



First Churches Northampton

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



November 2014

Pastor's Page

Important Dates

Nov 2 All Saint's Day

Nov 6 & 20 Common Ground

Nov 28 Music @ the Meeting

House - Ensamble Musica

Humana (see pg. 7)

Nov 22 Church Fair

Nov 30 Advent Begins

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A Typical Day in the Church Office

Its any Tuesday at 11:00 AM, when our staff meets weekly. Vanessa has already returned 3 phone calls and 7 emails, let in a Korean tour group to the sanctuary, and redirected two people asking for rent assistance. Ernie has completed a buildings and grounds check, picked up the trash and cleaned the bathrooms. Dana has been sorting through anthems, playing through new introits and practicing for the next wedding. Sarah just completed a new menu for the next Common Ground, spent an hour orienting a new Sunday School teacher and has ideas for integrating the Children's Time with the worship theme. I spent my waking hour reading up for sermon ideas have just rushed in from the Tuesday clergy meeting, and made two phone calls in route to check in with people who have been sick.

Topic #1 is communications because the Messenger is going out this week. Every activity gets communicated to the congregation five different ways: the monthly newsletter, the weekly bulletin, a weekly email, the website and Facebook page, and often an announcement on Sunday morning.

Topic #2 is the weekly calendar and Vanessa keeps us all on track. There is a wedding this weekend, and the rehearsal dinner is here, so Ernie needs to set up tables for 30. Leave the tables up for Saturday, because a group is renting Lyman Hall as a sign-in for a 5K fun run.

Topic #3 is worship this week. Vanessa is getting a good response of names for our All Saints remembrance ceremony. Dana has the chimes ready and Sarah will explain All Saints Day at Children's Time. Be brief because it is also Communion Sunday, and we need 15 file folders for the New Members packets for the meeting after church. Dana, Sarah and I plan to meet Thursday morning at 9:00

AM to start planning Advent worship, including candle-lighting, music themes, Hanging the Greens, and Christmas Eve. Don't forget there is another wedding on the Saturday we are weaving greens. Can we have some up for the wedding? Do we have enough Advent candles?

As we start to talk about the Church Fair, the doorbell rings on cue as a member brings in several more boxes to store. Sarah has met with the committee to coordinate between Common Ground's Thursday night worship and setting up tables afterwards, and we are baking pies somewhere in between. Did we talk with the Scottish dancers about all this? Choir will rehearse in the Sanctuary.

(Continued)



It's time to close, and Ernie needs to open the sanctuary for the Peace Prayer Vigil. Who needs help or support with anything this week? We take a moment to thank each other for little things during the week. We can't do this work without each other!

And we can't do this without all of you reading this! Somewhere in your busy lives, you find time to make committee meetings, serve as greeters, pie bakers, coordinate meals for the homeless, plan forums on important Peace and Justice issues, teach Sunday School, sing in the choir and make room in your budget for the mission and ministry of this church.

This is how we build the Beloved Community. It all comes together on Sunday morning (and Thursday nights!) when there is a warm welcome for all people, a Sabbath pause to be moved by music, a message of faith, hope and love; a chance to make a difference, and share the work of raising children. There is always room for one more.

Take a moment and think of one other person who needs community. Invite them to Common Ground, Sunday worship, or a special time like Hanging the Greens. Help share our community strength and support.

Bible Study – Moving to Mondays!

Sundays are always a rush, with people moving in many different directions, so after a quick poll we are moving Bible Study to Monday lunch. We will begin Monday, November 10 from noon to 1 PM. Feel free to bring a lunch and remember you get a free hour of parking in the Thorne's parking garage!

In November we will reflect on the book of Galatians and the nature of freedom. Paul is writing to a diverse Christian community struggling to live as an inclusive community. How do we honor each other's freedom and stay in community with one another? Please come any Monday!

