



First Churches Northampton

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



January 2014
Pastor's Message

2013 #FirstChurches

IMPORTANT DATES

Jan 1st Happy New Year!

Jan 12th Tiffany Window Q & A
after service

Jan 18th 9:30a-12p All Church
Dialogue re Tiffany Window

Birthdays

Susan Stone ⚡ Jan 5th
Michael Kushin ⚡ Jan 7th
Kasey Corsello ⚡ Jan 22nd
Heidi Rademacher ⚡ Jan 23rd

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Coffee Hour.....Pg 5

A year of dialog. Margaret Keyser, 4 Saturdays of bagels and coffee, from tiredness to trust, listening and healing, hearing all voices. Tiffany windows, good stewardship, what is our purpose? Marcus Borg house churches, deep insight, challenge, building faith and community.

Installing things. 1 efficient furnace, 243 efficient light bulbs, 1 semi-efficient pastor, 2 new drop ceilings and floors in Church School classrooms.

Worshipping together. Lenten Ashes on the front steps, Palm Sunday in Pulaski Park, Easter flowers sprouting from a cross, new hand chimes, Choir Cantata, bright children shining on Children's Sunday and Christmas Pageant, Silent Night by candlelight.

Action. Congressman McGovern challenges. Tuesday's praying for peace. Hundreds of signatures on petitions. Noho Pride and Transgender Remembrance Day. Haiti trip, notebooks for children and scholarship funds. CROP Walk, tired feet, good conversation and \$3750 raised. Hurricane relief for the Philippians, 40 Christmas presents for Safe Passages, Hot Chocolate runners and walkers, hundreds of pounds of food for Survival Center, a dozen meals for Cathedral in the Night and cot shelter.

New Members. Where would we be without Jenna, Patti, Gabe, Lucy, Claudine, Roger, Elaine, Stacy, Marilyn, Ellen, Heather, Heidi, Andrea and Rebecca! Can't wait for more.

Church Fair. We have bunnies and goats from Heifer! Free samples of apple pie. Cookies, jewelry, crafts and raffle. \$6000 raised! GOAL!

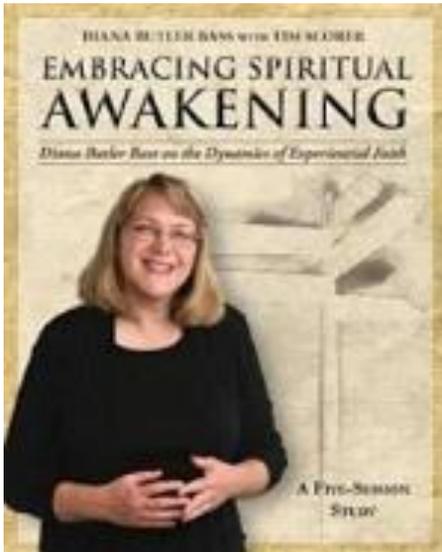
Details. Budget, data base, website, Facebook, four groups want space on Mondays, duct tape on the organ pipes? What is on the lawn now? Isn't that parking garage on our property?

A Pastor's Year. 50 sermons, 30 Bible studies, 12 newsletters, 6 weddings, 4 Memorial services, 2 Annual Meetings? 5000 emails, a hundred visits and counseling, holy moments over coffee. A new house and another move. Jeanne's broken shoulder, two weeks of great food, support and a house cleaning.

Making it all happen. Hiring Ernie Bosques as Church Sexton, Clean church! Hiring Vanessa Keillor as Church Administrator, Organized church! (Grateful Pastor.) Committees, Council and chairs. Energetic Eric. Steady and delightful Dana. All of you! The Holy Spirit too!



