

AUGUST 2017

First Churches of Northampton, UCC/ABC

PASTOR'S PAGE

Important Dates

Aug 12 - PVS Choir Concert

Aug 17 - Common Ground

Aug 20 - Worship at Laurel Park

Aug 24 - Dorcas Society Luncheon

Sept 3 - Blessing of the Bikes

Sept 10 - Homecoming Sunday

Looking For...

Common Ground pg 2

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Birthdays

8/2 Becky Lockwood

8/3 Chloe Felton-Emricks

8/4 Janice Francis

8/6 Suzanne Massey

8/8 Stacey Martin

8/27 Jeffrey Burbar

8/29 Micheal Martin

I heard the first locust humming in the oak tree last evening, which is a signal to me that summer is drawing to a close. Here at church the energy level is picking up rapidly. Happy children are in the hallways for Vacation Bible School. We had all of our staff together for the first time since mid-June, and Aaron McMurray, our new church administrator, is quickly getting up to beginning in September. This newsletter has more details about our Blessing of the Bikes joint service, Laurel Park summer worship, and other events to get on your calendar so you don't miss out.

Here are a few more things you might like to know from summer:

- Our internal signage makeover is nearly complete to better direct people around the building, and communicate our values and purpose to anyone who enters our Meeting House. We will also have a new name tag system in place for September. Thanks to Laura Dalton for coordinating this effort!
- The stained-glass window restoration project is on schedule to be complete in October. We will have site visit reports from the Window Team coming soon.
- Our new Administrative Ministry Board will meet for the second time next week, and ministry coordinators for Inward and Outward Ministries are getting ready for the Fall. We will have a volunteer opportunity fair and new opportunities coming in September.
- We have some new renters in the building, including Dance Spree's Freestyle Boogie on Friday nights, a Gay Men's AA group on Wednesday nights, and a peer support group associated with Cathedral in the Night on Friday nights. This group is volunteering time after their meeting to clean the Recreation Room and church grounds.
- We will be hosting a town hall meeting with Rep. Jim McGovern on September 19 at 5:30 PM.



Stones painted by VBS students were placed around town to inspire our neighbors

How to Keep in Touch at First Churches

- Our **church email list** is the heartbeat of what is happening on a weekly basis. Our new Church Administrator, Aaron McMurray, is revamping the style, and we will send it out every Friday to keep you in touch with what is happening each week. Contact the church office at admin@firstchurches.org if you would like to be on the list.
- The **church website** has all major events listed on the calendar. The calendar at www.firstchurches.org/events/month/ can be search and you can click on any event to find out more details.
- Events and news are also on the church **Facebook page**, First Churches of Northampton. Pastor Todd and Pastor Sarah also have Facebook pages. Our policy is we let church members “friend” us rather than assuming you want us to follow your page.
- For **pastoral needs**, you may contact Pastor Todd or Pastor Sarah through the church office at 413-584-9392 or through their email at pastortodd@firstchurches.org or pastorsarah@firstchurches.org.
- We do send a **monthly newsletter**, and mail copies to people who aren't on email. Please call the church office if you would like a mailed copy.

~ Pastor Todd

COMMON GROUND: Baptism & Potluck at Puffers Pond



Weather permitting, our beloved Stina will be baptized at the next Common Ground. We will gather at 5:45 at the Summer St. entrance to Puffer's Pond (the small beach on the far side from State Street). There is parking on that side of the pond both above and below the entrance, and ample parking on State Street if you don't mind walking a bit.

Our gathering will be potluck. Please bring a dish to share, your own plates, cups, silverware, and either a picnic blanket or folding chair. Also be sure to bring

whatever you need to protect yourself against mosquitos and other pests. I will bring tables for the buffet.

We'll baptize Stina at 6:00 and then move into the rest of our sacred meal. We'll continue to explore the power of questions and then spend the evening in deep conversation with one another.

Anyone interested in staying around for Common Ground After Dark is invited up the hill to my back yard (998 East Pleasant St). We'll make a fire and watch the stars come out. We know it's a hike from Northampton, but we hope you'll join us.

come cultivate a peace

~ Pastor Sarah

LAUREL PARK WORSHIP SERVICE: August 20, 10-11:30am

Every year First Churches celebrates a summer worship service at Laurel Park in Northampton for the LPA's Inter-Faith Spiritual Program.

Come Celebrate the deep connection underlying the many beautiful forms of spiritual practice.



Laurel Park's Tabernacle is a place where communities of spirit may deepen their own practice, and seekers may experience different spiritual traditions in a lovely, informal setting.

Click [HERE](#) for Directions.

Reverend Sarah Buteux preaching. We hope to see you there.

