



# MARKINGS

JUNE 2016

**A publication of  
South Acton  
Congregational  
Church**

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Welcome to South Acton Congregational Church. The foundation of our beloved church rests on God's unconditional love and boundless grace. We seek to know God and follow the teachings of Jesus.

We welcome people of every race and culture who are young and old; single, married and divorced. We welcome people of every physical, mental and intellectual ability; sexual orientation and gender identity; every educational background and economic circumstance. We believe diversity enriches our faith community.

All people are made in God's image. You are invited to continue your faith journey with us.

## From Liz...

### How do you make a vital church?

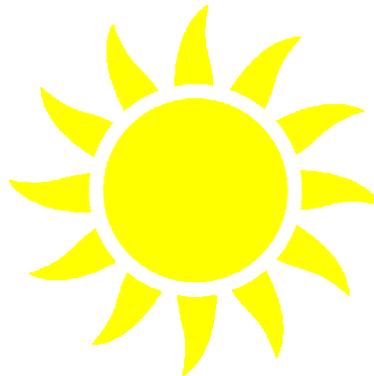
I teach a course at Episcopal Divinity School called Theology of Ministry in Small Churches. Students are always surprised when I define small: in church small is not about numbers but about attitude. Small churches look backward, not forward; they focus inward, not outward; they are spiraling down, not up; they are full of worry more than full of the Holy Spirit.

The opposite of a small church is a "vital" church, one that matters to the community where they are located. One that helps people move, one that pays attention to what other members are struggling with, one that reaches out to check-in with someone in need. A vital church has people who are doing mission, and they are doing mission with each other as well. A vital church is asking how can we serve our community?

Churches that are small in number sometimes worry that they are not doing enough but God's call is not

to do everything--it is to do a few important things.

First, to be a place that is full of the spirit, so that when people in need stop in they find a spirit of love and welcome, a radical grace. We work on that by engaging in our own spiritual disciplines: knitting and praying and study and social gatherings. Worship. Choir. Boards and committees. Potlucks!

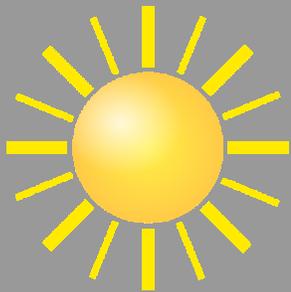


Second, to be a place that is connected to the neighborhood, so that people who have needs know they can turn to us. Direct services ministries like SACC movers, and social justice ministries like anti-gun violence actions are examples of this. So is our Monday night Pray for Peace meditation group and our mindfulness learning group (starts June 15!)

Third, they communicate both the first item and the second. Using all of the sources of outreach for their time and place, they make sure people know of their radical welcome and of their active outreach.

On the scale of vitality, SACC is doing pretty well. We've got the basics. Of course things can be improved--a tweak here, and a turn-around there, but our essential form is not small, its vital. Join us as we figure out our next steps for being all that we can be--a vital church with small numbers, but a huge heart, and huge helping of the spirit.

Liz



*"Faith is not  
the belief  
that God will  
do what you  
want. It is  
the belief  
that God will  
do what is  
right."*

## From the Diaconate

This will be my last Markings article as I am stepping down as Deacon Chair. **Jane Epstein, Bill Manning, Linsey Hurley** and **Michelle Abroff** are also stepping down. New deacons starting in September include **Angela Aaronson, Amber Klauer, Judy Hodge, Bob Van Meter** and **Peter Babcock**. Returning deacons are **Sarah Bradbury, Steve Hadden**, and . We are grateful to have found fabulous new

members. I know I speak for everyone moving on when I say we have enjoyed serving SACC and we hope we have been helpful and supportive to all of our Parish members.

Our final meeting for this year will be on **Wednesday, June 8th** at Steve Hadden's house. We will celebrate with an end of year BBQ and welcome the new crew on board. Parishes will be assigned at the first

meeting in September, the current group of Deacons will cover the summer services.

I wish you all a glorious summer, enjoy the warmth and sunshine, blessings to everyone.

Terry Martins  
Diaconate Chair

*Ed. - thank you so much to Terry, Jane, Bill, Linsey and Michelle for your service to our wonderful church!*

## Worship in June and beyond

**June 5** Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Communion Sunday & Congregational Meeting

Galatians 1:11-24 and Psalm 146

What does it mean (or not mean!) to be a Christian Believer?

**June 12** Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Children's Sunday & Annual Meeting

Jonah and the Whale

All children who come will have a chance to participate in the worship if they choose.

