



FEBRUARY 2018 [On-line Edition]

ALL IN THE FAMILY

How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity! according to Psalm 133.

Acting on the truth of the Psalm, Christian kindred from different traditions came together to pray in January. Orthodox, Catholic, Protestants and Pentecostal traditions gathered at the Cathedral of St Michael in downtown Springfield. Laura Everett, the Executive Director from the Mass Council of Churches, herself from the congregational tradition gave us clergy instructions for the high-church environment: processing who is supposed to sit where, who goes up the steps to sit on the chancel and who sits in the pews . . . And those of us from lower-church traditions were invited to “try on something new and venerate the altar” before filing into the pew. We were shown how we might pause in front of the table or perhaps bow to show our reverence.

I have to say, it was an impressive display of our common tradition to see all the clergy in their vestments – some clergy who generally wear suits or jeans and a golf shirt had to dig through a closet to find a robe.

I’d never been in the Cathedral before so I was fascinated by the sanctuary’s architecture. There is a long center aisle flanked by fixed wooden pews facing the front wall—a tall teal wall reminiscent of a sky, just like our own sanctuary, only this one had small shimmering symbols similar to stars but were the symbols of the catholic faith and cathedral as the seat of the Bishop. There was an ornate wooden wall (called a reredos) that highlighted the hierarchy of chairs with an overhead light that shone down on the Bishop of

the Cathedral making his fuchsia skullcap (called a zucchetto) glow. The communion table in the center of the large, open chancel area was a sculpted gray and white marble that looked like it was growing out of the floor. It’s enormous size and weight rooted it in place and gave us worshipers a sense of permanence and prominence of the table. I’m told that this is part of the renovation of the sanctuary—previously the table was up against the front wall so that the priest had to celebrate communion with his back to the congregation. Now the positioning allows the



Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, N.E. Annual Conference, United Methodist Church & Bishop Mitchell Rozanski, Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield, preside over the Renewal of Baptismal Promises.

priest to get behind the table and face the congregation. There is still a large distance from the pews to the table to set it apart from the seated masses—to mark it as aloof and sacred. And the distance and raised location of pulpit and lectern emphasized the authority of the words the congregation is meant to receive from those speaking there. It’s a space for listening to those trained and ordained and set apart, not for engaging and sharing the experiences of those gathered.

It all worked together for this impressive display of ritual with this solemn pageantry that spoke of the importance of what was happening – prayer and scripture across groups that don’t always celebrate what unites us. You can imagine weekly worship in that place would provide a strong sense of the ceremonial tradition of religion with all its spectacle – with that architecture, it could do little else.

Continued on page 4



Special health concerns: Bob & Diane Ferguson, Hank & Bev Kalloch, Tom Ryan & Phyllis Rathbun.



The ELUMC church office is officially closed when the East Longmeadow schools have a weather closing.



Edie Buckley - Redstone
Marilyn Burns -LifeCare, Wilbraham
Dottie Barnes Birch Manor in Chicopee
Dot Buzelle - Redstone
Joan Kearns Wells Country Village, Vernon CT
Paul Willer - Reeds Landing

Jesus said to visit the sick, care for the widow, the refugee, the orphan, for by doing so, you do so to him.

- Make time to visit these people (drop by for no more than 15 minutes).
- Listen or sit in silence.
- If they're too tired to talk tell them something about what's going on in your life.
- Thank them for spending time with you & tell them the church continues to hold them in prayer.
- Let them get on with their day.



CHECK YOUR BOX.

If you're a member, you have a mailbox outside the side sanctuary entrance.

Check it often.

You can help us reduce mailing costs and improve communications by promptly removing your mail.

You may notice that some people also use it to stash mints or keys or tissues.

A mailbox with your name on it -- it's a very good thing.



Joint service and softball game
Sunday, May 27



Laurie & Gary Conz
February 17

Wendy & Leo Coltey
February 18



**Mission Shares
 Market Place**

The Mission Shares marketplace will be open again in the fellowship hall after the worship service **Sunday, February 11th**. Pints of homemade soup (\$6 each), baked goods (\$2-\$5/ package), and photo notecards (\$3 each) will be available

to purchase. Sales benefit the mission work of the United Methodist Church. 'Hope to see you there!