Pastor Todd

Inquirer's Meeting for New Members

Sunday, November 2 at Second Hour

What does "joining a church" mean? Is it like joining a gym? Does it just mean that I get to vote on stuff? Great questions! If you would like to know more about church membership, please join us after worship on November 2 for find out more. We will answer these and other questions and hand out information packets. If you decide to join, we will have second opportunities to learn more about the history, theology and programs here at First Churches. We will offer this session twice, after church on both **Sunday Nov. 9** and **Nov. 16**, with a new member Sunday on **November 23**. If you would like to participate or have questions please contact either Pastors Todd (pastor@firstchurches.org) or Sarah (pastorsarah@firstchurches.org)

ALL SAINT'S DAY

November 2nd

All Saints' Sunday is a time where we honor the lives and memories of members and friends who have died in the past year. This year we will ring a chime for each person during our ceremony of remembrance, and the bell choir will perform a special ringing of the chimes. It is a beautiful ceremony and we invite you all to attend. This year we are especially honoring: Sue Massey, Bill Norris, Doris Blevins, and Betty Reed.

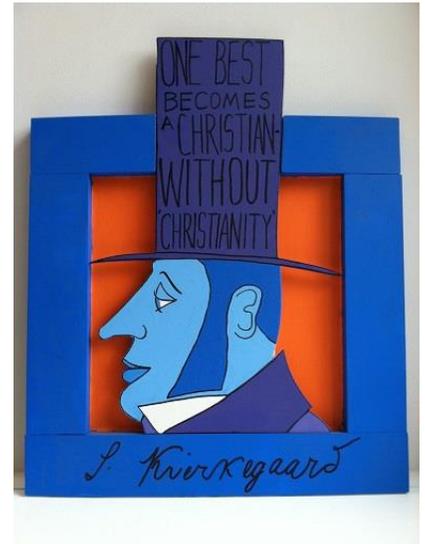
If you cannot attend, please know we hold all of our recent losses with great love and hope you will be with us in spirit. God bless!

Common Ground-Pastor Sarah

Calling All Saints

Why do we remember the saints? Who are some of your saints? Are we all saints? And if so, what can help you live as a saint in the world even now?

Chip made the beautiful icon you see here as a tribute to one of his saints, Soren Kierkegaard. Perhaps you'd like to make an icon in tribute to one of your own saints? Or maybe you'd rather compose a prayer of thanks to someone who has been a light to you on your spiritual journey? Or maybe you'd like to respond to the questions above with some thoughts of your own? Come join us for an exploration of sainthood at our next Common Ground gathering on November 6th from 5:30-8:00.



A word about Leftovers

Did you know that First Churches isn't just home to Common Ground, but to 5 different worshipping communities including Cathedral in the Night? CITN creates a worship experience every Sunday evening on the front steps of the church with people living on the streets of Northampton, and then serves a huge feast to everyone who has gathered. Although area churches provide food, the need continues to grow. To help meet that need, Common Ground is now contributing our leftover soup and bread to the feast, and the CITN folks are thrilled to have it all. Some of our members have also come out to worship and help serve the meal and CITN is always happy for the extra help. I'm happy to provide more information if you'd like to serve in this way.

To read more of the Common Ground News, click [here](#).

This month's recipe brought to you by Common Ground and the Moosewood Cookbook

Black bean soup *Serves 6*

- 10 x Sun-dry tomatoes, (not packed in oil)
- 1 c. Boiling water
- 1 1/2 c. Onions, finely minced
- 3 x Garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 x Jalapeno chile, chopped, or 1/4 tsp. cayenne
- 2 Tbsp. Vegetable oil

- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1/3 c. Water
- 3 c. Tomatoes, (28-oz can -undrained)
- 32 ounce Black beans, (canned) or possibly 4 c. cooked with their liquid
- 1 c. Cilantro, minced, sour cream, cheddar cheese

Directions

1. In a small bowl, cover the sun-dry tomatoes with the boiling water and set aside. In a soup pot, sauté the onions, garlic, and chile or possibly cayenne in the oil for about 5 min, stirring frequently, till the onions are translucent/soft. Add in the cumin, 1/3 c. water, and the juice from the tomatoes.