**June 19** Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Father's Day

Luke 7:36-8:3 and Galatians 3:23-29

Forgiveness makes us Welcome All

**June 26** Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

9:30am Worship in Boxboro with Liz Preaching

Luke 9:51-62

Don't look back! Follow Jesus. (9:30am at Boxborough through July 18)

**June 31 to August 28** Worship

(9:30 at SACC)

**September 4** to back to usual worship schedule.

Youth Group,  
Mission Trips  
Community  
Service



*"The world's  
favorite season  
is the spring.  
All things seem  
possible in  
May."  
- Edwin Way  
Teale*

# Congregational Meeting

Right after church on **Sunday, June 5.**

Childcare offered --  
All Welcome! Non-  
Members and

Members. Join us to hear about what was said in the Listening Circles and to prioritize all of the ideas that were generated.



# Join the Choirs

All kids (K-8th grade) are invited to join our **Junior Choir**, led by Amber Klauer. The Junior Choir rehearses every Sunday after

church, and sings an anthem during worship every few weeks. Our **Senior Choir** rehearses Wednesday evenings at 7:45 pm and sings every

Sunday except the last of the month. No experience needed - just come and enjoy!

# Pray for Peace

Please join us every **Monday night, 7:30 - 8:30 pm** in the church library for one hour of prayer or meditation - we'll pray for an end to gain violence. If you

can't be present, you can join in during that hour from wherever you are, sit quietly and join us for an hour of peaceful prayer. Led by Linsey Hurley.



# Friday Coffee



We are getting together at the Maynard Bean House on **Fridays from 9:30 to 11 AM.** Come join us for fellowship over coffee or tea to commiserate, vent, share what you're reading,

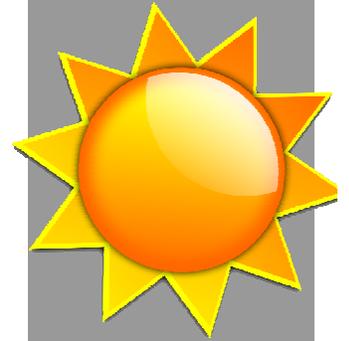
thinking, seeing, feeling, wondering, concerned about, and latest news of the church, science, arts, town, country, world - or just to listen to your friends at SACC.

# Be Stigma Free

May was Mental Health month. NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, began a campaign asking people to be stigma-free. Part of the effort was a PSA with Mayim Bialik, the Phd and actress of "Big Bang Theory" fame. The link is <https://www.nami.org/Press-Media/NAMI-PSAs>

In our country, 1 in 5 people is affected by a mental health condition. This PSA is an attempt to make people aware of how words and conversation can impact an individual who is struggling. Some words can not only be hurtful but can push an individual into denial and discourage that individual

from seeking help. It is important to change the conversation, get rid of hurtful words, and see the person, not the illness. The Good News is that we do that when we follow the teachings of Jesus.



## Learn Mindfulness - Free Classes

**Wednesdays 6:45 - 8:00 PM, starting June 15.**

These sessions teach the principles of mindfulness, and include practice meditation to strengthen those principles in ourselves. This centuries-old discipline provides many benefits in our harried world, including: calmness; clarity of thought under stress; emotional balance;

resilience in difficult social and work situations; and many more.

The series will start with 12 sessions, and will respond to participants wishes as our collective knowledge and ability develops. Reference will be made to several faith traditions, but the series is not focused on

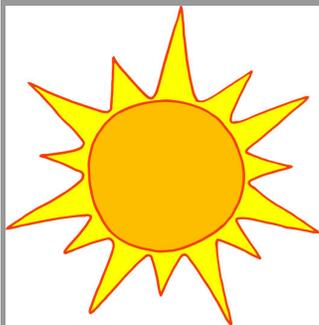
religion. It focuses on developing and practicing mindfulness, and will teach a variety of methods. All faith perspectives are welcome.

Please email Patti to be added to the mail list for information: PPBabcock@comcast.net

***"Faith is not the belief that God will do what you want. It is the belief that God will do what is right."***

## Cleaning Teams for June & July

6/4	Bill Klauer's Team	7/2	Tom Porcher's Team
6/11	Becky Hadden's Team	7/9	Angela Aaronson's Team
6/18	Marilyn Dow's Team	7/16	Jane Epstein's Tea
6/25	Pam Roger's Team	7/23	Judy Hodge's Team
		7/30	Bill Klauer's Team



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## The Interim Process

I've heard from many of you about the interim process--it is a delight how passionate you are about SACC. Our interim team: Curt Logee, Martha Rounds, Karen Voellman, and Sarah Bradbury are leading our journey. Their responsibilities are to work on several projects, all of which contribute to our vitality, and to our profile.

