



# MARKINGS

The Newsletter of South Acton Congregational Church

MARCH 2019

*“Revolutionary love is a well-spring of care, an awakening to the inherent dignity and beauty of others and the earth, a quieting of the ego, a way of moving through the world in relationship, asking: ‘What is your story? What is at stake? What is my part in your flourishing?’ Loving others, even our opponents, in this way has the power to sustain political, social and moral transformation. This is how love changes the world.”*

~ Valarie Kaur

My Friends,

I was recently meeting with a colleague who remarked that he was taught by mentors to avoid talk about love inside the context of ministry. My jaw hit the floor. Thankfully, it did not literally hit the floor because that would have been terribly embarrassing. I could not believe his words. I could not begin to wrap my brain around a faith community intentionally NOT talking about love. I feel like I spend quite a bit of time talking about Revolutionary Love. This idea weaves its way into my sermons and prayers, casual conversations and formal meetings. It is an idea that guides the way I hope to live my life and the way I understand my own faith. It is my ultimate hope for all of us as a community of faith.

The idea of the connection between love and faith are not new. This connection is the entirety of God’s message to the world...for our entire history as human people. Love God. Love your neighbor. And, while you are at it, try loving yourself. Maybe the reason some faith communities choose not to talk about Revolutionary Love is that this love is the difficult path. It is the path of making space for neighbors and friends and enemies. Those we like and those who just might send us over the edge. It is looking at each of them in the eyes - seeing them, knowing them, naming them as the Beloved of Christ.

As you are reading this message, the light of Epiphany is waning and we are stepping into the long shadows of Lent. The actual point of this season is creating space in our lives for God to do something new. We open our hearts and souls and look for the dead and dying pieces, the pieces that are bringing harm, and we let go of them. The church has long practiced the season of Lent through abstinence, aestheticism and self-denial. I invite you to join me as we take a different approach. What would happen if we intentionally added things into our lives that encourage the wholeness, the healing, the restoration that God longs for on our behalf? Perhaps, instead of giving up chocolate or coffee or wine or swearing we add in time for something that nurtures our souls: meditate, pray, read a Psalm every day. What if we add in a practice that shifts the way we relate to the people around us: we practice an intentional act of kindness every day, we participate in the Vigil Against Gun Violence, we write notes of thanks and encouragement to neighbors and friends, those who are sick and those who are well.

I find that when I am making space for new things, the broken and dead habits naturally fall away. I find that when I am tending to my soul, I am tending to the pieces that are rough and calloused as well as the pieces that are bruised and tender. Join me. Let’s open our lives to the Spirit who is working within us. Let’s open our hearts to new practices that will slowly re-shape us. Let’s allow ourselves to be changed.

♥ Rev. Amy

Rev. Amy Lunde-Whitler is Pastor at South Acton Congregational Church

# Let's Talk: Sharing Our Pronouns

Dear Friends,

I wanted to write you a note about the document I have created below. If you were in Sunday worship, you know that I started a conversation inside the sermon about adding personal pronouns to our name tags and why this is an important step for us as a faith community. In case you are wondering; My name tag would read Amy and below my name you would see the pronouns she/her/hers. The document below will tell you a little more about why this is important but I wanted to share a personal story about how I came to understand identifying pronouns as an important and welcoming act.

