the Wolf Family Concert November 3, 2:30pm

Family Holiday Pops Concerts

December 14, 3:30pm and 7:30pm

All John Williams January 11, 7:30pm **Breaking Boundaries** March 14, 7:30pm Happy Birthday, Ludwig! April 18, 7:30pm and April 19, 2:30pm The Finnish Line

May 23, 7:30pm

Full concert information can be found online at www.nbsymphony.org



Look who was home for a visit recently. Thank you for your service, Sam!

Adult Scripture Readers Wanted

please contact Rev. Amy Lignitz Harken.

If you'd like to read scripture on Sunday morning,

Sam Hill, US Navy, E2 & Cindy Johnson



DECEMBER 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Advent #1 10 am "Fear Not" series w/Hanging of Greens	2 6 pm—Gather Round Circles "Advent Stories"	3	4 7 pm Deacons	5	6	7 9-12 Holiday Fair
8 Advent #2 10 am worship, "Fear Not to Speak"	9	10 5 pm Trustees	1 1 1 pm Crafters Group 5 pm WomenSpirit	12	13 4:30 pm Open Table	14
Advent #3 10 am worship, "From FOMO to JOMO" 6:30 pm White Gifts	16	17	18 1 pm Crafters Group 6 pm Exec Council	19	20	21 Mercy Meals and More
22 Advent #4 10 am Cantata w/artists from Sea- glass Theater	23	24 Christmas Eve service at 5 and 10 pm	25 Christmas Day Office closed	26	27	28
29 10 am Watch service, "From Fear to Curiosity"	30	31				

REGULARLY SCHEDULED FUNCTIONS/ MEETINGS IN THE CHURCH BUILDING

	Catelli Dance School	BS & CS Troop 53	Mattapoisett	<u>AA</u> :	<u>WomenSpirit</u>
W	Monday 2:30-6:45	Tuesday 7 pm	Woman's Club:		Last Wednesday of
34	Tuesday 3-6:30	Pack 53	Third Thursday at noon	ACA:	the month @ 5 pm
	Wednesday 3-8	First 3 Thursdays of month 6 pm		Mon. 6:00 pm	
100	4	Girl Scouts		Sat 10:00 am	W - W -
7	W. T.	Wed 5:30 pm		AA Workbook:	
G.	J. The state of th			Thurs 7 pm	
1	4				

JANUARY 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 New Years Day Office closed	2	3	4
5 10 am Commun- ion/worship	6	7	8 1 pm Crafters Group	9	10 4:30 pm Open Table	1 1 10 am memorial service for Nick Nahigyan
12 10 am worship	13	14 5 pm Trustees	1 5 1 pm Crafters Group 6 pm Council	16	17	18 Mercy Meals and More
19 10 am worship	20	21	22 1 pm Crafters Group	23 12 pm MWC 6:30 pm Cubs	24	25
26 10 am worship	27	28	29 1 pm Crafters Group 5 pm WomenSpirit	30	31	

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4	Monday 2:30-6:45	Tuesday 7 pm	Woman's Club:	Thurs, 9:30 am	Last Wednesday of
1	Tuesday 3-6:30	Pack 53	Third Thursday at noon	ACA:	the month @ 5 pm
	Wednesday 3-8	First 3 Thursdays of month 6 pm		Mon. 6:00 pm	
1	4	Girl Scouts		Sat 10:00 am	N - N -
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