They've lead us our circle discussions, identifying who we are, and who we long to be, and then helped us to prioritize all of those vision choices. This summer they will work on how to choose our search committee, and how to identify the most important values that grow out of our history together as a church. I hope you'll stay as connected as possible over the sum-

mer--through worship, through small group gatherings, through reading about what is going on. The spirit continues to blow in summer breezes!

In the fall we'll need to identify who it is outside our doors that we are hoping to reach out to--what are the demographics of our community, and what is the primary need that we can meet? Again this information is essential to who we are as vital church, and is necessary to fill out our congregational profile.

When the search committee starts in September they will begin two important processes--getting to know each other and gathering data for our profile. They will work with me and Kelly

ate Conference Minister) as they write their profile, and then just with Kelly once they start accepting profiles.

But the interim time is not one of waiting, it is a time of stirring the waters with our net cast around us. Using the information we have gathered this spring and over the summer, we all will spend time in the fall experimenting with the little changes that come up in our visioning. We will practice new ideas, try them on for size, set some aside, and take another step with some others. Do you have something you wish we would try? Share with us.

Come, drop your net in the water, and trust that the spirit will guide us.

thank  
you!

## Thank you...

*Dear SACC friends, Thank you so much for the lovely cards and sentiments you sent to our home after the death of my father. They touched us deeply.*

*Gratefully, Judy and Don McKendry*

# May = Mental Health Awareness

*Judy McKendry shared this during Sharing of Faith at church.*

May was mental health month. You may have seen some advertising or noticed some mental health fairs or programs being held in the past few weeks. In the past two weeks, our local NAMI affiliate was asked to participate in two of them by providing resource tables at Wilmington Middle School and Concord Carlisle High School. It is good to see more effort to increase awareness of mental health conditions.

In case you have not heard of the acronym NAMI before, it stands for “The National Alliance on Mental Illness.” NAMI is a national grassroots organization whose mission is Support, Education, and Advocacy for individuals and families dealing with mental illness. Several members of our congregation belong to NAMI and our church has provided some financial support.

**Did you know there are many famous people who had/have mental illness -**

Beethoven, Michelangelo, Charles Dickens, Ernest Hemingway, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, Sir Isaac Newton, Buzz Aldrin, Dick Clarke, Mike Wallace, Princess Diana, Terry Bradshaw, Winona Ryder, JK Rowling, Billy Joel, and so on?

Mental Illness is more common than you might think. We are talking about conditions such as depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, schizoaffective disorder, and schizophrenia being the more well known conditions.

Approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S.—43.8 million, or 18.5%—experiences mental illness in a given year.

6.9% of adults in the U.S.—16 million—had at least one major depressive episode in the past year.

18.1% of adults in the U.S. experienced an anxiety disorder such as posttraumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and specific phobias in the past year.

**Did you know that...**

Mood disorders,

including major depression and bipolar disorder, are the third most common cause of hospitalization in the U.S. for both youth and adults aged 18–44.

Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide.

**Did you know that...**

Despite effective treatment, there are long delays—sometimes decades—between the first appearance of symptoms and when people get help.

**Did you know that...**

if you or a family member has an operation or is hospitalized with some physical illness, people are inclined to send cards, visit, or provide casseroles.

That does not usually happen if someone is hospitalized with a mental illness.

Stigma does still exist even though, fortunately, the climate is improving. Change is slow. My hope is that with the eradication of stigma will come quicker access to treatment and improved quality of life.

To commemorate May as Mental Health Month, NAMI began a

campaign asking people to become stigma free and created a PSA video with Mayim Bialik, the Phd and actress of “Big Bang Theory” fame. The link is <https://www.nami.org/Press-Media/NAMI-PSAs> To commemorate May as Mental Health Month, I ask you to pledge to be stigma-free and encourage the same in others. How?

First, reject stigmatizing stereotypes you sometimes hear and see in the media or from your acquaintances regarding individuals with mental illness. Those individuals could be you or your loved ones. Remember mental illness is not a choice or a reflection of personal weakness. It impacts all socio-economic classes equally. Individuals with mental illness can be very intelligent, creative, and accomplished, as the list of famous people illustrates.

Secondly, see the person first and not the illness. Get to know the person. Treat the person with kindness and empathy. That is more important than knowing the struggles he/she is going through.

The words of the anthem chosen for Mental Health Sunday were very relevant: “Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love, show us how to serve, the neighbors we have from you.” Treating everyone with an open heart and mind, as Jesus showed us, means you will be stigma free.