2. Break up the tomatoes by chopping them coarsely right in the can and add them to the pot. Cover and bring to a boil. Lower the heat

and simmer; covered, for 5 min. Add in the black beans and their liquid, and continue to simmer, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking. Drain and chop the softened sun-dry tomatoes. Add them to the soup and cook for 10 min longer, till the onions are tender. Puree half of the soup and return it to the pot. If the soup is too thick, add in some water or tomato juice. Reheat gently. Garnish with a dollop of sour cream, cheddar cheese, and/or cilantro.

BOLIVA



David Entin, a member of the Peace and Justice Committee, just returned from a 10-day trip to Bolivia. He will be sharing with us what he learned as a member of the Food Sovereignty and Native Resistance Delegation in the Second Hour on Sunday, Nov. 16th. Bolivia just re-elected Evo Morales and his Movement toward Socialism (MAS) Party to a third term with 60% of the vote against four opponents. President Morales, the first indigenous president of Bolivia, received more votes in every province/state than in the previous election. During his

five year term as President, the country's economy grew at 6% a year and extreme poverty was reduced from one third to one fifth of the population. Come learn more about how the program of this Socialist Administration is benefiting those most in need in one of the poorest countries in South America.

GUATEMALA

Today we went up to the village of Santa Maria de Jesus and saw the new chicken enclosure, nearly finished, and the new chickens, who are being sheltered in a neighbor's fenced yard until the big enclosure is finished. Then I got to meet many of the Taq Rumial children and their mothers and grandmothers at a little party. They made my mother and I a beautiful traditional dish called pollo pepian (chicken in a chili sauce). We had speeches and lots of jokes and I got to hold one of the babies, and we handed out the school supplies. The children and mothers and grandmothers were really pleased – lot of happy faces and hugs, and a few restrained tears as well. The whole party was very



bilingual, in Spanish and Mayan. I need to find some way to make sure the older children can get to middle school, or in a few cases keep going to middle school, and that is really the worst challenge, as the middle schoolers have to take a bus and round trip is 7 quetzals per day, when some of the mothers only earn 20 or 30 Q a day. Not all of the mothers are single, I was mistaken about that, Taq Rumial is a women's empowerment group, and some of the ladies are married, some are grandmothers caring for their grandchildren. The married ladies who have husbands working may get additional income of 30 Q a day, and some of the children work in the fields to help earn money for the families. Family sizes range from two to five or six, with a larger number being more common. With an average of five mouths to feed, and an income of 30 to 60 Q per day (that's 4 to 8 dollars per day) affording a dollar a day for transport to middle school by bus is pretty unfeasible. And then school supplies are not provided. Our party was in a hut in a small yard area made of cinder block half way up the walls, then tin, with a tin roof. The floor was pressed dirt, and the light came from the door and the fire place and one window with no glass. Even so, it was so cozy and hospitable because of how wonderful the ladies were to us. The lady who lives there, Juana, also had flowers growing. They loved meeting my mother and we made jokes about the group finding her and another older woman husbands, double wedding etc etc. There is no running water in that living space, and in fact that part of the village does not have a good source of running water at all, it is on alternate days, and the ladies carry water on their heads in jars to their washing/water storage area. I have photos of the washing area, of them teaching me how to carry water on my head etc but will just sent a few photos in a moment if I can figure out how to upload on my mom's pc! – Oonagh Doherty



OUR PARTNER IN HAITI – CONASPEH

In a recent report for Global Ministries, the current missionaries working with CONASPEH (the National Spiritual Council of Churches in Haiti) described attending a graduation of nurses and seminarians. David Entin, Judy Sherman and I attended this graduation the previous year and were all deeply moved by the ceremony. Along with their diplomas the seminarians received either a gift of a Bible or a commentary or a book of church history. Our friends at the Longmeadow UCC church provided nursing bags for graduating nurses that included a blood pressure kit, a nurse's watch with a sweep second hand, a digital thermometer, a penlight for examining pupillary response and a pair of bandage scissors. This gift bag is part of the church's "alternative Christmas" program, which members have supported for the past four years. In past years, First Churches has contributed to the nursing bags and Bibles. To read more about the ceremony, go to

