



Parish Visitor

First Congregational Church UCC

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2021

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

This month marks one year (May 15) since I arrived in Walpole, to begin serving as pastor of the First Congregational Church of Walpole, UCC. Though I have yet to be officially installed, I do now have ordained ministerial standing in the Southwest Association of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ. What a year it has been! I have not preached in the sanctuary since February 2020. There has been progress. Though worship has taken place, overwhelmingly on Zoom, we proclaimed the Good News of Christ's resurrection at sunrise on Easter, IN PERSON! It was a welcome sign of new and abundant life.

As more of our members have been vaccinated, we can begin to see hopeful signs of worshipping together again in our sanctuary. When the time comes, we will take steps to do so as safely as we can. With the warming days of spring, we may well worship outside before we do so in the sanctuary. Once in the sanctuary, we may have to hold off on singing hymns together, and mask while we are indoors. We are all eager to be together again in the sanctuary on Sundays, but I am sure none of us are DYING to be there. We will get there, safe and sound.

The whole world has been reeling from this pandemic. Over three million have died. We have all been affected, physically, spiritually, economically, and perhaps all three. There is no ignoring the fact that the past year has taken a toll on our church's finances. Our lay leadership is already wrestling with the challenges left by the past fiscal year in preparation for June's annual meeting.

Our ongoing mission and ministry require an all-hands-on-deck stewardship response. I hope you are, each and all, prayerfully considering your role as Christ's disciple in Walpole, NH in the twenty-first century. I am convinced that we are needed more than ever.

In Christ,
Richard Malmberg



May 2021

Languishing. We are now past one year since the onset of the pandemic and we wish it were over with the flick of a switch or the onset of spring. Our daughter, Liz, and her family are planning to come east from Salt Lake City to go to the lake in Maine, where we have gone her whole lifetime. When she contacted the car rental agency, she was shocked to find out the cheapest rental was over \$3,000, and that was for a compact car for their family of four. And yesterday's Keene Sentinel had an article pertaining to the car rental market and some of the explanation for it.

There has been a lot of disruption and we are going to have to continue to be patient while the challenges of an economy trying to re-open will be on full display. Yet despite the tendency to become frustrated, there is opportunity to flourish. We need to be very careful, but the more of us who are completely vaccinated the better we all are. Rev. Gordon Rankin, our New Hampshire Conference minister, is issuing new guidelines this week for the UCC churches and Governor Sununu is issuing new guidelines for New Hampshire on May 7.

While restrictions will be relaxed, we need to remember we are in a Very High Risk Area of the United States for the virus. Carefully we will have a Rummage, Yard and Bake Sale on May 15. We have a new sound system in the sanctuary and a video system is in the process of being installed.

We have raised over \$2,400 as part of the \$10,000 challenge match at the Fall Mountain Food Shelf. We are slowly and carefully easing back into church with music and the choir. We get to see each other once or twice a week in the Zoom service, Bible study or meeting. It's good that these events are a steady part of our week. We are people of faith, hope, peace, joy and love.

The last page of this month's Parish Visitor is a four-question tear-off page. Please fill it out and return it to the church. We usually have a robust response to surveys. I think you will feel better venting some of your pandemic frustrations in your answers.

Peace, Chuck



Our Steeple – Photo by New England Drone Productions – Bill Farrell

A Lovely Letter from Zimbabwe

Below is a letter to Ellie Shaw from Maidei Mazhata. Maidei visited Walpole In 2009 as part of a Zimbabwe delegation, and stayed at Nancy Sloan's. Everyone loved her:

How are you Ellie? Am very well regardless of this pandemic troubling us. Anyway, I am safe together with my family. I hope God is also your refuge there. Greet the whole of Walpole church congregation for me please not forgetting my Host Nancy. We are now attending church in 50s, so we are two groups in our church. The first group attends church at 0800 hrs. in the morning and the other starts at 1000 hrs. Better now we are worshipping our Lord. MASK UP, SANITISE AND STAY SAFE. I love you all.



Let's Get Cookin'! Linda Smith and Sandy Pickering are looking forward to your delicious contributions to their Food Table for our May 15th event. Some suggestions: pies, cakes, breads, bars, Rice Krispy treats, Chex mix, beans, chili, mac and cheese etc.

Please wrap your labeled items individually or in individual containers to reduce handling. Items can be dropped off at church on Friday, May 14th from 9-12 or on Saturday, May 15th by 8:00. If you have questions, contact Linda Smith.



THE DEACONS

Greetings to one and all.

The deacons wish to thank everyone who participated in any way during Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter Sunday. Thank you to every guest and member of our congregation.

This month of May, we will be celebrating Pentecost to remember the day the Holy Spirit came to the apostles and all followers of Christ. This is thought to be the beginning of the Christian Church. Remember to wear red on Sunday May 23.