Thank you.



Dear members, friends and family of ELUMC,

On behalf of *Open Heart Ministries* of Harrison County I wish to convey to you our sincere thanks for your extravagant



Thanks to all who contributed to the church's mission shares in 2017. We were able to pay our total commitment of \$26,541. This is the seventh year in a row that the church has paid 100% of its mission shares commitment.

Julie Dunlop
Church Treasurer

generosity of \$1,010 we recently received in the mail. Over the years your love, prayers and support have been so welcomed, appreciated and so needed. You all are awesome!

The ministry with our families goes on assisting with rent and utility bills/shut offs, offering resources and help. This month we had a challenge, we are working with a 96 year old resident whose furnace quit working. The program that is set up to assist folks like Ms. Mason has run out of funds. Her caregiver called *Open Heart Ministries* for help. So we took on the \$4,000 bill ourselves with help from all our partners. We put our trust in God that the money would come to help in this situation. Your gift has been a real blessing to our shared ministry and we thank you again. May God continue to bless you as we work together to serve the "least of these among us".

Respectfully yours,
Gayle Lesure, Deaconess/CCW
Director, *Open Heart Ministries*



ELUMC sends a BIG thank you to all those who have organized and contributed to the collations following funerals lately. You've creat-

ed opportunities for warm fellowship –spaces where people can support one another in their grief and celebrate their loved one. Thanks especially to Laurie Conz, Joan Clark, Diane Hemingway & Patty Ryan for their organizing efforts, for all those who have baked food, helped set up and stayed long after everyone leaves to clean up.

ALSO THANKS to Jon Knight, Joyce D'Angelo and L&J Linen Service for so graciously donating tablecloths and napkins to the receptions for that extra special formal touch. It makes a difference and we appreciate your making your business resources available to the church for many years!!



Dear Friends,

I am so grateful for your donation of handmade hats, gloves & mittens.

With your help, The Gray House can continue to serve those who struggle to meet their basic needs through our food pantry, adult education and youth programming. Thank you for helping keep our neighbors warm.

Teresa Spaziani-Liberti, *Executive Director*



Dear Friends,

Your support has brought us to strength now, as opportunity, changing minds, and the Bible itself call for action to bring justice and equality to our Church. Thank you for your recent gift of \$250. The generosity of Reconciling Communities like yours makes possible the lifesaving ministries of creating safe sanctuaries and just policies for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

We will put your gift to good use right away. Thank you for your Reconciling Community's inspiring support!

Many blessings,
Jan Lawrence, *Executive Director*



I'd like to thank you so much for the lovely poinsettia that someone brought me on Christmas eve. I just missed you. I had just left to go to my sister Barbara's for festivities with her, the grands and the great-grands. Good time had by all.

Happy New Year!

Love,
Joan L. Kearns

RETIRED LAWMAKER BEN SWAN HONORED AT MLK BREAKFAST

*excerpt from an article by Brian Steele
bsteele@repub.com*

Wesley United Methodist Church hosted its 35th annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Scholarship Breakfast on Saturday, January 13th, at the Sheraton Hotel, featuring a lineup of speakers who urged young people to keep up the fight for civil rights.

The breakfast honored retired state Rep. Ben Swan, a Springfield Democrat famed for his civil rights leadership on the local and national stage. State Rep. Bud Williams, who took over from Swan after the 2016 election, said his predecessor and friend was a "linchpin" in the nonviolent battle for equality.

"Springfield has honored me more than I could have ever expected in my life from anybody, anywhere, and I am eternally grateful for that," said Swan. The 83-year-old politician represented the 11th Hampden District at the statehouse for 22 years.

A U.S. Army veteran and lifelong activist, Swan was arrested several times in the 1960s for his protest work with the Springfield chapter of the Congress on Racial Equality. That work brought him to Montgomery, Ala., in March 1965, where he spent three weeks helping black Americans register to vote and advocating on their behalf. On March 21, 1965, he was one of thousands who marched with Dr. King in Selma.



State Rep. Carlos Gonzalez presented Swan with a citation on Saturday morning, thanking him for his work on behalf of all Americans; not just minorities, but everyone whose voice has gone unheard.