<http://globalministries.org/lac/missionaries/graduation-haitian-style.html>

As a reminder, a group from our area will be traveling to Port-au-Prince March 7-14th, 2015. The group will include nursing students from American International College, but the focus will be more than just medical. Whatever your talent or interest is, you can share it with the students and staff at CONASPEH, and they will be very appreciative. If you are like others who have gone before you, you will return a changed person, likely much wiser and more grateful. Interested persons should contact David Entin, Judy Sherman or Pauline Bassett. – Pauline Bassett

Coffee Hour and Cot Shelter

- ❖ Anyone who would like to participate in providing, serving, and/or cleaning up the refreshments after the service should contact Heidi Rademacher or Jenna Sellers. There is also a sign-up sheet in the fellowship hall on the wall.
- ❖ The next Cot Shelter meal will be **December 1**. Anyone who is interested in volunteering to provide a food item, serve, and/or clean-up should contact Jenna Sellers.
- ❖ Any person interested in cleaning and reorganizing the church kitchen should please contact Jenna Sellers.



Tuskegee Homeless Veteran's Fund

The Tuskegee Airmen are debuting their TV show November 2nd! NCTV will host the Airmen on channel 12 @ 8pm on Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday. And Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 9pm. The show is called Brothers and Sisters of Humanity. If you are unable to make those viewings, but still want to tune in, please check out the podcasts @ www.northamptontv.org. The next fundraiser for the Tuskegee Homeless Vets Fund will be held November 8th at the American Legion on Riverside Dr. @ 6pm. Donations are always accepted to Tuskegee Airmen c/o People's Bank 330 Whitney Ave, Holyoke, MA 01040

October 21, 2014

Dear Friends at First Churches:

Having disappeared somewhat abruptly from your midst at the end of the summer, I am resorting to an open letter to tell you this piece of good news: On September 7, I was called by congregational vote to be the pastor of Belchertown United Church of Christ. I have been called as a half-time, 'designated term pastor,' meaning our covenant is for a designated, two-year period. (This is different from both a settled pastor and an interim pastor, in that the question of service beyond those two years remains open-ended.) BUCC is a lovely, friendly, open and affirming congregation of about 120 eclectic and lively souls, and I am deeply grateful that, after my giant leap of faith into ministry, I have touched down in such a welcoming place.



Photo by Don Treeger of [The Republican](#)

I am also deeply aware that I would never have taken that leap, had it not been for First Churches. The welcome of this congregation drew me back into the heart of the church, after a long time of alienation. Your example reawakened my faith, and your encouragement reawakened my sense of call. If God planted the seed, First Churches tended it and watered it and gave it room to grow. You will always be the church that called me into ministry, and I draw daily upon the many lessons I learned in your care. And now you have sent me out, to minister elsewhere. Luckily, not too far away; my family continues to live in Greenfield, and Lora and the girls will continue to worship with you in Northampton most Sundays. At least for now, their plan is to be 'members' of First Churches and 'friends' of Belchertown. And although I am pastor at BUCC, I also remain officially a member of First Churches. I look forward to introducing you to my new congregation at my ordination ceremony, which will take place at First Churches, sometime after Christmas and before Easter. You will be hearing from me as soon as the date is set! Meanwhile, I send my love to you via my family each week. I think of you all, and miss our weekly fellowship together. Please pray for me and my congregation in our new ministry together, as I pray for you and the church we call home.

Peace,

Liza Knapp

Advance Dates

Nov 30 Advent Begins

Dec. 4 & 18 Common Ground

Dec. 6 Gather and Weave the Greens

Dec. 7 Hot Chocolate Run (***no morning worship***) and Hanging the Greens –
4:00 PM

Dec 21 Christmas Pageant

Dec 24 Candlelight Service, **7:30 pm**,
Lessons & Carols.

