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March & April 2010 North Star  
A publication of North Congregational Church, UCC

413-549-0500 Church Office

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

Sunday Worship: 10:30 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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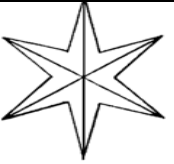
# North Star

North Church – UCC News

March & April 2010

Unconditionally Welcoming, Decidedly Christian

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## In My Thoughts...

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*Hope means to keep living amid desperation,  
and to keep humming in the darkness.  
Hope is knowing, that there is love;  
it is trust in tomorrow; it is falling asleep  
and waking again when the sun rises.  
In the midst of a gale at sea it is to discover land.  
In the eyes of another it is to see that [s/he] understands you.*

Henri Nouwen in *With Open Hands*

I've been taking my time in shaping this month's edition of "In My Thoughts" because in the midst of my Lenten journey, I've noticed how much I need to keep giving hope a chance... Hoping for longer days with more sunlight and more green life showing up outside. Hoping for our energies and devotion of the season to bear the fruit of deepening faith and greater wisdom into the mystery of the cross and the way of Jesus. Hoping that Spring energies given to the life of the church in studying, learning, praying and welcoming can encourage us as to what the Spirit is up to in our midst. Hoping that we continue to see possibilities and even a call to action, as we consider the new directions identified for our church in recent rounds of evaluation and discussion (See Annual Meeting update below). Hopes nurtured as I consult on behalf of our congregation with those who may be a part of guiding our next steps...

Somehow, the focus of Lent, when we recommit ourselves to travel with Jesus and to share God's priorities in our lives, offers this pause. But in pausing we do not simply cease to be about being the church; far from it! In our season of reflection, don't forget that God's call to you and I can break through loud and clear! What are you hearing? Be a part of the listening and responding that's happening in our worship services; join

*(continued on next page...)*

in Holy Week observances of Maundy Thursday, (Stations on the Lenten Way) and Good Friday (Community service at Grace Episcopal). And most of all celebrate the joyful surprises of Easter on the first Sunday of April!

“...[W]e have three things to lead us,” writes Paul to the Corinthian church, “Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.” (1 Cor. 13:13 *The Message*)

Peace,

**Pastor Nada**

FYI

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**March 20**     **St. Patrick’s Day Boiled Dinner**, South Cong. Church in Amherst, 5:30p & 7p, \$12

**April 10**     **Walk & Roll for Aphasia**, registration begins at 11am (more information on insert)

**April 11-23**     Series of “**Church Chat**” gatherings planned to discuss specific developments in NCC’s long-range planning process

**April 25**     **NCC Potluck & Long-Range Planning meeting**, after morning worship in Parish Hall.

**April 25**     First Annual “**Amherst Follies**” an Old Time Variety Show for the whole family to benefit the Amherst Senior Center at 2pm at ARHS, \$10 adults / \$7 children

**May 1**     Northampton **PRIDE Parade** starting at 12noon in Lampron Park. NCC will once again be marching and setting up a booth behind Thorne’s market to greet revelers and hand out info about our church. See Ginger, Faye or Bill for more information. **SAVE THE DATE!** You won’t want to miss it!

**June 18-19**     Relay for Life walk in support of the National Cancer Foundation at Look Park - NCC will walk to raise funds and awareness as well as to represent North Church. More info soon. Check with Bill Wiley for more information. **SAVE THE DATES!**

**June 19**     Mass Conference of UCC - Annual Conference meetings in Worcester, MA

## Spiritual Care and Nurture

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*Please keep the following friends of North Church in your thoughts and prayers:*

For those who are grieving or adjusting to loss:

The Jenks family (Dottie), The Sottile family (Myrtle)  
The Higgins family (Christina), The Diduk family (Bob)  
Kevin Hargreaves, The Patte family (Dick)

For those with health concerns:

Pauline Richmond, Mark Kipperman, Amy Johnson, Julia Evans,  
Jeanette Serwa, Geoffery Vyce, Dave Maslanka, Mida Dunn,  
Norm Clarke, Chris Normandin, Hanifah Murfin, Bill & Linda Perry,  
Pat & Nada (for pet Duncan), Barb Jones, Sally Farfield, the Fernet family

For life changes & challenges:

Margaret Bates, Dottie Giard & family, Nazita Gamini & family, Diane Carraci,  
Neal & Samme, Maria Yorgakopoulou, Eric Brown, the Parent family

*Drop thy still dews of quietness, till all our strivings cease; take from our souls  
the strain and stress, and let our ordered lives confess the beauty of thy peace.*  
- John Greenleaf Whittier (The Brewing of Soma)