Most impressive were the 3 high school students who received scholarships, who came from 3 faith traditions, Muslim, Jewish & Christian and who spoke so passionately about serving their communities to help create justice.

Continued from front cover

Certainly it had the effect on us clergy in the front pews to sit up a little straighter, pay attention to what was right and proper, to revel in the pomp of it all and feel the weight of the tradition of the creeds recited throughout time. While not exactly a comfortable place for this Methodist, it was an occasion I could appreciate as an annual event.

More importantly, I could see the echoes of that space in our own sanctuary—so similar, if on a much smaller scale. And it became an opportunity to understand how visitors must experience our space. Our fixed pews facing forward, the raised chancel, distant communion table, and heavy, stately, raised pulpit communicate to worshipers who enter ELUMC. I pray for such fresh eyes so we may engage anew our tradition and the possibilities as we envision worship and how our renovated sanctuary space can support our building today for tomorrow.

Pastor Kelly



From left to right: Bishop Talbert W. Swan II, Nova Scotia Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, Church of God in Christ, Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar, N.E. Annual Conference, United Methodist Church, Rev. Laura Everett, Massachusetts Council of Churches, Bishop Douglas Fisher, Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts, & Bishop Mitchell Rozanski, Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield.

ONGOING MISSION OPPORTUNITIES



Justice for Our Neighbors A legal -aid ministry to help immigrants get accurate information and assistance, housed at Trinity on Sumner Avenue. Volunteers provide hospitality, child care, translation services, and dinner for the clients, the people who accompany them, and the staff who work with them. ELUMC is responsible for providing dinner one night every two months.



Loaves and Fishes Donations can be made to Loaves and Fishes to help support this important ministry that helps feed those who are homeless in the Springfield area. On the third Wednesday of each month, the Loaves and Fishes team meets

at 8:30 a.m. in the church kitchen to prepare a hearty lunch, which is then served at a local soup kitchen in neighboring Springfield. **Volunteers are needed** to help with food preparation (and/ or cleanup.)

Goat

The Billy goat out by the mailboxes has collected quarters over the years for a variety of ministries. Originally it helped us buy a goat through Heifer International, then it supported the Hattie B. Cooper center for children in Boston, then mosquito nets to eliminate malaria in Africa. Presently, these funds go to World Missions.

Donating food & pet supplies By the mailboxes are baskets to receive your donations of canned goods for the E.L. Food Bank and pet supplies for Dakin Animal Shelter.



Change to Change the World

Collect your spare change in a jar (the office has labels for your recycled jar) and when it's full convert it

to cash or just bring in the coins to fund Mission Shares around the globe.



Human beings aren't perfect. We may neglect to care for ourselves, for our bodies, for our relationships. Lent is the season we acknowledge our mistakes and

the mess we sometimes make of our lives. If you've ever felt unlovable, broken and worthless - like a worn-out space gone too long without an update, join us in our efforts to renovate. Because just like that outdated room, all we need is for someone to see our potential and give us another chance. Sometimes all it takes is love, patience and a few trips to the hardware store. The message of the gospel is that no matter where we are or what we've done, God sees beyond our imperfections, loves us, forgives us and offers us new life. With a little effort and some elbow grease, we can build a faith that will serve.

It begins on Ash Wednesday with a valentine from God on **February 14th at 7:00 pm.**

Each Wednesday following, there are brief meditative Taize services – a joint effort of the local churches (see the back of the calendar or the last page of the on-line version for the location each week). ELUMC is hosting **February 21st.**

In our Lent study we're exploring the outdated concepts of race and white supremacy and how they have formed the church and our world. No guilt, no shame, no blame, just civil conversation on difficult topics, deep exploration of what it means to be the church and what we as white allies can offer to the repair of the world.

Sunday morning 8:45 parlor – video & discussion
OR abbreviated conversation on **Thursday March 22nd at 6:45** at the parsonage

Part of rebuilding a life with God and one another must be an awareness of how issues of identity continue to divide us and how restoration is possible if we're willing to do the work. Sandpaper and paint will no doubt be required.