Dec. 31 First Night

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

-Pastor Sarah



Gleaning a Success! These are some of the hands that gleaned 300 lbs. of potatoes, beets and carrots for Rachel's Table this past Sunday. Youth from First Churches, Edwards, and St. John's worked together to harvest food at Brookfield Farm in Amherst. They then transported all that fresh produce down to Kate's Kitchen in Holyoke. Kate's Kitchen provides a hot noon time meal 365 days a year to anyone in need. Through their lunch program they also empower, educate, and train unemployed and underemployed individuals interested in the culinary field. I am really proud of our youth and very thankful to Manny Pintado who stepped in at the last moment to help chaperone this event. This trip wouldn't have been possible without his help. Thanks Manny!

Ensamble Musica Humana

November 28th @ 8pm, Pre-concert talks @ 7pm

A Celebration of Advent:

Hymns and Dances by Michael Praetorius featuring Renaissance Men

A discount code for members of First Churches is valid through November 16th, use discount code: **FCNTICKETS** at checkout for \$5 off general admission. If you would like to attend, and would like assistance with purchasing tickets, please contact Vanessa at the Church office and she will be happy to help. General Admission \$15 online/\$20 door, Students \$10 online/\$20 door

Tickets at www.ensemblemusicahumana.com

Many Thanks to Angie and Kelli Montalvo-Greene for hosting the Scarecrow Making Party

It was a lot of fun meeting parents and kids from the larger community. There was great food and lots of fun to be had stuffing hay into old clothes and creating some very funky scarecrows. My kids had a great time, and I'm sure everyone else's kids did too. Thank you, Angie and Kelli, for your gracious hospitality.

Craft Table at the Christmas Fair

We can use some volunteers to help us entertain kids during the Christmas Fair. I have a fun and easy craft for children, but we need a few more hands to help. It's also a great opportunity to tell people in our community about our wonderful Sunday School. Let Pastor Sarah know if you would like to help.

And Speaking of Sunday School...

Patti and Rachel will be teaching this month, but we can still use two more teachers for the month of November. Many thanks to Gabe and Stacey for all their help through September and October. They helped get our Sunday school off to a great start. To read more of the First Churches Ministry News, click [here](#).



FAIR UPDATE!

SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 9:30- 3:00.

Remember: A successful fair is vital to the church as it is our biggest fund raiser of the year!

Volunteers are needed to “make, bake, donate” and sell at all of our tables! **We will have sign-up sheets at coffee hour on November 2nd and 9th.** Or, you can contact any chair or member of the **Church Fair Steering Committee** for any questions, to volunteer for any of the tasks listed, or make suggestions. **If you have any ideas or plans for the fair, it is vital that you contact someone on the steering committee first, please.**

- **Barbara Parsons**
- **Peg Whitham**
- **Ginny Wahl**
- **Celeste Ortega**

Raffle: Celeste Ortega is busy obtaining raffle items from various businesses in town. We will need people to sell tickets the few weeks before and during the fair.

Craft Table: Home-made crafts of most any kind are welcome. Potential Christmas gifts work well as do items that are inexpensive. Be sure to let Dori McCracken or Sandie Pirrello know what you are planning so that they can plan the arrangement of their table.

Christmas Table: Elaine Wert and Stacey Martin are arranging a fun table displaying “gently used” Christmas items. We need you to take a look in your attics and closets! Home-made Christmas decorations are also welcome.

Luncheon: Margie Riddle and Mary Ramos are co-chairing. Cooks will be needed! We welcome your requests for dishes that are “tried and true” as well as suggestions for “something new.” Please let us know if you would like to provide or prepare food before the fair and/or work with us in the kitchen for the luncheon

Attic Treasures: Greg Wilson needs “gently-used” items in clean and fair condition.

Jewelry table: Please search thru your jewelry boxes and dresser drawers for any items you haven’t used in a while and wouldn’t mind giving away for a good cause.

Apple Pies: Want to learn to bake a pie? Here is your chance! Join Doryne Pederzani and friends to make and bake pies at the church on the Friday preceding the fair (**please note the change of day**) starting at 9am.