Sunday Morning Adult Education 8:45 AM in the Parlor Starting January 12



As a congregation that traces our history back to Jonathan Edwards and the Great Awakening, Diana Butler Bass is someone we need to know. Our new discussion series begins January 12, with a five session exploration on the dynamics of Spiritual Awakening. Bass is one of the top thinkers exploring the future role of Christianity in a rapidly changing culture and has published several best-selling books. She will also be the featured speaker at Super Saturday on March 1 in Ludlow, MA. The five sessions focus on Waking Up, Believing, Behaving, Belonging and Awakening. You are welcome to come to any individual session or all five. A 15 minute video opens the session, with a half hour discussion time following. Here are some reviews of Bass's latest work:

"Embracing Spiritual Awakening invites participants to examine and understand the changing cultural landscape in North America. Is the oft-heard critique of declining numbers in congregations simply a canard of those who would prefer a world of families with many children and stay-at-home mothers, or is it the consequence of increasing ethnic and cultural and religious diversity around us? Or is it something else? Diana Butler Bass leads a discussion of what it means to be spiritual, to be religious, and how Christians today might be grace-filled witnesses to the reality they know and experience."

—The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop & Primate of The Episcopal Church

"Led by one of today's foremost interpreters of Christianity, Embracing Spiritual Awakening provides a rich and engaging educational and spiritual experience."

—Marcus Borg

From your Moderator....

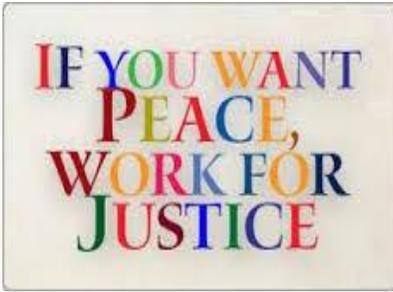
Dialog Session: Stewardship of the Tiffany Window

We are scheduling what may be our final dialog for Saturday, **January 18, from 9:30 AM to noon** and encourage everyone to keep this date clear on their calendars. I understand it has been hard for everyone to be engaged and we want to reach as many people as possible to disseminate all the necessary information. We will be holding an information and Q and A meeting after church on **Sunday, January 12**. This is not a meeting to debate or continue the dialog, we just want to catch everyone up who may not have been to previous meetings, and to find out what you want to know. Please read the reports available on the web or through the church office and think about what else you would want to know before making a decision. As always, please be in contact with me if you have concerns or questions. Let us move forward with compassion and wisdom.

Donna O'Meally – Church Moderator



PEACE AND JUSTICE FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION PROJECT



Immediately before their December 2 meeting, the Peace and Justice Committee attended a packed meeting on immigration reform in the First Churches Chapel. Several members of the Ecuadorean Church who worship weekly in our Chapel offered moving testimony on how they were harassed and made fearful by acts of law enforcement personnel. One woman was made to leave her car returning from her job at night in the middle of winter while eight months pregnant and walk more than a mile to her home because she did not have a valid driver's license.

The First Churches Peace and Justice Committee decided to select immigration reform as a major project for 2014. Members are eager to work with and support our sister Ecuadorean church. The meeting in the Chapel was sponsored by the Just Communities organization. An important current goal of immigration reform in Massachusetts is passage of two bills before the state legislature: The Trust Act that would stop harassment about immigration status and the Safe Driving Act which would allow undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses. Marion Van Arsdell and Harriet Wilson agreed to serve as liaisons for this project and will attend local Just Communities meetings.

Mission Committee members Merrilyn Holcomb and Sandie Pirrello prepared twenty-five kits of school supplies for distribution in Haiti. David Entin, chair of the Peace and Justice Committee, will be taking them to Haiti on January 3 and will distribute the educational materials to CONASPEH school children.

The next meeting of the Peace and Justice Committee will be at 7 pm on Monday, January 6 in the church parlor. All are welcome to attend and participate. The Committee is especially eager to receive support for the new immigration reform initiative.

What is Super Saturday? – Find out March 1 in Ludlow!

Why should you clear your calendar for a bunch of church workshops on a Saturday in March? Are you interested in where Christianity will go in the 21st century, how to inspire spiritual growth in yourself and others, faith formation for children, how churches welcome new members, wondering what to do for the Stewardship campaign next year? Whatever your interest is in the church, there is probably a workshop for you. And you should come just to hear Diana Butler Bass, one of the most dynamic authors in the US today, who will be the keynote speaker. (See Adult Education article, p.2) What's not to like? Email to admin@firstchurches.org if you are interested in going so we can get a group rate. Workshop lists will be available soon. Put Saturday March 1, 8:30 to 3:30 on your calendar.