A few years ago, I was in a professional group and as we were getting started, one of the members "Jennifer" introduced herself, answered the silly 'getting to know you' ice-breaker, and closed by stating that her pronouns are she/her/hers. I just stared at her blankly and tried not to look too clueless. It was as if she had suddenly switched to speaking French or I had dozed off and missed a piece of the conversation. Why was this woman telling me her pronouns? This seemed obvious. After the meeting, I asked a friend and she had never heard of this either. I moved on and didn't give the encounter much thought until I encountered it again almost a year later. I thought it was interesting but wondered if it was still a fluke or perhaps a few people making things 'extra complicated.' Over the next few years, I saw people identifying pronouns with an increasing regularity. Several Summers ago, I was at the UCC annual meeting where we were all wearing name tags that identified our pronouns. Over that weekend, I ended up talking to many pastors and members of UCC churches and I met a young person who was attending. I appreciated my conversation with "Bex" and his energy for the church and realized that I would never have known what pronouns to use without his nametag. Bex was thrilled to belong to a church and said that some of his friends were raised in other churches and they didn't feel like they belonged or could be themselves. Suddenly, a light bulb flashed in my head. Adding my pronouns to my name tag or my email signature does not cost me anything but it means the world to a sibling in Christ who longs to belong and be known and welcomed.

So, let's talk about this. If you have more questions or thoughts, give me a call. I would love to chat.

♥ Rev. Amy

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*In college, I had the good fortune to be living happily in a room by myself. However, down the hall, a pair of roommates found themselves in trouble: one of the women, Cassie, came out as a lesbian to her roommate, Jill [not using their real names]. Jill was shocked; she, and likely her parents, complained to the administration that she couldn't possibly live with a lesbian, she did not feel safe, she demanded that Cassie be removed from her room or Jill would leave college for good. As a result, a second set of furniture was placed in my tiny single, and Jill moved out of her room with Cassie and in with me for the rest of the year. Four decades later, I am still saddened and ashamed to confess that I stood by silently while Cassie was rejected, and I did not follow my impulse to move in with Cassie and leave Jill with a single. I was afraid to speak out and be ostracized myself.*

*Since that time, much inside me has changed. I've embraced a wider understanding of love. I've grappled with my ignorance and prejudices: put*

*bluntly, I've been growing myself up. I've met friends, neighbors, and young people who have thoughtfully, proudly, defiantly, lovingly come out as LGBTQ. I watched as some in our local and wider world became more accepting and open.*

*But still more work is needed: LGBTQ people are still not accepted in our world. We as a church must make ourselves clear to everyone who enters our building. To me, pronouns on nametags mean that we as Christians stand up for individuals who do not yet feel accepted. Pronouns on nametags proclaim that God loves each of us, through and through, as our unique and beautiful selves. And that we as a church commit ourselves to loving others as we ourselves are loved. Pronouns on nametags mean that someone like Cassie – a young woman who rightly did not feel herself to be safe in her college home – can plop down in a pew and feel loved, accepted, and welcomed.*

~ Martha Rounds

### **What do you mean when you say “Sharing our Pronouns”?**

Great Question! The first time I heard this term, I looked at the person speaking and turned my head to the side as if she had suddenly slipped into speaking French. So, let's talk: Just as you share your name when introducing yourself, sharing your pronouns is a helpful way to communicate how you want to be addressed. Sometimes we may feel a need to rely on stereotypes - about someone's clothing, haircut, or other aspects of their appearance - to determine the gender of someone whose pronouns we don't know. By asking directly or putting our pronouns on our nametags, we can avoid making awkward and potentially harmful assumptions.

### **Why do I need to share my pronouns? Everyone knows who I am?**

When I was growing up, my home church made visitors wear a bright orange ribbon on their clothes so the folks would know they were new. Talk about uncomfortable! Can you imagine getting up the courage to visit a church only to have to wear a bright, noticeable ribbon letting everyone know you are different? As part of being a welcoming community, we want to make sure everyone feels welcomed and belonging in our space. As an ONA community, it is important that we create a worship space that is welcoming to everyone. An important way to do this is to allow anyone who comes to tell us who they are.

