



Christian Education Programming

Tewksbury Congregational Church

10 East Street

Tewksbury, MA 01876

(978) 851-9411

www.tewksburycc.org

Tewksburycc@Verizon.net

Welcome!

Welcome (back) to Tewksbury Congregational Church! Whether this booklet is your first introduction to our church or you already knew most of the information contained here, we hope that you will feel the love, creativity, and passion that go into our programs. As the year progresses, we hope that the information contained here will help aid in your family's journey: from birth and baptism, through childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

In order to share the wealth and love we experience weekly here at TCC, we ask the following: There are extra copies of this handbook available in the church office. If you know of a family without a church, please give them this copy and get another for yourself. We have much to offer to others and unless we invite them, they will miss out!

Peace and Prayers to you and your family in this new Sunday School year,
Sue Panilaitis, Director of Christian Education

Table of Contents

General Information	5
Our Facilities	5
Worship is for Everyone!	7
Inclement Weather Cancellations	8
Communication Tools	8
Weekly Electronic Newslink.....	8
Facebook Connections.....	9
Online Membership Directory	10
Sunday Morning.....	10
Nursery.....	11
Typical Sunday Morning Schedule	12
Curriculum.....	13
Pre Service Child Care	14
The Sunday School Program	14
Sunday School Volunteers, Locations and Class Specific Information	14
Junior & Senior High School Youth Options for Sundays..	15
Sunday School Related Programs	16
TCC Grandparents.....	16
Communion Sundays	17
Sunday School Offering.....	18
Birthday Card Program	18
Missionaries In Training (MIT)	18
How Bible Bucks are Spent IN MIT Program.....	20
Seasonal Events.....	21
Bibles and Story Books.....	21
Festival of Trees	21
Third Grade Stoles.....	21
Confirmation	22
Advent Workshops.....	22
Lenten Workshops	23
Youth Sunday	23
Musical Programs for Youth	24

Cherub Choir 24
Seraphim Choir..... 24
Youth Social Activities..... 25
 Family Fundays..... 25
Other Information..... 25
 Scholarships 25
 School Loans 26
 Safe Church Policy..... 26
 Fire Evacuation Plan..... 27
 Adult Christian Education 28
 Adults Volunteers Welcome 28
CE E-mail Distribution List..... 28
Important Websites 29
E-mail Addresses of Interest 29

General Information

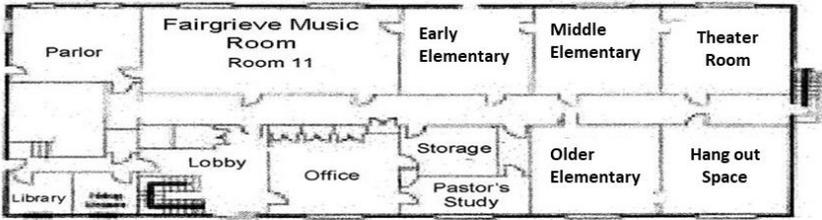
Tewksbury Congregational Church (TCC), United Church of Christ, is a mainstream, Protestant church, established in 1734 and is the founding church of Tewksbury. We have a long tradition of worship, mission, and fellowship with the community and beyond.

Our Facilities

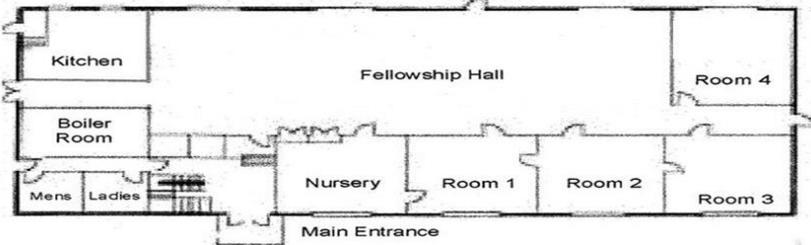
The Tewksbury Congregational Church is fully handicap accessible. The two storied educational wing is bright and roomy, allowing each individual grade level to have its own classroom. For classroom locations, please refer to the map below.

Educational Wing: Floor Plan

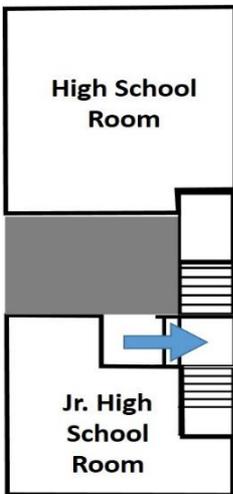
Second Floor



First Floor



Tower



Worship is for Everyone!