*Please notify Bill, Ginger, or Pastor Nada of any updates or changes to this list. Thanks!*

## Birthdays in March and April

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

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

## Memorial Service for Dorothy A. Jenks

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We at North Church mourn the loss and celebrate the life of one of our long-time members: Dottie Jenks. Dottie contributed so much to North Church over the years, from her service as a Deacon, to picking up our mail, to making sure the church was neat and tidy. We will always remember her warm smile and hard-working, helpful nature! Pastor Nada assisted with a private burial service at North Cemetery in Amherst, and memorial service will be held on March 21 after Sunday services.



AMHERST, Dorothy A. (Dottie) Jenks, 80, of North Amherst passed away on February 19, 2010 after a long struggle with Alzheimer's disease. Born in Northampton, she was the daughter of the late Harold A. and Hazel A. Haskins. She was the wife of the late Nelson A. Jenks. A life long resident of the area, Mrs. Jenks served with the US Postal Service for 32 years until her retirement in 1998. She is survived by her four children Nancy Hankinson and her husband Jim, Patricia Jenks, Alan Jenks and his wife Nancy, and Philip Jenks and his wife Kellie. She was the grandmother of five and great-grandmother of three.

## West Cummington Church Fire

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North Church sent a letter of condolences and offer of support to the West Cummington Congregational Church family after the tragic fire that destroyed their church. Their message back was as follows:

Dear friends at North Church:

Your loving letter is such a comfort to us at this sad time. The loss of our cherished and historic church building is still a shock. Your prayers and kind words give us hope. In due time, we'll take the path toward rebuilding. We surely will call on you when there is a need.

Heartfelt thanks,  
The West Cummington Church Family



## Foundation Honor for Haiti

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A letter from Marky Jean-Pierre:

I am taking a trip to Haiti to work with the members of Foundation Honor for Haiti (FONHOH) in regard to the work the group has been doing before the earthquake and the rebuilding efforts after the earthquake. FONHOH is an established grassroots organization that has been working in Haiti since 2005. In 2007 a branch was established in the Amherst area to support the work being done in Haiti. We are supported by the generous contributions of our friends around the world. Members of the North Congregational Church have been very present in helping the group to reach out to the people in need in Haiti. Before the earthquake, the church had provided storage and had helped the group to gather a significant amount of materials, all of which were shipped to Haiti. The trailer that was used to ship the items is now being used as a shelter for up to 7 Haitians who lost their house in the earthquake.

The education system is one of the most affected sectors. Before the quake a bare 50% of primary school-aged children were enrolled in school, with less than 35% of them completing their primary education, and less than 2 percent successfully finishing secondary school, according to UNICEF.

The situation has worsened dramatically after the quake. The educational system lost numerous teachers and school personnel. More than 80% of school buildings from preschool to higher education collapsed in the capital region and up to 50% of schools outside of the capital have also been impacted. 541 teachers, 189 educational cadres, and 3,951 students have died in the quake. At the state university, 350 professors and students died, and the private universities lost 900 professors and students. It is estimated that up 3 million children are currently out of school.

Our main concern in the aftermath of the January 12<sup>th</sup> earthquake is to increase access to education in Haiti. We are particularly interested in providing access to education for poor children who are out of school in the remote areas and the children of families who are displaced as a result of the earthquake. We are now focused on two areas: La Plaine (which is about 8 miles from Port-au-Prince) and Lagoun (a remote area in the country side located between the cities of Lascahobas and Belladere).

## Annual Meeting 2010

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Sunday Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010 found the North Church congregation coming together for our Annual Meeting, in order to review the 2009 Annual Report of the church, and to agree on budget plans for 2010.

Moderator Barbara Jenkins invited the congregation to read all reports carefully at a time outside of the meeting so that their full import might be recognized. She noted that our leaders in areas of mission, ministry, finance, investments and properties have all shared their perspectives, giving measured looks at what the congregation has been doing and what we should expect moving forward in the next year. Feedback and any questions are most welcome.

Moving forward in 2010 into the future God will provide, involves a continuation of deficit spending and hence, further use of church reserve funds which are quickly disappearing. Mary Jane Laus and Jonathan Evans both underscored the urgent story contained in the numbers for last year, and the items which are anticipated for 2010. A careful review of our 2010 proposed budget ensued, and with suggestions and modifications noted, the budget was approved. The congregation also chose to approve a modification of our bylaws which will provide for the election of church delegates on a regular basis, as representatives at association (Hampshire) and conference levels of the wider United Church of Christ in Massachusetts.