### **Does this actually matter?**

Imagine you decide to take a walk this afternoon and on your walk you meet an adorable dog. As you and the dog owner begin to interact you might say something like:

*Oh my goodness! Your dog is so cute. Can I say “hi”? What is your dog's name? Is your dog a boy or a girl?*

In that moment you were actually asking *What name and pronoun should I use when I am talking about your cute dog?*

Here's what you might have actually meant - *What name and pronoun should I use when I'm talking about your cute dog? If we can show this respect to dogs, we certainly can show it to humans.*

### **What do I do if I make a mistake and use the wrong pronoun?**

We all make mistakes. Just correct yourself, apologize and try not make too big of a deal about it. For example, "I was talking to him, *I mean them, the other day and they told me about a great restaurant.*"

### **I know I'm going to get it wrong. Can I just use someone's name so I won't offend them?**

No one is expecting you to be perfect or get it right every time. We are all learning together. What matters is that you make the effort, improve, and apologize if you make a mistake (and if you keep making mistakes - you can always practice!) You might find yourself avoiding pronouns, only using someone's name, or even not talking to someone who changed their name/pronoun. Please lean in and be open to making mistakes and learning from them. Otherwise you're not fully engaging with that person and might be missing out!

## **Why Stating Pronouns Matters**

**It helps everyone feel included and respected**

**It acknowledges someone's pronouns aren't assumed**

**It encourages folks to think about their own gender**

**It's a way to show folks you are serious about being an ally**

**It ensures folks you get everyone's pronouns right**

As those who seek to be welcoming in the name of Christ, we hope to see everyone in our midst as themselves, as children of God. Creating space where people name their pronouns both shows our welcome and invites people to share their full selves with us and with God.

# From the Diaconate

We will soon enter the Lenten Season and then into Easter. We will be having an Ash Wednesday service on **March 6th**, and there will be an opportunity to "Pause for Peace" on Wednesday evenings during the remainder of Lent from 5:00 to 6:00. During this time the church will be open for meditation, candle lighting, poetry, prayers, and mandalas for a "Come and breathe and meditate on your way home."

We had both our first "Bring a Friend to Church Sunday" and our first rejuvenated Sermon Discussion meeting in February. Both went very well, with eight members bringing friends along to

church on the second Sunday of the month, which is quite remarkable and sets the bar high for doing better on **March 10th** (which also happens to be the start of Daylights Savings time) so mark your calendars. There were ten folks (not counting Rev. Amy) who attended the Sermon Discussion meeting on Feb 17th and spent almost 2 hours discussing February's sermons, asking questions about the scripture readings, discussing how they pray and what it means to them. I have always found these discussions to be very interesting and have learned a lot about the bible, myself, and other members of the congregation.

As always, please let your deacon, me, or Reverend Amy know if there are any issues or needs you wish to bring to the attention of the deacons. As always, you can contact your assigned deacon (see below) or let me know.

Respectfully submitted,  
Peter Babcock  
Diaconate Chair

Deacon	Last Names
Amber Klauer	A & B
Martha Rounds	C & E
Bob Van Meter	D, F & G
Judy Hodge	H thru K
Laurie Thibodeau	L thru N
Angela Aaronson	O thru S
Tom Porcher	T thru Z

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## Journey through Lent at SACC

### **Just Peace Players: Mar 10, 10:30 AM**

The Just Peace Players will share their new play "Extra! Extra!". Invite your friends! Don't miss this special dramatic worship service.

### **Pause for Peace: Wednesdays, 5-6pm**

There is a certain heaviness to life lately. During Lent, we are creating a space for prayer, meditation, and reflection on Wednesday nights in the Sanctuary. This time will not have a set agenda but will just be an open space to come and listen to music, light a candle, meditate, color, read a poem, write a lament or absorb quite space. All are welcome.

### **Palm Sunday April 14, 10:30 AM**

### **Maundy Thursday April 18, 7pm**

### **Easter Sunday April 21**

6am SUNRISE service

Upper end of the Great Hill soccer fields, behind the Fire Station

7am BREAKFAST in the church

Potluck, bring something to share

10:30am Easter Worship, Sanctuary



# Missions & Outreach

There is a lot bubbling up in Missions and Outreach. Mark your calendars for upcoming meetings. They are scheduled for 12:00 after church on **March 24, May 5, September 29, and November 24**. In keeping with our tradition, we will disperse our funds at the November meeting. You will want to plan to attend that meeting and help us decide. Just in case you didn't know: the Missions and Outreach Committee is open to anyone in the church.