TCC is a multi-generational church. We believe that all of us belong in worship together, old and young, singles, couples, and the families of all types and sizes.



Especially for children and their families:

- ❖ Sunday School is held at the same time as adult worship
- ❖ Children's activity sheets and books designed for ages 3-11 are available in the entryway. Please take the time at the end of worship to return crayons to either the entryway or the basket on the window ledge outside the church office for continued use.
- ❖ Children of all ages come forward for Children's Moment, an interactive mini-sermon. Parents often accompany toddlers and young children to the front. At the completion of Children's Moment, youth are dismissed to Sunday School classes.

Inclement Weather Cancellations

When snow has fallen or is falling on Sunday, please be sure to check the church's answering machine (978-851-9411), WHDH or WBZ, or check the church's Facebook site to see if the church service has been delayed or cancelled. If you are part of the CE distribution List, an e-mail will be sent as well.



Communication Tools

There are a variety of ways that members of Tewksbury Congregation Church stay fully connected to the events and happenings at Tewksbury Congregational Church. In general, information is disseminated through many different avenues and some are listed below:

Weekly Electronic Newslink

Every Thursday, the office puts out an e-mail titled "TCC Flash:" with that day's date. This e-mail contains links to various articles that have been put up by church members on two different web pages: FLASH and Crib Sheets. FLASH articles focus on the larger church and contain general church information. Crib Sheets is focused more on youth related information. While you can access this information without the e-mail reminder at <http://tewksburycc.org/>, the weekly

reminder e-mail is helpful so that you don't miss out on any information. Contact the church office at secretary.tewksburycc@verizon.net to ask to be put on this distribution list.

Facebook Connections



There are 2 different Facebook pages.

There is the public Tewksbury Congregational Church Facebook page which is geared to providing information to the public regarding events and happenings at TCC. We encourage you to like this page so that you can help spread the word about our church and all that it has to offer.

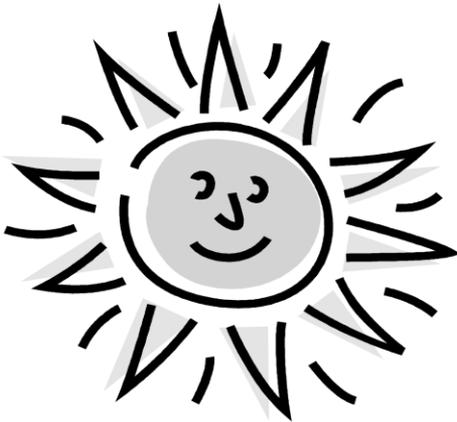
Tewksbury Congregational Church also has a private group page. This page is fairly active where TCC members share pictures of various church functions, questions are asked, reminders sent out regarding various "in house" events, and a general sharing of more private church information (sicknesses, help needed, etc.). Given the personal content on this page, individuals who attend church regularly will be added.

Online Membership Directory

Members at Tewksbury Congregational Church stay connected to each other through the use of our membership directory. This database is an online, password protected, member directory which contains addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of TCC's Members and Friends. Again, with regular attendance, this information on how to contact other church members is given out.

Good Morning

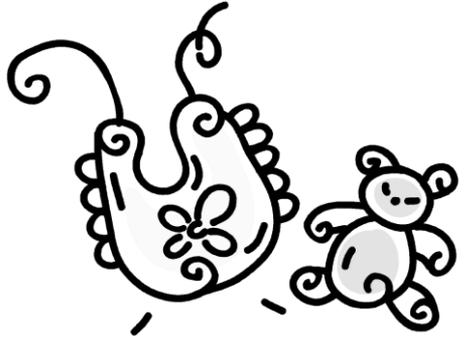
Sunday Morning



Students in PreK through grade 6 begin their morning with their family in the sanctuary each Sunday at 9:30am as part of the regular worship service. They are dismissed to their classes following Children's Time. Classes conclude at 10:45.

Nursery

Nursery care is available for children under age three each Sunday beginning at 9:25 and ending with the conclusion of adult worship.



The nursery is staffed by one adult (who has had a criminal background check or CORI) as well as a youth aide.

To aid in the care of each child, we ask that each parent sign their child into the nursery weekly (name; parent's name; clothing child is wearing for easy identification and phone number to reach you at during worship in case of emergency). A space is provided for any additional information that might be important in order to provide the best care possible for the child.