Recognizing that continuing at current levels of expenditure is not a sustainable path, Barbara and Pastor Nada both spoke to the on-going discernment process which began last fall, and led to the formation of Action Teams to evaluate the options before the church. Receiving Action Team input, the Executive leadership and the Pastoral Relations Committee had been working closely with our pastor to move forward with the priorities identified in our discernment process, namely possible partnerships with a congregation or congregations in our area that might reduce our building expenses and free us to focus energies on pursuing our mission of a being an invitational, Spirit-led Christian community. Following the presentation of steps underway in these areas, and a period of discussion, both Barbara and Pastor Nada pointed to additional gatherings and updates which will be scheduled in the next quarter.

Submitted by Barbara Jenkins and Nada Sellers

## Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ

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Dear Members of North Congregational Church, UCC:

Thank you for your generous gifts in 2009. Thank you for joining with us to change lives. Let me share with you a little bit of how your gifts to the Massachusetts Conference and the United Church of Christ are changing lives.

- ✦ The victims of the earthquake in Haiti are receiving relief for today and help for tomorrow.
- ✦ Children are learning of God's love for them in safe churches, using excellent curriculum, taught by trained and resourced Christian educators.
- ✦ Those who have felt excluded and rejected by the Church have found a radical and inclusive welcome that has affirmed their value as beloved children of God and full members of the community of faith. New people have been invited to walk with us in the way of Christ.
- ✦ A more just world is imagined and realized, from advocacy on behalf of the poor in Congress to homelessness awareness events in Boston, from church bells pealing 350 times to warn of global warming to fair trade coffee, from celebrating 90 ONA churches in '09 to social networking for justice and peace.
- ✦ More and more people are finding the joy of discipleship, as they learn to give more generously of their money and time and to share their faith more fully.

Visit [www.macucc.org](http://www.macucc.org) and [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org) to learn more about how your gifts are changing lives by engaging in mission, nurturing congregational vitality and supporting pastoral excellence.

Please find below a list of gifts from your congregation received between January 1, 2009 and January 19, 2010. *Please note that Fellowship Dues on this statement is only the Conference portion.*

Yours in Christ, Andrew Gustafson

Associate Conference Minister for Stewardship & Financial Development

Date	Fund	Received
12/31/2009	BU - Our Church's Wider Mission Basic Support	\$2,623.00
12/31/2009	SP - Christmas Fund (VOC)	\$400.00
12/31/2009	SP - Neighbors in Need	\$265.00
11/10/2009	CDHSH - Fellowship Dues - Hampshire Assoc.	\$869.20
4/29/2009	SP - One Great Hour of Sharing	\$466.00
		<b>\$4,623.20</b>

## Walk and Roll for Aphasia

Graduate students in the department of Communication Disorders at the University of Massachusetts Amherst are coordinating a Walk and Roll for Aphasia, to take place on April 10, 2010.

Aphasia is an impairment in the ability to speak, understand, read, and/or write, usually as a result of stroke. According to the American Heart Association, approximately every 40 seconds, someone has a stroke in the U.S., and about one fifth of these result in aphasia. It is *not* an impairment of intelligence, but losing the ability to communicate dramatically reduces a person's access to normal social, vocational, and recreational opportunities. In spite of the large number of people affected by stroke and aphasia, public awareness remains relatively low.

The Walk and Roll for Aphasia will increase aphasia awareness in the community, and participants' fundraising efforts will benefit local aphasia outreach efforts and support clinical research in the department of Communication Disorders at UMass.

Interested? You can download registration forms from <http://blogs.umass.edu/jacque> (under the "Aphasia Walk" link) or pick them up from the church office (just ask Lee).

If you need additional information, please contact Tara Marchacos at [tmarchac@student.umass.edu](mailto:tmarchac@student.umass.edu) or at 413-388-8828. Thank you.

## Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for our May-June newsletter will be April 21st. 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).

April 2010						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>  Pamela Simpson's birthday	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>  Easter Sunday!	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>  Book Group @ 7pm	<b>7</b> Admin Mtg 7pm in Bates Mtg Room  Duncan Simpson's birthday	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>  Walk and Roll for Aphasia
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>  Exec. Mtg @ 6:30pm	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>  Pat Koons' birthday	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> NCC Potluck & Long-Range Planning Mtg  Amherst Follies Variety Show 2pm, ARHS	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>  Schuyler Evans' birthday	<b>1</b>