The diaconate needs to fill one position for our full complement of deacons. If you are interested in doing so, please contact Pastor Richard, Chuck or myself.

The DOM for May is Minna Good

The DOM for June is Jennifer Hanrahan.

The next deacon's meeting will be Thursday May 6th.

Peace to you all.

Minna Good





We were pleased with the enthusiastic response to our Easter Pie Sale. We had many beautiful pies, cakes, rolls, and cookies. We were sold out very soon and had many inquiries when the next sale would be! Heartfelt thanks to everyone who so generously donated. We are truly blessed.

This is a busy time of year since we are currently working on the budget for fiscal year July 1, 2021 thru June 30, 2022. We still face many challenges but are encouraged that we have navigated the present year on a stable financial footing. We learned recently that we will not have to start repaying the loan for \$84,400, which is currently sitting in the Cornerstone Fund of the UCC, for another year. That will be helpful.

We will continue to keep the congregation informed of our status. Please keep us in your prayers!

Thank you.

Janet Wilson

Sue Krebs

May is upon us and our grounds are prepped for summer. The noise pollution of lawn mowers and string trimmers will soon fill our daylight hours. Let's all lobby for electric tools and machines!

The news for this month is we have been meeting with the SCS Headstart Program leaders from the Drewsville location. We were asked if our Church could be an emergency location for their program should their location have an emergency shutdown. This request was brought to the Executive Committee, received approval to be presented at the Church Council meeting. It was felt that this was an appropriate Christian outreach for us. The CC supported the Headstart request. This has been framed for facility use in a short-term situation, with review as necessary. More information will be provided.

Paul Looney is moving ahead with the Video installation. The fiber optic cable has been installed to the balcony area and camera equipment has been received. This will be an exciting addition to sanctuary services to be able to extend our outreach. The repair and painting of the steeple will be a major project for this summer and will require an all-church vote because the cost will exceed \$10,000.00. We will present this at the annual meeting for an approval vote. We expect this to be done in July/August.

Enough for now. Enjoy the spring flowers!
For the Trustees,

Dale Woodward, Chair



SPRING RUMMAGE SALE

MAY 15 9am—2pm

Yes, Missions is having our Spring Rummage Sale. We will be having clothing inside in Fellowship Hall and housewares, etc., outside. On the southside of the church, Women's Fellowship will have a table and Chef Kathy will have something yummy to eat. There will be a food table on this side with baked goods for sale. The rain date will be May 22nd.

We need people to help set up on the 15th at 7:30 am and we need a crew to clean up and pack up at 2pm. If you can help, let Chris Miller know. Linda Smith is chairing the Food Table, so let her know what you will be bringing.

Due to COVID, we are limited in places to take the leftover clothing and housewares. Because of that, we need to be much more selective in the items we accept as a donation.

At least two Missionettes will be checking your donations during drop off times, while you wait. We will be going through what you are donating. Things that we view as unsellable will be returned to you to take home. Drop off times are Monday, May 10th 9-12, Tuesday, May 11th 9-12 and Wednesday, May 12, 3-6. At NO other times should you be bringing donations.

You **CANNOT** drop them off and leave.

This is really important as we are limiting our stock.

You can help us by:

Only bring things to church during designated drop off times (see above). This way we can check your donations
Only bring things that you would buy at a sale.

Do not be offended if Missionettes ask you to take some of your donations home.

Any season of clothing that is clean and mended. Housewares clean with no chip or cracks. Children's toys clean and in good condition.

PLEASE DO NOT BRING:

Books, underwear, patterns, anything with an electrical cord, VHS tapes, records.

Thank you for your understanding in helping us make this fund raiser a success.



Our church in the Spring

PLEASE POST THIS CALENDAR FOR EASY REFERENCE

MAY 2021

Calendar subject to change due to challenges of Covid-19

Sunday, May 2	Worship Service online via Zoom - Weekly Offering Communion Sunday	10:00 am
Wednesday, May 5	Bible Study on Zoom	4:00 pm
Wednesday, May 5	Executive Board Meeting on Zoom	5:00 pm
Thursday, May 6	Deacons Meeting on Zoom	5:00 pm
Saturday, May 8	Council Meeting on Zoom	8:30 am – 9:30 am
Saturday, May 8	Brainstorming Session on Church Finances after Council Mtg. All are Welcome! Use Sunday Zoom Link to join in.	9:30 am
Sunday, May 9	Worship Service online via Zoom - Weekly Offering	10:00 am
Tuesday, May 11	Finance Committee Meeting	4:30 pm
Wednesday, May 12	Bible Study on Zoom	4:00 pm
Wednesday, May 12	Women's Fellowship Potluck at the church	5:30 pm
Saturday, May 15	Rummage/Yard and Bake Sale at the church	9 am – 2 pm
Sunday, May 16	Worship Service-online Zoom-Weekly Offering	10:00 am
Wednesday, May 19	Bible Study on Zoom	4:00 pm
Thursday, May 20	Missions Committee Meeting at the church	3:00 pm
Sunday, May 23	Pentecost Sunday Worship Zoom – Weekly Offering	10:00 am
Wednesday, May 26	Bible Study on Zoom	4:00 pm
Sunday, May 30	Worship Service online via Zoom – Weekly Offering	10:00 am
Friday, May 21st	Clarion Deadline	
Monday, May 24th	Parish Visitor Deadline	