A snack is offered to children while in the nursery. After disinfecting the table and using wipes to clean hands, children are offered food suitable to the age group, which many times, consists of apple juice and goldfish crackers.

For emergency purposes, the nursery is equipped with an evacuation crib. On heavy duty steel casters, children can be placed in the crib and rolled directly outside to safety if necessary.

Diapers will be changed on a need only basis.

Typical Sunday Morning Schedule

(September to mid-June)



- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 9:25-10:40 | Nursery Care available |
| 9:30 | Junior and Senior High
Students meet in Tower to begin their morning |
| 9:30 | Adult worship begins |
| 9:45 | Approximate time children aged three through grade 6 leave the sanctuary for classes. |
| 10:40ish | Coffee and fellowship time for adults |
| 10:45 | Sunday School Classes are concluded |
| 10:45 – 11:00 | Seraphim Choir rehearsal (grades 4 and up) |

Curriculum

In Sunday School, classes from PreK through 6th grade will use the curriculum, *252 Kids*, published by Orange Curriculum. *252 Kids* is a weekly, web-based children's ministry curriculum and strategy designed to invite kids into the Story of God, to show youth the character of God, all the while helping them internalize 3 Basic Truths through the use of unforgettable illustrations, activities, and graphics to capture their attention and keep it relevant.

We want youth to have experienced and own three basic truths modeled by Jesus in Luke 2:52 - ***And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.*** (light bulb moment—now you know what the 252 means):

- 1. I need to make the wise choice.**
- 2. I can trust God no matter what.**
- 3. I should treat others the way I want to be treated.**

These truths are introduced each week in an updated, energized program featuring large group videos and learning situations and then reinforced in grade specific smaller break out sessions.

Pre Service Child Care

For parents who are interested in teaching Sunday School, singing in a choir, or participating in a Sunday morning activity, the church provides childcare for all ages starting at 8:45 and going to 9:30. This program is held in the nursery and is run by a CORI'd adult.



The Sunday School Program

Sunday School Volunteers, Locations and Class Specific Information

The Tewksbury Congregational Church Sunday School Program is staffed by dedicated and caring individuals. All staff members have had criminal record checks (CORIs). For a map of the building and location of classes, please see section *General Information: Our Facilities*.

Early Elementary Class (PreK, K and Grade 1)

Location: Second Floor, Yellow Room

In order to be released from the classroom, a designated individual must meet youngsters at the classroom door at the end of adult worship.

Middle Elementary (Grades 2-4)

Location: Second Floor, Green Room

Older Elementary (Grades 5 & 6)

Location: Second Floor, blue room

Seventh Grade & Eighth Grade

Location: Tower

Senior High

Location: Tower

Junior & Senior High School Youth Options for Sundays

For youth in Junior or Senior High school, there are a variety of options for participation during the church school year. For approximately 15 minutes, teens enjoy a casual breakfast as a way to catch up with each other before worship together using a selection of worship expression which may include media presentations,

music, readings and other relevant sources. After this, 7th and 8th grade will go to a separate class to begin their studies while high schoolers remain in the tower as an alternative to a standard Sunday school classroom setting. Teachers will utilize materials from a number of different sources in order to have current, relevant, and active lessons each week.

Other options for teens include remaining in adult worship with their parents or serving as a classroom aide weekly (or bi-weekly) in one of the younger grade's traditional classroom settings. Arrangements to become an aide are made through Sue Panilaitis, the Director of Christian Education.



Sunday School Related Programs

TCC Grandparents

In order to create a multi-generational connection to older church members, grades will be paired with a TCC shut-in, also known as a TCC grandparent. Classes are encouraged to create artwork, write class letters, send a

card, and provide a class photo for their grandparent. TCC grandparents will provide the class a photograph and communicate as much as they are able with the class. Outside of church, families are encouraged to visit their TCC grandparent to create a stronger bond with this individual.

Communion Sundays

Under the United Church of Christ, communion is open to all youth and adults. On the first Sunday of the month, we provide children in grades K through eighth grade the opportunity to partake in the sacrament as part of their Sunday School experience. They will be dismissed to class following communion.



At 11 o'clock on Communion Sundays, communion is again served on the second floor in Room 9 to families who would like to take Communion together, as well as volunteers who were unable to be in the sanctuary during the sacrament.

Sunday School Offering

Families are welcome to pick up offertory envelopes for their child(ren) from the church office. We hope that parents will explain why we give money to the church and encourage youth to earn a portion of what they give. We hope that youth will learn that the money received will be used to do God's work through this church.

