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## March & April 2009 North Star

A publication of North Congregational Church, UCC

413-549-0500 Church Office  
413-323-0377 Co-Pastors Nada Sellers and Patricia Koons

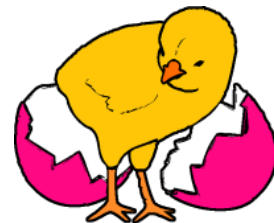
Web Address: [www.north-church.org](http://www.north-church.org)

Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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North Congregational Church  
North Congregational Church, UCC  
PO Box 9613  
North Amherst, MA 01059-9613



***Time Sensitive Material  
Please Open Immediately!***

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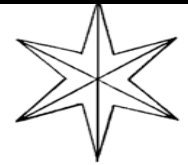
## North Star

North Church – UCC News

March & April 2009

Unconditionally Welcoming, Decidedly Christian

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### In Our Thoughts...

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When we are present with one another, when we take the time to communicate and to understand – to “be with” – we sow the seeds of peace.  
The only way this can happen is in offering our time and ourselves.

- Kathryn T. Adams “Sowing the Seeds of Peace” *Alive Now* March-April 2009

By the calendar, we are emerging from a long cold winter, eagerly watching and waiting for the warming breezes that signal a new season has arrived. The cycle of our Christian year flows in the same vein, as Lent guides us to Holy Week and Easter, and that glorious light revealed for all to enjoy! Days are still mostly cool and darkness still arrives earlier in the evening than we’d like, but that’s changing... The transformation we are waiting for is quietly taking place!

North Church’s recent Annual Meeting gave us a chance to review our own emerging realities... We launch forward in a year where deficit spending, and continued use of reserve funds to cover expenses remain a must. We trust that the Spirit continues to enliven and encourage our ministries and service at North Church, and yet we realize we need drastic growth and changes in the stewardship of our resources. What can be we do?

Kathryn Adams brings me right back down to one of the things that Lent is all about: allowing the sowing of seeds of peace in the depths of our souls, and in the relationships found around us in our church community. What is God doing as the darkness fades and the new light of Spring grows even brighter? I’m praying for the continuing opportunities in which we learn to “be with” others through the sharing of ourselves and our time. Grab a bite, share a cup of tea, take a walk, share a phone call; the new day is dawning and there’s so much more to do for Jesus!

Pastor Nada

## Spiritual Care & Nurture

"... every prayer makes a difference."

- ✦ Ask for God to be especially close to those who are grieving.
- ✦ Pray for emerging possibilities to be in partnership with friends at the Amherst Survival Center through the Women Building Bridges project.
- ✦ Give thanks for the willingness of new leaders, Carrie Pinheiro, Alison Maslanka, and Malissa Vyce, to accept positions on the Executive Council.
- ✦ Remember our brothers & sisters in Haiti; pray for Marky & family as he travels back home in mid-March for a short visit.
- ✦ Continue to pray for God's blessing of growth and vitality for North Church.
- ✦ Please keep the following in your prayers:  
Margaret Bates, Dottie Jenks, Lucile Sevoian, Norm Clarke, the Giard family, Lucille Benda, Jeanette Serwa, Julia Evans, Lester Sottile, Neal, Julie, the Brown family, the Maslanka family, the Bousel family, the Murfin family, and the Parent family.

If you have any prayer concerns please contact the Pastors at 413-323-0377 or Ginger Fowler, Ministry Commission Coordinator at 413-658-5654.

## Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for our May-June Newsletter will be April 19th. Please send all Newsletter submissions to me at [nccadmin@crocker.com](mailto:nccadmin@crocker.com). I am more than happy to receive anyone's entries any time before the deadline. Let me know that the email is specifically for the Newsletter by putting 'Newsletter' somewhere in the subject line. Thank you! Lee Steventon

This newsletter is produced by NCC with special help from Barbara Jenkins, Bill Wiley and Nada Sellers.; layout and final copy by Lee Steventon. Your submissions are welcome, subject to review and possible editing. Questions? Please contact us at [nccadmin@crocker.com](mailto:nccadmin@crocker.com).

## FYI

March 1: First Sunday of Lent

March 7 (morning) Service Day for North Church from 9AM – 12 noon. We'll fix up the Dickinson Room, as well as the Bates Room (lower level of the church).