March 10th A Wrinkle in Time– on building a life embracing difference. Movie screening (for more information on *A Wrinkle in Time* please see page 7.)



Each week in our series we're exploring what makes our lives vital.

And we have lots of good videos to help us be more self aware, less anxious, open to compassion, healthy and calm. A few of the videos are part of worship but most are posted to the church Facebook page. So make sure to "Follow" ELUMC on Facebook, twitter and Instagram to get the latest info. And increase our reach by "liking" and sharing our info on social media with others.

Explore the best info about to how improve your life.

The [latest research](#) from the School of Medicine at Vanderbilt says attending worship improves your health:

"We've found that being in a place where you can flex those spiritual muscles is actually beneficial for your health. . . . Attendance at worship services is associated with less stress and enhanced longevity."



FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

Hi everyone,

The Roman month *Februarius* was named after the Latin term *februm*, which means *purification*. We probably won't do any of the things originally associated with this, like sacrificing goats or dogs. So what could we do?

The old song "Purify My Heart," suggest asking the Lord for "cleansing fire" to kindle the love that flows from heaven. If we want to be filled with the Spirit we need to empty ourselves of negative things. My favorite way to do that is to immerse myself in the readings, prayers and music of the service.

I will continue to use our Music Ministry to try and help us all get closer to God!

Grace and Peace,

Rick



A SPECIAL VISITOR FROM IRELAND

Submitted by Kelly Greene

Singles & More

The Singles & More group met on the second Tuesday in January, and with our luck, Eileen Brogan was in town, and was able to stop in for a visit. Fun was had by all, and the food was delicious. It happen to be Eileen's birthday, along with Barbara and Ruth, so we had a cake, and celebrated the January birth-days. Since Ruth was unable to attend, we were hoping that she could hear us singing Happy Birthday from her home not too far away.



Singles & More meets the second Tuesday of each month and all are invited. It is a potluck which starts at 6:00 p.m. Hope to see you there.



SPECIAL CHOIR OPPORTUNITY!

At the Church Service on February 4th as part of our "Vital Signs" series, we will be performing "Seasons of Love" from *Rent*. Anyone who would like to perform it with the Chancel Choir is invited to a special rehearsal to be held **Saturday, Feb. 3rd at 1:00 P.M.** I kindly ask that if you do not attend the rehearsal that you do not sing the next day.

- Rick



Worship Team

RETREATING TO CREATE MEMORABLE AND MEANINGFUL WORSHIP

by Kelly Greene

On Saturday, January 20th, eleven church members met at the Lay Leaders' home for the second part of our worship planning for the remainder of the season. The Hutchinsons hosted the event, which ended up as a productive day, with a bit of fun. We started the day reflecting on why we were meeting for the good part of a Saturday, and started to work on Lent. The creative juices were flowing, and we hope you enjoy the results of our gathering. It didn't hurt that we had bagels, egg sandwiches, muffins, fruit, and sweet caramel rolls to stimulate our minds and bodies. Jokes were flying throughout the day; well, one joke in particular which Vera counted as used thirteen times. We shared our "creative" sides, learned things about others that we never knew, and also heard some great stories. We hope this will all make better sense as we move closer to our Renovate Lenten series: Building a life with God.

The team is renovating a piece of its own and asks that if you break anything, especially the ceramic and dish-type items, you not toss them away—instead give the pieces to Chris Hutchison.

Our discussions included Ash Wednesday, which falls on Valentine's Day this year, Maundy Thursday (some very interesting conversations around a possible activity for this service), and of course, Easter (which falls on April Fool's Day this year). The team then moved on to Eastertide, and the ideas continued to flow. We talked about what our loved ones did to annoy us and what they did that was touching. The sharing brought on great laughter and excellent discussions. We also talked about the significant impact of what a simple thank you or acknowledgement can make.

We noted that Recognition Sunday would come early this year; on May 20th, Day of Pentecost. The joint service will also be earlier this year, during Memorial Day weekend, on May 27th. Hopefully, our softball players are not away that weekend. Carrington Scholarship weekend will be on June 3rd, where scholarships will be given out during the luncheon after the service.