Church Office Hours: 9 am to 12 noon, M-F



Women's Fellowship met on April 14 on the Common, with about a dozen women present. President Gwen Yardley called the meeting to regroup and reorganize since the hiatus caused by the pandemic.

We held a vote to honor the pledge of \$5000 to the church for this fiscal year. This leaves us with a diminished treasury, so no pledge for the next fiscal year is forthcoming.

We had a lengthy discussion of how Women's Fellowship will continue. Gwen cannot continue as president. Treasurer and secretary positions are open. Jan Martin volunteered to be treasurer, and Sue Krebs will be secretary.

We decided we would run the organization a little differently, with different committees running a program at each meeting. Each group would be responsible for the whole meeting. We also decided not to meet during the winter months of January and February and perhaps March. We have volunteers to organize meetings through September. December. Meetings will continue to be at 7pm. Gwen has agreed to be the overseer. This plan at least keeps the organization viable while we continue to deal with the pandemic, and uncertainty about our traditional fundraisers.

Our next meeting will be a potluck on May 12th at the church if open, if not, at Betsey Congdon's at 5:30 or 6pm. More specific details will follow. Reservations are necessary for Betsey to know how many to expect. Please call Betsey at 756-3717.

We will have a table for Women's Fellowship at the upcoming rummage sale.

Short discussions were held regarding ways to do public suppers. A baked bean supper or a crock pot supper were some of the ideas.

The Women's Fellowship is open to ALL women in the church, member or not, and we would welcome more members! Please consider giving us a try at the May meeting. We generally meet on the 2nd Wednesday of the month.

Sue Krebs





MAY BIRTHDAYS

May 7	Ed Potter
May17	Joe Graff
May18	Mark Perry
May 20	Dean Allen
May 20	Abigail Brown
May 20	Eric Graff
May 20	Bennett Shriver
May 20	Amy Winnen
May 23	Marjorie McGill
May 23	Marilyn Shriver
May 30	Bruce Martin



May 9th Austin & Sandy Pickering

May 12th Jeremy & Tania Johns

**PARISH VISITOR SURVEY
MAY, 2021**

In his March 10, 2021, letter to the New Hampshire UCC churches Gordon Rankin, our Conference minister, included a section about the COVID-19 pandemic and change. Specifically, he said;

“Our pandemic experience has changed us and our churches. The ways in which we do ministry are now different and perhaps not all of them will, or should, return to the way they were before the pandemic. I would encourage all our congregations to engage in some intentional reflections of the following questions:

1. What activities did you start during the pandemic that you cannot wait to let go of?

2. What activities did you start that you definitely want to keep?

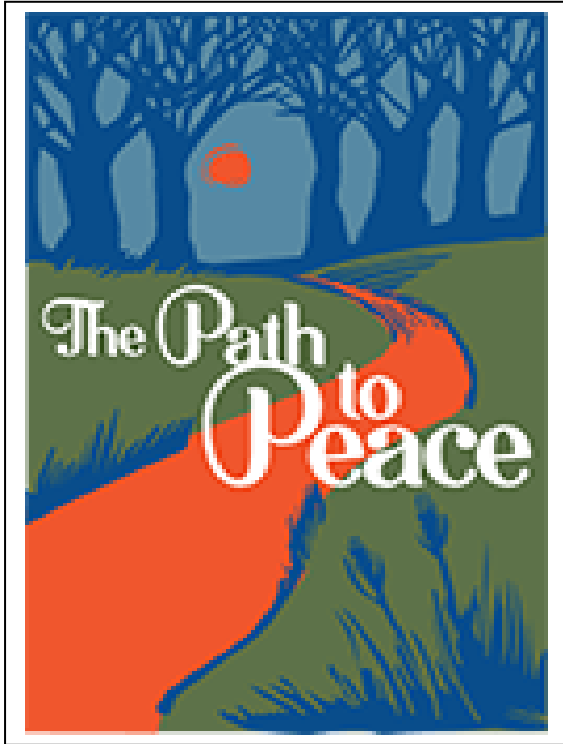
3. What did you let go of during the pandemic that you cannot wait to get back to?

4. What did you let go of during the pandemic that you won't pick up again?”

Deadline is May, 31st!

Please give us your opinions by answering these questions, tearing off this page and leaving it in the outside box or in the church office.

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