March 7 (evening) Soup & Song fundraiser, 5PM – 6:30 PM All You Can Eat; 7PM Concert

March 9: Executive Council Meeting @ 7pm in Dickinson Room (Parish Hall basement).

March 11: Worship Planning will hold its next gathering at 5:30p in the Bates Room. Come if you're interested in what's going on in worship at NCC.

March 12: Book Group – 7pm in Dickinson Room; first 10 chapters of *Take This Bread*.

March 14: Service Day #2 at NCC 9 am to 12 noon; continuing projects, preparing for Spring!

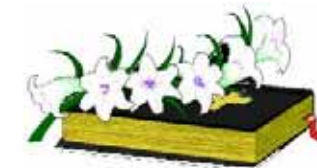
March 15: Third Sunday of Lent Theme: Prayer

March 22: One Great Hour of Sharing special offering will be received; Service of Healing and potluck; Theme: Relationships

March 29: Fifth Sunday worship activities planned. More TBA!

April 5: Palm Sunday

April 12: Easter Sunday



## Birthdays in March & April

March	10 <sup>th</sup> – Jhonny Massilien	April	7 <sup>th</sup> – Duncan Simpson
	31 <sup>st</sup> – Pamela Simpson		16 <sup>th</sup> – Pat Koons
			30 <sup>th</sup> – Schuyler Evans

We would like to have the birthdays of everyone at North Church, so please reply to [nccadmin@crocker.com](mailto:nccadmin@crocker.com) with yours, if you have not done so in the past 6 months. Thanks.

## Church Family Updates

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Dottie Giard sends thanks from her grandson, Steven Giard, for the cards and items mailed to him from North Church while he was stationed in Iraq. Steven has recently been made a Sergeant in the U.S. Marines and is currently stationed in Yuma, Arizona. Dottie herself continues to try to see life from the "glass is half full" perspective. In spite of limits from increasing macular degeneration and other health problems, Dottie enjoys astonishing medical professionals with her ability to hold complex yoga poses. Dottie attends a yoga class each week; we should all be so motivated at 89!

While Margaret Bates, another of our older members at 95, doesn't do yoga, she faithfully attends an exercise class each morning. These two ladies are definitely an inspiration for all of us. Both of them are so pleased to receive the church bulletin each week. We thank Bill Wiley for sending bulletins each week to our older and more distant members.

## New Members Elected to the Executive Council

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North Church celebrates the election of new members to the Executive Council. Carrie Pinheiro will become the new Clerk, replacing Sherre Harrington, who has moved from the area. Malissa Vyce and Alison Maslanka will share the position of Management Commission Coordinator. We thank all three for stepping up to fill these important positions and look forward to their valued input during Council meetings.

The Executive Council for 2009 will be made up of:

Moderator -- Barbara Jenkins

Clerk -- Carrie Pinheiro

Treasurer -- Mary Jane Laus

Assistant Treasurer -- Bill Wiley

Mission Commission Coordinator -- Chris Normandin

Ministry Commission Coordinator -- Ginger Fowler

Management Commission Coordinators -- Alison Maslanka & Malissa Vyce

Trust Fund Treasurer -- Jonathan Evans



## Education Express

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If you'd like to help out more with our sponsored elementary school in Springfield and you shop at Big Y, please consider making Margaret C. Ells your school of choice to receive Education Express points for much needed equipment. You can read more about the program at <http://www.bigy.com/education/> or ask in the stores.

## Soup & Song: 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Benefit for Not Bread Alone

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*A community meal program offering fellowship and fresh, hearty food to the homeless and hungry*

Saturday, March 7, 2009 (Snow Date: Sunday, March 8)

**First Congregational Church, 165 Main Street, Amherst**  
(Across from the Police Station)

5:00 - 6:30 pm "All You Can Eat"  
4 great soups, garlic bread & live jazz music

7:00 pm CONCERT (Door Prizes & Raffle)

**Featuring:**

**Tony Vacca**, an innovative American percussionist with Jazz and World Music roots & **The South Hadley Children's Chorus**

**Tickets -- Concert only:** Only at the door - \$5 Kids, \$10 Adults

**Combination Meal & Concert:**

Advance sale (A. J. Hastings, Amherst Books) \$7 Kids, \$12 Adults  
At the door - \$10 Kids, \$15 Adults