Birthday Card Program

As a way to encourage a relationship with Christ and the church, TCC sends a special birthday card signed by the Sunday School staff. Children in the Pre K 1 through sixth grade can look forward to being remembered on their special day.

Missionaries In Training (MIT)

In our commercialized society, youth have limited opportunity to learn the joy of giving. In an effort to emphasize this foundation of our Christian faith,



Missionaries in Training (MIT) will give Sunday School youth a chance to earn "money" which can be used to

purchase items locally or globally through our missions program.

Each week, Sunday School students have the ability to earn bible bucks. Teachers and the Director of Christian Education will have the ability to award this money for the following reasons:

\$1 will be given for attending Sunday School

\$1 can be earned for random acts of kindness. To collect for a midweek act, parents need to submit a quick description of the act in writing to his/her teacher.

\$1 can be netted randomly as deemed appropriate by the teacher during Sunday School. This can include, but is not limited to, such things as good behavior, answering a tough question, or helping before or after class.

\$5 will be handed out if the child who brings a new friend to church (this includes fellowship, movie matinee, or another church sponsored program). This will be handed out by the DRE.

\$5 for serving the church in a larger way, such as volunteering to help change a bulletin board, helping with the church's fall/spring clean-up, etc. This will be handed out by the DRE.

\$10 can be earned for the completion of a grade level accomplishment

How Bible Bucks are Spent IN MIT Program

Twice during the Sunday School year, lists will be available with different items that can be purchased from predetermined organizations. Children can look at the list to determine what they would like to purchase for a charity and work towards saving their money.

- As with real money, Bible bucks will not be replaced if lost. Children will be encouraged to put their name on the bill on the “Earned by” line. If found, the money can be returned.
- Any real money earned by a child can also be combined with Bible Bucks for more purchasing power.
- Youth can work together, as a family, class or with friends to buy items. As in real life, it is up to the youth to determine how they would like to spend/save their money.
- In order to spread the giving to various organizations, only so many items in a particular category can be purchased. Once those items have been bought, it will be removed from the list.
- Once a gift is purchased, youth will be recognized for their contributions through publication in Faith Notes, Crib Sheets, and bulletin boards.
- Bible bucks can be saved and used over the year. They do not expire and can roll over from year to year.



Seasonal Events

Bibles and Story Books

On Reformation Sunday, children in third grade will be presented with their own Bibles during adult worship. Also on this day, three year olds will be given a children's Bible as a way to encourage further learning at home.



Festival of Trees

During coffee hour in the month of November, youth have the opportunity to create theme based ornaments which are displayed as part of the Tewksbury Public Library's Festival of Trees. At the conclusion of the Festival of Trees, the hand crafted ornaments are returned to each family to be displayed in their own homes on future holidays.

Third Grade Stoles

On Palm Sunday, third graders are responsible for handing out palms while wearing hand-made stoles, created as part of their classroom learning experiences. These stoles will also be blessed during worship.

Confirmation

Youth are given the opportunity to participate in a series of classes in preparation for being confirmed. “Confirmation” means that the young people make for themselves the same promises that their parents made for them at their baptism. Each student is assigned an adult mentor who works with them over the course of their ninth or tenth year. Attendance at full group classes and mission work is also a must. Confirmation will begin in January.

Advent Workshops



Following regular Sunday services in mid-December, families are invited to partake in a simple meal followed by activities and crafts that relate to the Christmas season. Families will be encouraged to rotate through various stations, each detailing an important aspect of the season and a project relating to the theme at hand. It is a wonderful way to celebrate the season with the church community in a fun and festive way.

Lenten Workshops

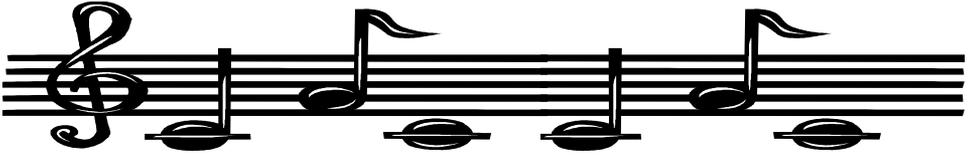


Similar to the Advent workshops held earlier in the year, this event is held during the season of Lent. Again, a simple lunch is served followed by crafts and projects focusing on Easter activities. There will also be an opportunity to get a photograph with the Easter Bunny. Families are encouraged to invite other to join them.