Bake Table: Laura Judd will need help selling and baking home-made goods. Best-sellers are: cookies of all varieties including chocolate chip, hermits and snicker doodles; brownies; tea breads/quick breads and homemade candy. Less popular are muffins, frosted cupcakes and large cakes as people don’t like to buy anything difficult to carry. Smaller, individually wrapped items preferably in plastic with a list of ingredients and an attractive bow or ribbon helps to make the table more attractive and sell more goodies.

Clean-up: One of the most important jobs of the fair. Bill Ames will coordinate this effort but he needs lots of help! It doesn’t take long—lasts from about an hour at most from about 3:00 on.

Be sure to stay tuned to the weekly bulletin, our face book page and website for regular fair updates.

This is Not Your Average Annual Meeting Keynote Address

By Marlene Gasdia-Cochrane (thanks to Massachusetts UCC Conference.)



“Deeply flawed, and deeply spiritual.” That’s how Nadia Bolz-Weber, next year’s Annual Meeting keynote speaker and the founding pastor of [House for All Sinners and Saints](#) described herself in a Denver news interview.

“Nadia is a blogger, author, and well regarded speaker on the importance of church, Christ, and the transforming power of God's grace, and I think she will be a great keynote speaker for Annual Meeting,” said Ian Holland, pastor of [The First Church in Swampscott, Congregational](#) and Annual Meeting Moderator.

Others may describe her as heavily tattooed, loud, sarcastic, cranky and punkish; but this may truly be a case where one should not judge a book by its cover.

According to Holland, Bolz-Weber is a passionate disciple of Christ and a great preacher. “She was raised in a very conservative Church of Christ tradition, rebelled against everything, fell into a life of drug abuse, nearly died, fell in love with her husband, God, and orthodox mainline Christianity, and is now a mother, and a Lutheran pastor of an emergent Lutheran church in Denver that serves both the outcasts of society as well as khaki-wearing middle-class dudes,” he rattled off.

She has also become a leading voice in the emerging church movement.

“I saw her on YouTube giving a speech\sermon to an ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) youth conference that knocked my socks off,” Holland said. “She is an unlikely Lutheran, with her- 6+ foot tall height, tattoos, black tank-top t-shirts and profanity. Yet she speaks so vividly and relevantly about the mission of the church in our time.”

A former stand-up comic who struggled with drug and alcohol abuse, Bolz-Weber never considered herself to be religious leader material—until the day she ended up leading a friend’s funeral in a smoky downtown comedy club. Surrounded by fellow alcoholics, depressives, and cynics, she realized: These were her people. Maybe she was meant to be their pastor. Read more at <http://www.macucc.org/newsdetail/455191>

The 216th Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference will be held Friday, June 12 and Saturday, June 13, 2015, at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. The keynote address will take place Saturday morning and will be open to the public. Stay tuned for further details early in 2015.

NOVEMBER 2014

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat
						1.
					7:00 Choir Practice	
2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
8:45 Bible Study 9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship & Sunday School 5:00 Cathedral in the Night	7:00 Peace & Justice	12:00 Peace Vigil	7:00 Deacons	5:00 Common Ground	7:00 Choir Practice	
9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship & Sunday School 5:00 Cathedral in the Night	12:00 Bible Study	12:00 Peace Vigil Office Closed	12:30 Finance 6:30 Trustees 7:00 Missions 7:00 Welcome & Outreach		7:00 Choir Practice	
16.	17.	18.	19.	20.	21.	22.
9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship & Sunday School 5:00 Cathedral in the Night	12:00 Bible Study December Messenger Items Due	12:00 Peace Vigil	7:00 Council 5:30 Christian Ed	5:00 Common Ground	7:00 Choir Practice	Church Fair
23.	24.	25.	26.	27.	28.	29.
9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship & Sunday School 5:00 Cathedral in the Night	12:00 Bible Study	12:00 Peace Vigil	1:00 Invest.	Thanksgiving-Office Closed	8:00 Ensemble Musica Humana (see pg.7) Office Closed NO Choir Practice	
30.						
9:00 Choir 10:00 Worship & Sunday School First Day of Advent 5:00 Cathedral in the Night						