Over the past few months, members of Missions and Outreach along with the SACC Movers have advocated with the Town of Acton for improved conditions at the Concordian Motel. This project began last fall when some of our SACC movers were awakened to the appalling physical conditions at the motel during a mission move. Stay tuned to learn

about what will be done and how we can help. As always, the SACC movers are still looking for a few new faces. Let us know if you would like to join their adventures.

Last Sunday, a group met to begin planning a mission trip to Puerto Rico. The planning is still in the early stages but the group is considering a trip during Winter 2020. You are invited to the next meeting: **March 31st** at 12:00p

Judy McKendry has information about a volunteer opportunity to help deal with local domestic violence. This would include 40 hours of trainings and the expectation that volunteers would devote 3 hours at a time, twice a month. The Acton police had mentioned concerns about domestic violence as an area where they could use help.

As a Lenten practice, we plan to resume our Vigils Against Gun Violence on Wednesdays starting on **March 13** from 4:30 to 5:30. Make plans to join us as we dedicate the season of Lent to advocate for peace and safety for all. Make your own sign or pick one already made before the vigil. We will show up at the intersection of School and Main Streets. Come for the whole time or whatever time you can manage. Then return to church for a Pause for Peace!

Finally, the Mother's Day Walk for Peace is coming up! Please mark your calendar for Mother's Day. We will begin making plans at our March meeting.

Respectfully,  
Judy Hodge  
Missions Committee Chair

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# Spring Rummage Sale

Our spring Rummage and Bake Sale will be held on **April 6th** from 8:00am until 2:00 pm. This is one of our major fundraisers and it's a SACC mission. Let's all be involved to make it a big success!

Here are some of the ways you can participate: Donate goods, bake something, help set up tables after church on Monday, **April 1st at 6pm**, sign up to help unload goods during the week, work on day of sale, join the clean-up crew and take leftovers to Goodwill in Concord, Savers, and other recycling places before the dump runs.

Donations will be accepted on Tuesday, **April 2**, from 10-12pm and from 6-8pm; Wednesday, **April 3**, from 10-12pm; Thursday, **April 4**, from 10-12pm and from 6-8pm, and on Friday, **April 5**, from 9-12pm. No donations will be accepted after noon on Friday. Please drop off bake sale items on Friday.

Come and buy, eat lunch, take home a frozen entree and have a fun day with friends and neighbors.

Any Rummage questions contact Angela Aaronson. Any Bake sale questions contact Becky Hadden.



# SACC Notes

## Pause for Peace

There is a certain heaviness to life lately. During Lent, we are creating a space for prayer, meditation, and reflection on **Wednesday nights** from 5p-6p in the Sanctuary. This time will not have a set agenda but will just be an open space to come and listen to music, light a candle, meditate, color, read a poem, write a lament or absorb quiet space. All are welcome.

## Sermon Discussion Group

Join us as we gather each month to discuss thoughts, ideas, and questions from recent sermons. Our next gathering will be hosted by Bill Manning and Martha Rounds on **March 17th** at 6:30pm. Contact Rev. Amy with any questions.

## Vigils Against Gun Violence

SACC will resume weekly anti-gun violence vigils beginning Wednesday **March 13** from 4:30 to 5:30 throughout Lent. Make your own sign or pick one already made before the vigil. We will show up at the intersection of School and Main Streets. Come for the whole time or whatever time you can manage. Then return to church for a Pause for Peace!

## One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great Hour of Sharing, as part of Our Church's Wider Mission, is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God's message of love and hope to people in crisis.

The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water, food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, and emergency relief and rehabilitation. OGHS also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response.

