



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



APRIL 2015 PASTOR'S PAGE

Important Dates

April 2nd- Maundy Thursday
April 5th- Easter
April 19th- Cantata
April 26th- Crop Walk

Looking For.....

Sunday School..... pg 2
Common Ground..... pg 2
Holy Week..... pg 3
Cantata..... pg 3
Crop Walk..... pg 4
Organ Fund..... pg 4
Edna and Vivian..... pg 5
Advanced Dates..... pg 6
Prayer Shawl..... pg 6
Calendar..... pg 7
Summer Camp..... pg 8

March is closing as I write, slowly dwindling like the last snow pile holding out on my Petunia bed. The snow shovel is still perched near the garage door and the lawn mower is buried in the back corner. Early April is still too soon to swap them. As the snow recedes, the archeological evidence of last fall appears. Someone did not rake all the leaves before several feet of snow buried the inattention to yard work. The fingers of a lost glove emerge by the front porch, calling for its lonely partner in the closet. The yard lies naked and disheveled, snoring off the hangover from the winter bender, and I'm embarrassed looking at it, all tangle-haired and drooling. We won't speak of this till it is awake and clothed again in green grass and purple Petunias. April is knocking at the door, teasing us with morning sun and then dousing us with showers. That's April, always promising more than she can deliver. But I love her anyway, because I know she means well. Hope springs eternal.

Winter is counting the last days till retirement, spring is eager for a promotion. Lent has entered the depths of Holy Week, and laments must still be sung at Tenebrae and Good Friday, while Easter lilies are already ordered. We have lost things that cannot be replaced. Tall trees broke from the weight of ice, and the pew that once held Vivian and Edna is empty. It takes a long time to grow saplings into a new hedge, but all things shall be well in time. Mother Nature is pregnant and looks like she could burst any moment, and the church is preparing the Hallelujah Chorus. The rakes and hoes will come out soon, and so will the Choir Cantata, Stewardship Campaign, Pride March and something special every Sunday through June. It will soon be planting season, and I am watching eagerly, waiting for the day to rotate my snow shovel for a garden spade.



ASSOCIATE PASTOR'S PAGE

SPECIAL COMMON GROUND APRIL 16TH

At Common Ground we always let the kids know they are welcome to be as much a part of the service as they would like, but that it's also ok to play around the edges of worship. On April 16th our worship will be geared with an eye toward keeping children fully engaged throughout the service and even give them an opportunity to lead certain parts. But parents, please know you'll be welcome to be as much a part of the service as you like, and there will be quiet activities set up for you around the room if need be ;).

In all seriousness, I think this gathering will appeal to people of all ages as we explore issues of faith and doubt and we hope you'll bring your whole family.



LAST CHANCE TO TEACH SUNDAY SCHOOL

Yes, we need Sunday School teachers for the months of April, May and June. Many of you have given of your time to come and teach and I am deeply grateful. If you haven't had a chance to help out in this way, come on down and visit us one Sunday. You may be surprised and even kind of excited about the prospect of teaching, and it's a wonderful way to give to the church and help us strengthen our community overall. Please let Pastor Sarah know if you'd be able to help us out for a month or even 2.

Thank you everyone. Our children's ministry is thriving because of you!

Pastor Sarah

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR TEENS

Teen Movie Night

(ages 11 and up)

Friday April 10th 6-8:30pm

Our joint Youth Group will gather for pizza and a movie on the big screen in our church parlor. Movie TBD, and we're open to suggestions.

Confirmation

June 7th

10:00am

Come join us for worship as we recognize our new confirmands.

HOLY WEEK EVENTS

♠ **Maundy Thursday**~ April 2nd- The First Churches Choir will join Common Ground for dinner and candlelight Tenebrae Communion at 6pm.

♠ **Good Friday**~ April 3rd- Join First Churches and other Northampton Congregations for a Good Friday Ecumenical walk around Northampton. We will start at the Halligan and Daley Memorial near Hospital Hill at 12pm.

♠ **Easter**~ April 5th- 10am worship service. Please bring brightly colored flowers to adorn our Easter Cross.

34th ANNUAL PRIDE PARADE!!!!



34th Annual LGBT Parade and Pride event
May 2, 2015 12pm-5pm Rain or Shine
THREE County Fairgrounds ~ Northampton, MA

First Churches will be marching with our amazing banner again this year. If you are interested in marching with us and other Open and Affirming churches, the deadline to register is April 15th. This is an extremely family friendly event, come join us to support our LGBTQ community. The parade begins in the parking lot on Hampton Ave, across from the Northampton Brewery, Gathering time is 11:00am, but you may want to come a little early to find our group and have a picture taken. Click on the NOHO PRIDE rainbows above for more information.

