

2023



Parish Visitor

Friends,

Easter Sunday was April 9, but most of May is still Easter! Eastertide begins Easter Sunday and runs until Ascension Day, which is May 18th this year. However, the last Sunday is May 21. Go figure.

The last Sunday of May will be Pentecost Sunday, when we celebrate the birthday of The Church, when the Holy Spirit visited the Apostles in an upper room. The book of Acts of the Apostles tells us that, "Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability." (Acts 2:3-4) The fire imagery is why the liturgical color Pentecost is red.

The First Congregational Church of Walpole came along a bit later, in 1761, five years after our town was incorporated. We have been blessed with a goodly inheritance and a sacred trust in our beautiful sanctuary and landmark church on The Common. In this season of new life, let's renew our commitment as good stewards of our building and our ministry.

I hope that, when anyone sees our steeple, they will know it as the home of a congregation committed to justice in a troubled and troubling world. I trust that everyone who enters will find a warm welcome by people who take Scripture seriously and seek to interpret it faithfully and with relevance. It is in that spirit that I offer the following prayer for Eastertide.

Yours in Christ,
Richard

A Prayer for Eastertide

Creator of all,

For the ageless reliability of turning seasons

We thank you.

For new blossoms, singing birds, budding trees,

We thank you.

For the gift of human love that speaks to us of you,

We thank you.

We pray that in our life and ministry together you will

Sustain us.

We pray that our ancient faith and traditions will

Guide us.

As we face new times, new challenges, and opportunities.

You will inspire us.

In the name of Christ, who triumphs over death we

Hope and pray.

Amen.

From Marilyn Shriver, Council Co-Chair

God Dollars?!

On the morning of April 15, as Church Council members were gathering for the monthly meeting, Gwen Yardley handed Finance Secretary Linda Smith a plump envelope and said, "Here are some God Dollars."

Say what, now?

Turns out that every dollar bill has a letter, from A to L, in the middle of the left side front, indicating the Federal Reserve Bank that issued the note. It's called the Federal Reserve District seal. Yes, I'm mildly embarrassed that I've never noticed this before. I mean, I'm sure I've seen it, but never noticed that the letter isn't always the same.

Anyway, Gwen explained that she looks for dollar bills that have the letter G for God (or Chicago Federal Reserve Bank). She sets those bills aside and when she has a stack, donates them to the church.

Brilliant!

I love this idea on so many levels.

- It's a mini act of worship.
- It prompts a level of mindfulness that is easy to neglect in our busy lives.
- It provides for the church without a sudden impact on one's checkbook.

I have started setting aside God Dollars for loose plate offerings. I feel a little thrill when I find a bill with the letter G, and I offer a brief prayer of gratitude that I have a dollar to give.

Maybe you'd like to try it?

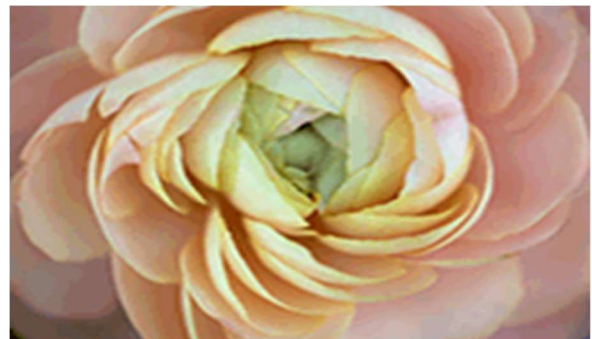
Finance Committee

This past month has been a difficult time for the Finance Committee. Working with a deficit budget, we have requested every committee to begin calculating their expenses for the coming fiscal year which begins July 1st. (This is not a pleasant task for any of us!) Some committees have not yet turned in their estimates but will soon.