Lunch was somewhere in between all the dynamic work, which included broccoli and cheese soup, chicken tortilla soup, grilled cheese and tomato sandwiches, brownies, and of course, more chocolate.

The team then moved on to discuss the "Out-of-the-Ordinary" Summer services—some on the Chancel and some outdoors. There was even some talk about having the pews gone by this series so we can worship in the round on one level. We were inspired by the outside August services, where the circular set-up was crucial for the sharing of stories by members. To end the day, we moved back to the current series to ensure that we were still on target, as this series was originally planned back at our Spirit Fire retreat in October.

As we were leaving, Tom McGowan remembered last year's event where snow needed to be cleared from the cars. The weather cooperated much better this year.

We hope that you will enjoy the fruits of our labor and also hope you can join us for our next workshop planning event. Our hope is that something in each series speaks to you, building (or re-building) your relationship with God, where you will walk away with a meaningful worship experience.



A WRINKLE IN TIME

A Smith graduate and New England resident, Madeleine L'Engle has written many books full of wisdom and compassion that help make the world a better place. Several of her books have been used for church studies.

A Wrinkle in Time, a Newbery Medal award winner, has been called one of the most significant novels of our time. This groundbreaking science-fiction and fantasy story of darkness and light, fear and friendship is a classic in children's literature.

The book has been made into a movie so let's go see it together. **Save the date March 10th**, the first showing at Enfield Cinemas.

In the mean time, you've got enough time to read the classic before we see Disney's interpretation.



Thanks to all the team leaders who sent in reports for our annual report. This annual effort to gather all the ministry we've been about in the last year not only helps to archive our efforts but is also a great way to celebrate our work, to evaluate our efforts and to help inspire our way forward.

Please contact the church office if you would like a copy of the 2017 Annual Report.



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 East Longmeadow, MA 01028-2998
 413-525-7416 • *a reconciling congregation*
 www.elumc.org

Address Service Requested



THE SUNDAY EXPERIENCE

8:30 a.m. – Bible Study for Jr./Sr. High & Adults
 10:00 a.m. – Worship & Church School
 (pre-schoolers through Grade 5)
 Professional child care is provided for
 “Cribs & Creepers”/“Toddlers & Twos.”
 11:15 a.m. – Fellowship Time

**For the on-line church calendar
 follow this link:**
<http://57650311.view-events.com/>

The Methodist Messenger is a journal of the ministry of The East Longmeadow United Methodist Church. **Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.**



EASTER FLOWERS

Donating a flowering plant to beautify our sanctuary, is a wonderful way to honor or remember a loved one in celebration of Easter. The **DEADLINE** for ordering plants is **Sunday, March 18, 2018** Please complete this order form; attach your check, payable to ELUMC, with “Easter flowers” on the memo line; and submit to the church office by the deadline. Flowers may be picked up following the worship service on Easter Sunday.

Name: _____

In Honor of: _____

In Memory of: _____

___ Easter Lilies @ \$10.00



___ Daffodils @ \$10.00



___ Tulips @ \$10.00

LENTEN TAIZE SERVICES ON WEDNESDAY NIGHTS



The East Longmeadow Ministerium (Methodist, Congregational, Catholic, Lutheran, Orthodox, and Episcopal Churches in town) are excited to offer a series of Lenten Taize Services throughout these holy days of Lent.

Beginning on **Wednesday, February 21st** and concluding on **Wednesday, March 21st** area churches will welcome you to come and take part in Taize prayer and worship.

Taize is a style of chant which involves simple passages of scripture or prayers being repeated over and over again. In many ways, Taize singing is deeply calming and meditative and can often help people sense deep peace and connect with God's presence. Additionally, Taize services usually involve candles, candle lighting to signify prayers, icons (religious images which can help focus and direct the prayers of those gathered), and moments of silence.

The schedule for Wednesday Services, which begin at 7:00 p.m. and will last roughly 30 minutes, is as follows:

2/21 at the East Longmeadow United Methodist Church located at 215 Somers Rd.

2/28 at St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church located at 128 Maple St.

3/7 at St. Paul Lutheran Church located at 181 Elm St.

3/14 at St. Mark's Episcopal Church located at 1 Porter Rd.

3/21 at the First Congregational Church located on the Rotary.