“No matter who you are, not matter where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”



12th ANNUAL CANTATA

Please join us on Sunday, April 19th, at the morning worship service when the First Churches Choir and the Williamsburg Congregational Church Choir will join to sing "Gloria" by Antonio Vivaldi. This will be at least the 12th year that our choirs have come together to sing a major work.

Vivaldi's "Gloria" is a sunny, joyous composition and his most famous choral piece. It was composed in Venice, probably in 1715, for the choir of the Ospedale della Pieta, a home for girls (the illegitimate daughters of Venetian noblemen) where Vivaldi spent most of his career as a music teacher.

The "Gloria" was discovered in the late 1920's when it was found buried among a pile of other forgotten Vivaldi manuscripts. It was first performed in 1939 in Siena, Italy. The edition commonly in use today was published in 1957 and sung for the first time at Brooklyn College that same year.

Gretchen Burdick will be conducting the choirs. The singers will be accompanied by Cindy Naughton, flute, Barbara Wright, violin, Carol Hutter, viola, and Sally Bagg, cello. Linda West of Williamsburg and Sue Stone and Heather Williams of First Churches will be the soloists.

The choirs will also be singing the "Gloria" in Williamsburg on April 12th at their 10:00am worship service.

There will be a reception in Lyman Hall following Worship. If you are able to/interested in helping, please call or email the church office. Look for sign-up sheets in Lyman Hall!

We hope that you will be able to be with us to enjoy this special music. **Dana Pasquale**

LENTEN GREEN UPDATE

Have you put your leaf on the Lyman Hall "Green Up For Lent" bulletin board yet? As of 3/24 that tree is enjoying an early spring, with leaves like this:

"I use cloth shopping bags. I also buy as much local food with as little packaging as possible." "I put LED light bulbs in my house." "I use the free composting at the Northampton Trash bought a Recycling Center." "I ride the bus. natural hybrid car." "I had a audit of our MassSave house." "I do as many errands as possible in one car trip." "We have an Energy Star water heater and refrigerator." "I use wrapping paper for drawing paper." "I give leftovers to the dog." "I recycled all the other leaves."



Big leaves, little leaves --- they're all green! So add yours to the tree! (It doesn't have to be different.) And come to a Peace & Justice 2nd-hour on Sunday, April 19th, to hear Amanda Jacir from [CET](#) (Center for Ecotechnology in Bay State's Cutlery building) talk about green electricity.

ORGAN FUND COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Organ fund Committee has a bit of news to share with the congregation this month.

On Sunday March 15, Dick Purrington met with a few members in the parlor after the service to offer a visual presentation on the repairs that were needed to restore the organ. Unfortunately other activities were occurring at the same time and as a result it seems that people who might have wanted to participate had to miss the organ presentation. So a plan has been put in motion to offer this again with a bit more depth of information about this magnificent Skinner organ (as in did you know that it really is comprised of 4 organs?) to be offered on a Sunday at the end of April or early May when there will be no other gathering commitments to honor.

Also...a letter initiating the raising of funds to offset the cost of the organ repairs is being made ready to be sent out to all.

And...a few more donations have come in and the income amount for the Organ Fund currently stands at \$9175.49!!!

Quietly at work...Dana, Dick, Marcia and Peg

CROP WALK 2015

On **Sunday April 26 at 12:00**, people from several area churches and organizations will gather at First Churches for a walk to fight hunger around the world.



Walkers will seek pledges. Of the money gathered, 75% goes to Church World Service for their efforts to address the need for stable sources of food and water around the world, disaster relief and recovery and may other efforts to improve the lot of the world's poor. 25% will be donated to Hampshire County Friends of the Homeless. To be used to combat hunger here in our community. The CROP Walk is a lot of fun for adults and children of all ages, and raises money for some of the most crippling issues we face today. Please join us! Click [here](#) to find out more!

From the link, folks can register as walkers, create or join a team, create a homepage for online fundraising or donate. It's very easy to do, but if anyone has questions, Sandie and I will be available at Common Ground and at church every Sunday, or by phone any time ([413-210-0453](tel:413-210-0453) or [413-210-0454](tel:413-210-0454)).



**FIRST CHURCHES OF
NORTHAMPTON LOSES
PARTNERS IN THE
PEW VIVIAN EASTMAN
AND EDNA
MICHALOWSKI**



March 25, 2015- The Daily Hampshire Gazette

NORTHAMPTON — For decades, Vivian Eastman and Edna Michalowski sat together in the same wooden pew at First Churches, about halfway back toward the left of the historic building's ornate sanctuary. Eastman never drove, so Michalowski usually picked her up at her Florence home to ferry her to Sunday services.