For more information, contact Hwei-Ling Greeney  
(NBA Coordinator) at 413-253-4882

Generously underwritten by PeoplesBank, and The Rotary Club of Amherst

Not Bread Alone is a program of the Center for Human Development

## Women Building Bridges Project Update

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Our participation in this project with Class Action, the Amherst Survival Center and three other UCC churches took another step forward when Joanne Sunshower from Class Action met with North Church people who have agreed to be in a leadership role for the project. At the meeting were Hanifah Murfin, Patience Bousel, Mary Jane Laus, Barbara Jenkins and Pastor Pat Koons. Chris Normandin was unable to be at this meeting.

The major outcome of the meeting was a decision to survey North Church participants about their gifts *and* their needs. Most often, we think about what gifts we can give, as if we have no needs. It is especially important, as we prepare to partner with Amherst Survival Center clients, that we learn to think not just in a one-direction path, that of how we can help, but also of how we can receive. As we begin to understand this reciprocity among ourselves more thoroughly, it will help us recognize that with the women of the Amherst Survival Center.

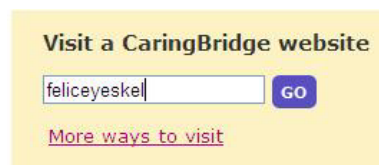
The group will be working with Pastors Nada and Pat to develop this next step more fully. Mary Jane, Patience and Hanifah have already begun to meet with Joanne and focus groups from the Amherst Survival Center to begin initial discussion of how their consumers and North Church can work together.

## Felice Yeskel's Journey

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For those of us who know Felice Yeskel from Class Action, you may want to read about Felice's journey since her cancer diagnosis in early February, right after our last Building Bridges workshop in Hadley. Please go to [www.caringbridge.com](http://www.caringbridge.com)

Where it says to enter a website name, type in feliceyeskel. There you can read her journal from each day and you can leave messages of support. Continue to pray for Felice and her family. If you have questions, please contact Chris Normandin at [hallnorm@comcast.net](mailto:hallnorm@comcast.net).



## WBB Classism Survey Reminder

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If you have not already done so, please return your completed Women Building Bridges survey on class & classism to the Church Office or mail directly to:  
Class Action P.O. Box 350, 104 Russell Street, Hadley, MA 01035-0350  
Thank you!

## Expanding our Horizons

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North Church would like to thank the Rumi Club from the University of Massachusetts for their delicious gift of Noah's Pudding at fellowship time on February 15<sup>th</sup>. The Rumi Club's purpose is to create a platform where people from different cultures, religions and traditions can come together and develop an understanding of each other by emphasizing similarities and common values based on Rumi's teachings. Most of the club members are Turkish and to celebrate the holiday of Ashura, they have been offering this traditional pudding to Amherst area houses of worship over the past few years as part of their outreach. Ashura signifies many events for Muslims, amongst the most significant being the day Noah's Ark set on dry land. The month-long festivities center on promoting friendship, good relations between neighbors and universal peace and understanding.

## Evading Winter's Grasp

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North Church also sends thanks to our sponsored Boy Scout Troop 504 and their Scoutmaster, Lyle Denit, for their gift of ice removal around the entrance to Parish Hall. Not only did they tackle the job, they purchased a shovel that makes the job much easier. We also thank Mary Jane Laus and Bill Wiley for their efforts in removing stubborn ice that was blocking entrances. It's been a tough year, as we all know.

## Drum lessons with Gary Rzab

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Gary is a professional drummer who has been teaching for over 20 years. Beginning through advanced students are welcome. Instruction can be on a drum set or hand drums, and lessons are offered in Ashfield or in the basement of our own church's Parish Hall. Call Gary at (413) 634-0274 if interested.

## Voice lessons with Eileen Ruby

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Are you a choral singer, car crooner, shower chanteuse, or karaoke nut who's been longing for some guidance to give you the confidence to move out into the limelight? Perhaps you're a student, dancer, or actor who keeps almost getting the lead . . . and then ending up in the chorus. Voice lessons with Eileen can help take you where you want to go. Eileen has taught private and group voice at Smith College, Amherst College, and UMass, and she holds master and bachelor degrees in vocal performance from UMass. Eileen teaches in the North Church Parish Hall. Call (413) 774-7969 for more information.