Cathedral in the Night 2014

This year our congregation will prepare the meal for Cathedral in the Night on these dates:



Jan 19
May 4
June 22
Sept 21

The "Cathedral" worship service is held at 5 pm – rain or snow or shine - on the sidewalk in front of our church. A hot meal is served afterwards, with wrapped sandwiches and hard boiled eggs "to go" for the following day. Many people count on this food weekly. **We are looking for COOKS and SERVERS for January 19th!** Financial reimbursement is available for your expenses, thanks to generous donations from our congregation and the Board of Missions.

Please contact: Carol Judd @ 584-9641 or cmcc55@gmail.com or
Judy Sherman @ 533-5655 or jhs12@comcast.net

Thank you!

Dear Friends,



Although I was partly sidelined with a respiratory infection for much of December, I had great fun helping clean up after our shared supper on December 8 and recruiting Advent Candle Lighters. I also caroled with the choir in front of the church, joined them in singing at Janet Dahlberg's, and did a limited amount of visitation. I planned and lead a December 29 intergenerational service with—surprise—not a single young person in attendance! I invited you all to unleash your inner child and you did, answering my questions and getting caught up in the spirit of the morning. Thank you for a wonderful day! Special thanks to Eric Frary and Peggy Anderson for helping lead the service. Several people said we should do this again when young people are present. January Term classes at Episcopal Divinity School will cause me to be away from January 4-17, but I will attend Deacons by Skype. I plan to return in time for the congregational meeting on the Tiffany Window on January 18. Thanks to Todd for being a fabulous supervisor and to the entire congregation for the opportunity to complete my Field Education Requirement at First Churches.

Denise Karuth

Coffee Hour 2014

Wanted: Coffee Hour Coordinator

Three years ago, when it became apparent that Fellowship Committee was struggling to be, I volunteered to temporarily take on the task of coordinating the Coffee and Lemonade Hours which followed the Sunday service until a coordinator willing to take on that task would step forward. Two more years have passed and I have made the decision not to continue in this capacity.

What has been evident these past three years is that the most successful model is the one in which a designated coordinator and teams of volunteers, who actually choose a Sunday (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th) to present coffee hour each month, work together. These teams also exhibited flexibility among themselves. A reliance on just signing up serendipitously failed to provide the coffee hour fellowship on a continual basis and would send me scurrying to call volunteers. Please understand this may be an okay situation that will work



for *someone else* and now **that someone else** needs to step forward to take it on and coordinate it in the manner which is the most successful for them; perhaps even implementing a totally new model.

A coffee hour routine is posted on the fridge to serve as a baseline guide to when, how, what, where...but members and friends may notice that each team has developed or may develop their own manner of presentation.

Currently, the sign up sheet reflects two teams of coffee hour volunteers who are willing to provide for the 2nd and 3rd Sundays. The 1st and 4th Sundays are uncommitted days and volunteers are needed to sign up for them. Vanessa will continue to print out and post the 2 month sign up sheets on the kitchen door. I am also available to share the "coffee hour expertise" that I have developed with whoever steps forward to volunteer to be coordinator.

All applicants can contact Todd Weir at 584-9392 or pastor@firstchurches.org.

So we start the New Year...may your cup runneth over!

Peg Whitham



JANUARY 2014

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
8:45 Adult Ed 10:00 Worship & Sunday School Teacher/Volunteer Training after worship 5:00 Cathedral in the Night	7:00 Peace & Justice	12:00 Peace Vigil	6:30 Missions 6:30 Trustees 7:00 Deacons		7:00 Choir Practice	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
8:45 Adult Ed 10:00 Worship & Sunday school Q&A session re the Tiffany Window 11:40 Christian Ed 5:00 Cathedral in the Night		12:00 Peace Vigil	7:00 Council		7:00 Choir Practice	9:30-12 All Church Discussion re Tiffany Window
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
8:45 Adult Ed 10:00 Worship & Sunday school 5:00 Cathedral in the Night	February Messenger Submissions Deadline	12:00 Peace Vigil			7:00 Choir Practice	
26	27	28	29	30	31	
8:45 Adult Ed 10:00 Worship & Sunday school 5:00 Cathedral in the Night						