The two women died within six days of each other last month, Eastman at 98 and Michalowski at 95. And First Churches of Northampton lost two titans. "They were the oldest active people, and to lose them both in the same week felt like a real passing of an era," said the Rev. Todd Weir. Michalowski had been a church member for 70 years, and Eastman since 1974. Weir said the two women, both teenagers during the Great Depression, "had the greatest-generation energy about them," he said. Both were longtime widows who were fiercely independent, outspoken, and good friends to the end. "Edna would say her opinions out loud; she'd tell parents what they needed to do with their kids," he said. "She was very opinionated." She had raised three children as

a single mother. "Edna could fix a car and change a tire," said Weir. "She was a very independent, I'm-going-to-do-it kind of person." After a stroke 10 years ago, Michalowski was in a semi-coma for a couple of days, after which her doctor tried to break the news to her that she might not regain her mobility. Weir said Michalowski told the doctor: "Watch me," wagging her finger at him. "They were both finger-pointers," Weir said, smiling at the memory. The first thing he noticed about Eastman, a tiny woman who was always impeccably dressed, was her handshake. "I was not ready," he said. "She had the toughest handshake. It was astonishing."

While the two women were good friends, they were quite different from each other — what Weir called "our yin and yang." Eastman never went out unless she was dressed to the T, say those who knew her, while Michalowski had a more New England style of fashion. "Especially in her 90s there was no way Edna was getting in high heels," said Weir. Michalowski could be sharp-tongued, he said, while Eastman was rather proper, never going out without a dress or skirt, hosiery and heels. She liked to pour tea at special church functions. "Whenever we brought out the china, she did the pouring," said Weir..... To read the full article, click [here](#), or call the church office to get a copy.

Prayer Shawl Ministry



Prayer Shawl groups meet on third Tuesday of the month. **Tuesday, April 21.**

Daytime Prayer Shawl group --
at **1pm**, in Church Parlor:
Evening Prayer Shawl group --
at **6:30pm** (location to be determined)

(Note that the daytime group may be discontinued. So far it has attracted little participation.)

If you're pondering whether there's room in your busy schedule for one more thing, consider this: The Prayer Shawl ministry is intended, first, as a ministry benefitting the participants. The contemplative, purposeful nature of knitting lends it emotionally and spiritually healing properties -- just in the doing. So if you're feeling over-committed, too busy, this is a way of doing for yourself, being in community, while also participating in an activity that will produce benefit to others.

Looking Ahead

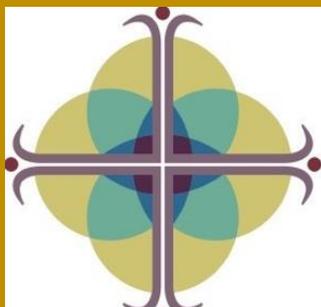
- April 12** - Rev. Sarah Butuex
Preaching
- April 19** - Choir Cantata (Center for Ecotechnology, Second Hour)
- April 26** - CROP Walk
Rev. Stephanie Smith from
"Cathedral in the Night", Preaching
- May 3** - Pride Weekend
Presenting budget after church
Cathedral Meal
- May 10** - Mother's Day
- May 17** - Smith Graduation Weekend
Haiti Mission Trip, Second Hour
- May 24** - Memorial Day Weekend
Pentecost Sunday
- May 31** - New Members
Trinity Sunday
- June 7** - Confirmation
- June 14** - Annual Meeting
- June 21** - Children's Sunday

Understanding and Healing War's Deepest Wounds:

Thursday, April 9 - 7 p.m., Seelye Hall, #106, Smith College

Three authors of recent books who examine war trauma and healing from different perspectives share their work and join our moderator in a discussion on the challenge that faces us all: to help our veterans come back whole to themselves, their families, and their community. The authors are **Mark Nickerson, LICSW** (*The Wounds Within: A Veteran, a PTSD Therapist, and a Nation Unprepared*), **Robert Meagher, PhD** (*Killing from the Inside Out: Moral Injury and Just War*), and **Ed Tick, PhD** (*Warrior's Return: Restoring the Soul After War*). Moderated by **Dr. Kathryn Basham**, Co-Director of PhD Program, the Smith College School for Social Work. *Veterans, military family members, members of the helping professions, the Smith College Community and the general public all are invited.*

Sponsored by the Smith College School for Social Work and the Veterans Education Project, Co-sponsors include: Central Hampshire Veterans Services, Soldier's Heart, Western Mass. Veterans Outreach Project, First Churches' Peace and Justice Committee, the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence Social Justice Committee, Wesley United Methodist Church Council, the Amherst Unitarian Universalist Society. An event for Veterans, military families, helping professionals and the general public Call 413-253-4947 for more information.