We are trying to find ways to decrease costs in every scenario imaginable, but it's just not possible without making major changes in all categories. The biggest problem for us is that the income side of our budget continues to decrease, particularly since Covid. I assure you that we are trying to improve this situation by reminding you to make or honor your pledges, to continue and create more fund-raising events, and to increase donor opportunities. Our goal is to find ways to further decrease our expenses and increase our income.

So – thank you to each of you who have so generously supported our efforts and will continue to do so...and in the meantime, your finance committee will continue to do our very best!

Finance Committee: Janet Wilson, Janet Martin, Tracey Martin, Don Sellarole, Chuck Shaw, Linda Smith.



Memorial Committee

Last month, I put in a reminder about the pavers in memory of loved ones for the Memorial Garden. This month, I must share the news that Keene Monument Company, which has supplied the pavers for us, is now under new ownership and the price of the pavers has jumped to \$95 from \$45 (a \$50 increase).

Here's the altar flower schedule for the month of May:

5/7: Sandy Pickering
5/14 Women's Fellowship
5/21 OPEN
5/28 Jane Vesper

Our next meeting of the Memorial Committee is Tuesday, May 16, at 2:00.

Thanks,
Ellie

Rummage Sale

Saturday, May 20th 9 to 1

Come join us for our annual Rummage Sale. We will have a variety of all-season clothing for you to buy. There will be a food table with donuts and coffee and a hot dog lunch. There will also be a small number of household items to peruse. From 12 until 1 will be our bag sale. A large garbage bag will be \$5.00, and a paper grocery bag will be \$1.00. If you have items to donate, we have specific drop off times. You can drop off items on Tuesday or Thursday from 9 to 12 and on Wednesday from 4 to 7pm. All clothing must be clean and in good repair. Small household items must be clean and not chipped or broken. We will not take books, electric items, CDs, video tapes, luggage or records. **Please respect our requirements.**

Deacons

April was a busy month for the deacons. Holy Week began with the distribution of palms on Palm Sunday. An offering of palms was placed outside the church for those who could not attend in person. We held a very moving Maundy Thursday service the evening before Good Friday. By candlelight, the deacons and Pastor Richard read the scriptures describing the last supper. Ellie Shaw sang a beautiful rendition of, "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" Members of the congregation left the sanctuary in silence. On Easter Sunday we held both a sunrise service and our regular service. Both were well attended.

April marks the end of Minna's Good's tenure as a deacon. Minna has been a deacon multiple times for a total of 16 years! We will miss her contributions and sense of humor. Thank you, Minna!

The deacon of the month for May is Jana Sellarole. This month marks the end of Jana's tenure as a deacon as well. She has already spent an extra year serving in this position. Thank you, Jana! As both Minna and Jana have said in the past, "Once a deacon, always a deacon." They have promised to be available at any time to pitch in where needed. Of course! That's what deacons do :-)

We already have two wonderful church members who have volunteered to take on the duties of deacons when we elect new committee members. We would love to add a few more to the diaconate if that speaks to anyone in the church. Stay tuned! Enjoy this beautiful Spring weather in our lovely village.

Becky Pearson 603-860-022

Trustees

The perennial garden between the Church and the Parsonage is being discontinued because of a lack of caretaking interest. The Trustees hired someone for two summers. Last summer it wasn't tended to.

There are plants available to dig if anyone is interested. We will turn this area back to lawn.

- By now I'm sure you have all heard that the front louver on the steeple was torn off by winds and landed on the sidewalk in a pile of kindling. Luckily no one was hurt though there were a couple of people that witnessed it. A redesign is happening to ensure this never happens again.
- Work to re-clad the spire is scheduled to begin in June. Zinc-coated copper will replace the vinyl. Copper was chosen because vinyl only had a ten-year warranty. We are fortunate that fundraising to date will cover the cost.
- No formal date has been chosen for spring clean-up yet.
- We are still planning to have some painting done this summer on the church. The who and the where were not confirmed at the time.
- Memorial and Trustees will be partnering to have insulated shades installed in the fellowship hall. These will help us with energy conservation. Good timing as three of our current shades need replacing.
- We made it through the heating season, under budget for the church. Thank you all for handling the cooler temperatures on Sunday mornings.
- Enjoy the sound of leaf blowers and soon-to-come lawn mowers. Maybe someday they'll all be electric! Love the sound of silence. 🙏

For the Trustees,
Dale Woodward, Chair.