SACC will be collecting for OGHS on Sunday, **March 31st**.

## Second Sunday Food Collection

Please bring in canned and nonperishable foods for our Second Sunday collection for the Community Supper Food Pantry on **March 10**. Soup, cereal, canned fruits & veggies, pasta & sauce, tuna, peanut butter and jelly can be left in the green bin.

## Prayer Shawl Ministry

Everyone is invited to these informal gatherings on the third Monday of the month to knit or crochet shawls for friends and loved ones in need of prayers. The next meeting is on **March 18** at 10am at Angela Aaronson's home.

## Invite Your Friends to Church!

The second Sunday of the month is Invite Your Friends to Church Sunday.

We invite people to do things all the time. We share about a new restaurant in town, or a yoga class or new beer we discovered. What happens if we shift our thinking to include inviting others to church? An interesting fact is that most people who start attending a faith community were invited by someone they knew. In that spirit, we are inviting each other to invite our friends to share in worship with us.

## Scrapbooking Workshop

Rachel Russell holds scrapbooking workshops once a month in the community room at SACC. The next workshop will be on Saturday **March 9** from 11-5. Email Rachel for details

## Cleaning Teams for March

- March 2: Judy Hodge's Team
- March 9: Bill and Amber's Team
- March 16: Becky Hadden's Team
- March 23: Marilyn Dow's Team
- March 30: Pam Rogers' Team

# March

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>3 10:30 Worship 12:00 Junior Choir 12:00 Deacons Meeting 5:00 Indian Dance</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5 8:15 Visit with Amy 3:45 Meditation Walk 7:00 NA Bridge to Recovery</p>	<p>6 6:30 Ash Wednesday Service 6:45 Mindfulness Workshop 7:45 Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>7 10:00 Stitch and a Prayer 7:00 Metro-West Boston Divorce Support Group</p>	<p>1 3:00 Violin Lessons</p>	<p>2 8:30 Therapeutic Yoga</p>
<p>10 10:30 Worship 2nd Sunday Food Collection 12:00 Junior Choir 5:00 Indian Dance</p>	<p>11 6:00 Cong. Board Meeting</p>	<p>12 8:15 Visit with Amy 3:45 Meditation Walk 7:00 NA Bridge to Recovery</p>	<p>13 4:30 Vigil Against Gun Violence 5:00 Pause for Peace 6:45 Mindfulness Workshop 7:45 Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>14 10:00 Stitch and a Prayer 7:00 Metro-West Boston Divorce Support Group</p>	<p>15 3:00 Violin Lessons</p>	<p>16 8:30 Therapeutic Yoga</p>
<p>17 10:30 Worship 12:00 Junior Choir 5:00 Indian Dance 6:30 Serrmon Discussion Group</p>	<p>18 10:00 Prayer Shawl Ministry</p>	<p>19 8:15 Visit with Amy 3:45 Meditation Walk 7:00 NA Bridge to Recovery</p>	<p>20 Markings Deadline 4:30 Vigil Against Gun Violence 5:00 Pause for Peace 6:45 Mindfulness Workshop 7:45 Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>21 7:00 FOGES 7:00 Metro-West Boston Divorce Support Group</p>	<p>22 3:00 Violin Lessons</p>	<p>23 8:30 Therapeutic Yoga</p>
<p>24 10:30 Worship 12:00 Jr. Choir 5:00 Indian Dance</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26 8:15 Visit with Amy 3:45 Meditation Walk 7:00 NA Bridge to Recovery</p>	<p>27 4:30 Vigil Against Gun Violence 5:00 Pause for Peace 6:45 Mindfulness Workshop</p>	<p>28 10:00 Stitch and a Prayer 7:00 Metro-West Boston Divorce Support Group</p>	<p>29 3:00 Violin Lessons</p>	<p>30 8:30 Therapeutic Yoga</p>
<p>31 10:30 Worship 12:00 Jr. Choir</p>						