APRIL 2015

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
			1. 7:00 Deacons	2. 5:30 Common Ground MAUNDY THURSDAY	3. 7:00 Choir Practice Kathy Felton GOOD FRIDAY	4. Eric Umberger
5. 10:00 Worship No Sunday School 5:00 Cathedral in The Night EASTER	6. 12:00 Bible Study Last Cot Shelter Meal of the Season Cristiano Corsello Alice Wondolowski	7. 12:00 Peace Vigil Genevive Dole	8. Bruce Weinraub	9. 7:00 Understanding and Healing Wars Deepest Wounds	10. 6:00 Movie Night 7:00 Choir Practice in Sanctuary Arts Night Out	11.
12. 10:00 Worship & Sunday School 11:40 Bell Choir 5:00 CITN	13. 12:00 Bible Study 7:00 Peace & Justice	14. 12:00 Peace Vigil 1:00 Prayer Shawl Ministry, Parlor	15. 12:30 Finance 6:30 Trustees 6:30 Missions	16. 5:30 Common Ground	17. 7:00 Choir Practice	18. 8:30 SHOW-TABCOM Brittany Williams-Murphy
19. 10:00 Worship & Sunday School CANTATA 11:40 Bell Choir 5:00 CITN	20. 12:00 Bible Study May Messenger Items Due	21. 12:00 Peace Vigil 1:00 & 6:30 Prayer Shawl 1-8:00 Photo Directory photographs	22. 5:00 Christian Ed 7:00 Council 7:00 Welcome & Outreach Rebecca Uttormark	23. 12:30 Dorcas Luncheon- at Brewmaster's	24. 6:00 Sean Elligers Trumpet Recital 7:00 Choir Practice	25.
26. 10:00 Worship & Sunday School 11:40 Bell Choir 5:00 CITN Rev. Clare Overlander	27. 12:00 Bible Study Ned Judd	28.	29.	30.		

THINKING ABOUT CAMP??

Horton Center – located in the northern White Mountains of NH – is where many of the NH Conference's Outdoor Ministry programs occur, or start out. In addition to Horton Center other locations are also used, including Geneva Point, the AMC Huts and state parks. This summer we have a full schedule! Programs start for children who have completed Kindergarten (with parents in Big Feet/ Little Feet), up to our High School and Young Adult camps. For older campers our Hut to Hut and Canoe camps offer a once in a lifetime experience of spending time with other Christians in a weeklong trip. At Horton Center, we are surrounded by the White Mountain National Forest, with thousands of acres and miles of hiking trails. Opportunities for rock climbing, caving, and sleeping under the stars are available without leaving the site.

Silver Lake – located in Sharon, CT – is a ministry of the Connecticut Conference, UCC. For over 50 years, Silver Lake has been claimed as the "Spiritual Home" for thousands of young people, ages 8-18 each summer for a week of Outdoor Ministry church camp. We welcome UCC and other denominations' children to experience the best week of their summer, with dedicated, trained, enthusiastic lay and clergy leadership and in-cabin counselors and summer staff. We offer amazing communitybuilding, spirit-stretching, high and low ropes adventure and teambuilding 'mountaintop' experiences, swimming, singing, worshipping, campfires, friend-making, ceramics, nature, arts and crafts, hiking and so much more. Each conference has a different program theme, from creative expression (think Biblical High School Musical), through sports, radio show, wilderness exploration to being God's Heroes.

Pilgrim Lodge – located on the eastern shore of Lake Umbagog in West Gardiner, Maine– is a ministry of the Maine Conference, UCC. Just two hours over the New Hampshire border on I-95, Pilgrim Lodge (PL) offers week-long sessions for 3rd graders through senior high school students as well as weekend events for adults. Our mission and philosophy (please see the website) involve the healing power of nature and community. With high quality program, an experience at PL will strengthen faith development in an unbelievably gorgeous setting. Children and adults return charged and inspired. And we have a whole lot of fun. Maine is known for its summer camps and PL is a gem! Build lifelong memories with us. Pilgrim Lodge is accredited by the American Camp Association. To view a free video and more information call (207) 724-3200.

Star Island –located off the coast of Portsmouth, New Hampshire – is a site for ministry of the New Hampshire Conference, UCC during the Star Gathering conference weeks. Offering programming for all ages – babies thru older adults as well as a concurrent Youth Conference for those entering 9th grade in fall of 2015 through 2015 hs graduates, the Star Gathering weeks are filled with chapel services, Bible Study, programming for adults and children, as well as the opportunity to see amazing sunsets, sit in a rocking chair, play softball, and more! Information about Star Island including more about each Conference's 2011 themes and leadership can be found here: www.starisland.org , information specific to the Star Gathering Conferences, including the Youth Conference can be found here www.starisucc.com

Irons Homestead – located in Glocester, RI For grades 3 -12: Connect with Creation, Sports and Games, Music, Art, Drama, Dance & Family Camp. Jennifer Geary at 401-710-9478. <mailto:jgeary@ricucc.org>