Birthdays in May

Ed Potter 5/7
Joe Graff 5/17
Eric Graff 5/20
Bennett Shriver 5/20
Amy Winnen 5/20
Marjorie McGill 5/23
Marilyn Shriver 5/23
Bruce Martin 5/30

Anniversaries in May

Austin and Sandy Pickering 5/9
Jeremy and Tania Johns 5/12

Women's Fellowship

The next meeting of Womens Fellowship is scheduled for Wednesday, May 10th at 6:30 p.m. at the church. Kathy Yardley will be there to show us how to make a beautiful greeting card or two. Come and join in the fun and bring a friend or two. Wednesday, May 10th at 6:30 p.m.

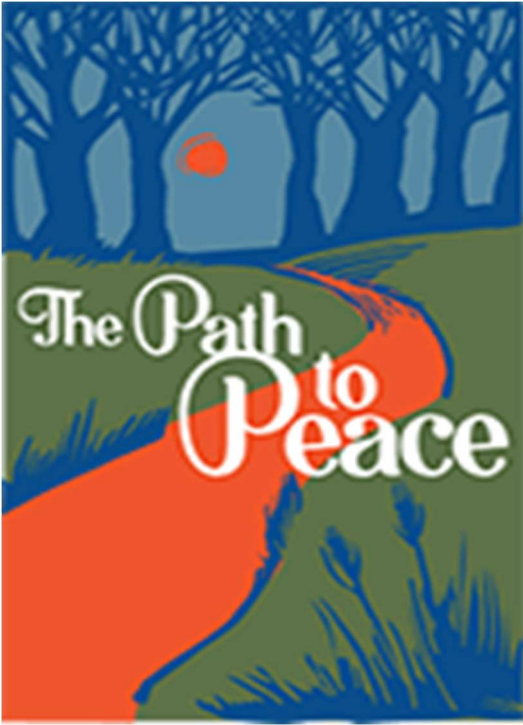


Church Calendar for May 2023

Wednesday, May 3	Bible Study on Zoom	4-5 pm
Saturday, May 6	Eleanor Sullivan graveside service – reception following in Fellowship Hall	11 am
Sunday, May 7	Communion worship service live and on Zoom	10:00 am
Tuesday, May 9	Deacons meeting	5:30 pm
Wednesday, May 10	Bible Study on Zoom	4-5 pm
Wednesday, May 10	Women's Fellowship card making by Kathy Yardley	6:30 pm
Thursday, May 11	Missions meeting	2:00 pm
Saturday, May 13	Council meeting	8:30 am
Sunday, May 14	Mother's Day	
Sunday, May 14	Worship service live and on Zoom	10:00 am
Tuesday, May 16	Rummage Sale Drop Off	9am to 12noon
Tuesday, May 16	Memorial meeting	2:00 pm
Wednesday, May 17	Bible Study on Zoom	4-5 pm
Wednesday, May 17	Rummage Sale Drop Off	4pm to 7pm
Thursday, May 18	Rummage Sale Drop Off	9am to 12noon
Saturday, May 20	Rummage Sale	9am to 1pm
Sunday, May 21	Worship service live and on Zoom	10:00 am
Sunday, May 28	Worship Service live and on Zoom w/ Susan Kershaw	10:00 am
Wednesday, May 31	Bible Study on Zoom	4-5 pm

Friday, May 26th Parish Visitor Deadline

Church Office Hours: 9 am to 12 noon, T-F
The office is closed on Mondays.



First Congregational Church, UCC
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