THE HEALING ARTS SANCTUARY: Soul Nurture for Anxious Times

Contemplative art making to soothe, inspire or vent. The nourishment of soup and bread. Cozy nooks for meditation or conversation. The gift of bodywork. The sounds of gentle improvisational song and music by Spirit Play Collective (Su Eaton, Glenn Smith and Matt Swift) for reflection or movement. Sacred space, together.

***Art & Soul :: Lyman Hall, First Churches
August 23, September 27, and October 25; 6:30 - 9pm***

*Sliding Scale of \$10-30 A collaboration between Art & Soul and Peaceable Village
artandsoulhcc.org or peaceablevillage.com*

BLESSING OF THE BIKES: Joint Worship Service



Ride your bike to church for a special ecumenical service **September 3 at 10 AM** followed by the Blessing of the Bikes.

Our guest preacher is Rev. Laura Everett, author of "Holy Spokes: The Search for an Urban Spirituality on Two Wheels." Rev. Everett is the head of the Massachusetts Council of Churches and an avid rider.

The Event is co-sponsored by Edwards Church, First Churches of Northampton, Haydenville Congregational Church UCC and St. John's Episcopal Church.

We will co-celebrate communion together. Childcare is available.



Vacation Bible School

Our joint Vacation Bible School was a huge success. A big thank you to all who made it possible and helped it run so smoothly including Olivia and all our friends from St. Johns, Helen, Rowan, Ernie, and our new administrator Aaron. [CLICK HERE](#) for some highlights of our time together.

FROM THE CHOIR LOFT

First of all, I want to express my gratitude for the opportunity to attend the gathering of the UCC Musicians' Association in Boston at the beginning of July. It was a wonderful experience, and I am still humming some of the music and remembering the highlights of the week! One of the outstanding aspects of the convention was that the city of Boston itself became one of the presenters as we traveled to venues in Brookline (United Parish) and Cambridge (First Church), and then to Boston's Old North Church and Old South Church for evening worship services. I hope I will be able to bring some of the things I learned to enrich the experience of worship at our church.

We are planning to host a pick-up choir made up of members of all participating churches at the Blessing of the Bicycles joint worship service on Sunday, September 3. We will meet that morning promptly at 9:00am to rehearse the music we will be singing. We had a great time singing together at our last joint service, so let's do it again!!

I would also like to invite any interested singers to join us as we begin our new choir season. The choir is a warm, friendly group of people who just love to sing! There are no auditions required. We rehearse on Friday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 and again on Sunday mornings at 9:00. Our repertoire is varied, and we welcome singers of all ages, including young teens. If you prefer to make a short-term commitment (for 6 weeks or a few months at a time), that is fine too. We are open to whatever arrangements work for you.

Our first rehearsal will be on Friday, September 8. We will meet at 6:00 p.m. that week for a light supper before we begin to sing~~everyone is welcome!

Thanks for considering making our choir a part of your life at First Churches!

**If you are interested in joining either the pick-up choir for Sept 3,
or for the new choir season, please contact Dana
413-727-8677 or music@firstchurches.org.**

Calendar of Events

August & early September

- 8/11 - 8:30p Dance Spree, Lyman Hall
- 8/12 - 3:00p PVS Choir Pop-up Concerts, front steps First Churches
(1pm Thornes and 2pm R Michelson Gallery)
- 8/13 - 10:00a Worship, Lyman Hall**
- **5:00p Cathedral in the Night**
- **6:00p Raging Grannies, parlor**
- 8/15 - 12:00p Peace Vigil, sanctuary
- 8/17 - 10:30a LAST Chair & Laughter Yoga Session, parlor
- 5:45p Common Ground: Baptism & Potluck at Puffers Pond
- 8/20 - 10:00a Worship, Laurel Park**
- **5:00p Cathedral in the Night**
- 8/22 - 12:00p Peace Vigil, sanctuary
- 8/23 - 6:30p Art & Soul, Lyman Hall
- 8/24 - 12:30p Dorcas Luncheon, Brewmaster's Tavern in Williamsburg
- 8/27 - 10:00a Worship, Lyman Hall**
- **5:00p Cathedral in the Night**
- 8/29 - 12:00p Peace Vigil, sanctuary
- 8/31 - 12-9:00p Opioid Candlelight Vigil, front lawn
- 6:00p Common Ground
- 9/3 - 10:00a Worship, Blessing of the Bicycles**
- **5:00p Cathedral in the Night**
- 9/4 - 12:00p Bible Study, parlor
- 9/8 - 1st Choir Rehearsal, Lyman Hall and parlor
6:00p Light Supper; 7-8:30p Rehearsal
- 9/10 Homecoming Sunday**
- **9:30a Sunday School Registration**
- **10:00a Worship**
- **5:00p Cathedral in the Night**