Youth Sunday

At the end of each Sunday School year, our youth lead the congregation in worship. Good attendance on the Sundays preceding Youth Sunday is especially important as all rehearsals are conducted during class time. Worship is followed by an all church celebration.





Musical Programs for Youth

Music is an important component of the worship experience at TCC. This is no more evident than in the wealth of music programs available to our youth from 3 years old to seniors in high school.

Cherub Choir

This singing group is for children ages three through third grade. They rehearse weekly at the conclusion of Sunday School, at approximately 10:45 am. Fun, age appropriate songs are sung, often interspersed with various types of musical accompaniment from the cherubs. Performances by the group are usually once a month and occur during the first part of adult worship.

Seraphim Choir

Junior Choir is offered to children grades four and up. They rehearse a variety of musical genres at 11 am Sunday mornings in the Fairgrieve Room and will participate in adult worship services 8 - 12 times throughout the year. Children are encouraged to participate even if they have no previous musical experience.



Youth Social Activities

Family Fundays

In order to foster better connections between families and youth in our Sunday School programs, enrichment, social, and/or mission based activities are offered monthly to families at little to no cost. We encourage all families to come join in the fun and hope that there are activities that are of interest to each and every family. For a calendar of upcoming events, please visit our website at <http://www.tewksburycc.org/cribsheets> for up to date information.



Other Information

Scholarships



Our church has a long history of helping others. This tradition includes helping students within our church family with scholarships to assist with college and other post high school educational expenses. Grants will be awarded based upon total contributions and

according to how many students apply. In the spring, application forms are available in the church office. Applicants are encouraged to assist in the yearly scholarship breakfast, the only scheduled event to raise money for this fund.

School Loans

Loans are also available from Tewksbury Congregational church. More information about this program can be obtained by contacting the church office.

Safe Church Policy

Tewksbury Congregational Church has a “Safe Church” policy with the purpose being to protect our youth. While very detailed, the policy has several key components to it and includes information about reporting of child abuse, calls for refraining from unhealthy practices, requires permission for photos to be published of minors, mandates criminal background checks of all volunteers who work with youth and among other things, also requires all TCC volunteers and staff be five years or older than the oldest participant as well as two adults to be present for each class, group or



activity (or easy viewing of all adults and youth at all times). This policy was recently amended to also require parental permission for youth to engage in electronic communication with a TCC adult volunteer or staff member acting in official capacity of the church.

For a full policy, please contact Jim Kenney, TCC's safe church advocate.

Fire Evacuation Plan

As is the policy, all classrooms have posted evacuation routes and all teachers are knowledgeable and trained in evacuation procedures. This is further reinforced and evaluated by the Tewksbury Fire Department through set fire drill practices.

In the event of an emergency, the nursery is also well equipped to deal with quick evacuations due to our Fire Evacuation Crib. In the corner of our nursery is a sturdy crib that is on large caster wheels. Should infants and toddlers need to leave the space quickly, our staff has been taught to place all children in the crib, unlock the wheels, and roll the crib out the door directly across Fellowship Hall. This crib is made to handle up to ten young children easily.

Adult Christian Education

In addition to the Bible studies offered within TCC, we are always striving to provide classes and workshops for adults in an attempt to strengthen their faith. We are open to ideas for presentations and guest speakers, so please feel free to contact a member of the Christian Education Committee with any thoughts you might have. Look for information regarding workshops in our electronic communication, *FLASH*, or under “calendar” at www.tewksburycc.org.

Adults Volunteers Welcome

In order to offer the variety of programming available at TCC, we are always looking adult volunteers to help. If you are interested in working with youth, please contact Sue Panilaitis.

CE E-mail Distribution List

Throughout the course of the year, church members are kept up to date on the latest Christian educational news through *Crib Sheets* found on our website tewksburycc.org/cribsheets. On Thursdays, a link with updated information is sent to your e-mail. If you would like to be added to the list, please send an e-mail to Sue Panilaitis at education.tewksburycc@verizon.net.

Important Websites

www.ucc.org – *a reference site for the United Church of Christ*

www.tewksburycc.org – *Tewksbury Congregational Church's website*

E-mail Addresses of Interest

baxterchism@gmail.com – Baxter Chism, Pastor of
Tewksbury Congregational church

secretary.tcc@verizon.net – Mercy Delgado,
Administrative Assistant of Tewksbury
Congregational Church

education.tewksburycc@verizon.net – Sue Panilaitis,
Director of Christian Education

sarahsc@comcast.net – Sarah San Clemente, Assistant
Director of Christian Education