



## Parish Visitor

First Congregational Church UCC  
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March 2025

Friends,

The forty days of Lent are modeled after the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness after his baptism, fasting, praying and being tempted by Satan. Almost all of March will be taken up with Lent, but we have one final fling before the somber season of reflection, study and prayer begins.

Shrove Tuesday, March 4th AKA Fat Tuesday (*Mardi Gras*) is the final feast before Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. Together with the good folks from Saint John's Episcopal Church, we will cohost a pancake supper in our Fellowship Hall of First Congregational. All are welcome. Free will offering for the meal. If you want to help, come to the church kitchen Tuesday the 4<sup>th</sup> at 4:30, and we will put you to work.

As in past years, we will hold an Ash Wednesday worship service in the sanctuary Wednesday the 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. to mark the beginning of Lent. The service will include Communion and the imposition of ashes.

*The Secret Chord* will be our Lenten book this year. We will read and discuss Geraldine Brooks' 2015 novel *The Secret Chord* about the life of King David. The story is told in the voice of the prophet Nathan. Palm Sunday, April 13, we will gather to discuss the book at church. Time and exact location TBD. The Walpole Public Library has a copy in the collection and are requesting six additional copies from inter-library loan. Our librarian assures me she can get more copies if needed.

In imitation of Jesus fast in the wilderness, many Christians give up something for Lent. In recent years, Jane and I have given up eating meat during Lent. Some take on a Lenten discipline, like resuming a long-neglected exercise routine, daily prayer, or reading some scripture every day. If you are stuck, try sitting in silence for a bit, and perhaps inspiration will find you. Let the Spirit lead you to a spiritual practice for Lent that will prepare you to greet new life on Easter Sunday.

In Christ,  
Richard Malmberg

## News from the Council

Our last Council meeting was on February 8<sup>th</sup>. We were seven of us in person and three on Zoom. We have good news to report. Normally we should be at 58% of our budget but we're at 56%. We're doing a great job holding our expenses and plus increase in giving.

Mark your calendar, on **Saturday, March 8<sup>th</sup>** we'll host our first Community Potluck of the season. The last one got snowed out. We'll gather at 5:30pm. Bring a dish to share. We'll also have a free will offering for World Central Kitchen. Our next meeting is Saturday, March 8<sup>th</sup> at 8:30am.

Peg Winnen, co-chair



## Women's Fellowship

We are looking to purchase a new refrigerator to replace the one in the basement, which has died. Then we'll sell the little freezer.

We are also getting an estimate from Jason Beam to fix the kitchen, including the cabinets, replace the floor and replace the broken countertop. When we get the estimate, we'll call a meeting on how to proceed. Thanks to Dale Woodward from the Trustees for his help. That's it for now,

Peg Winnen, chair

## March Birthdays

Susan Scott	March 4
Jeanette Vesper Wilburn	March 11
Michelle Wright	March 11
Catha Vesper Link	March 12
Peg Winnen	March 13
Vincent Malnati	March 15
Katelyn Houghton	March 16
Jana Sellarole	March 19
Bonnie Woodward	March 20
Megan Sellarole	March 22
Christopher Caserta	March 23
Bill Kingsbury	March 26

## A very Special Thank You

Dear Church Family,

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the thoughts and prayers extended to me and my family during this most difficult time. Bruce always welcomed a visit from a familiar face. I could tell by his wonderful smile when greeting someone.

I am slowly healing but miss him so much. I will always cherish the wonderful memories we made together over the last 67 years.

Once again, thank you for your overwhelming support.

Jan Martin

## Missions

On Saturday, March 15, the First Congregational Church of Walpole will be having their **annual Peanut Butter and Jelly Drop Off Drive**. We will be at the church from **10 am-12 pm** for drop-offs. All items collected will be delivered to the Fall Mountain Food Shelf.

Sunday, March 16, will be our monthly food offering for the Fall Mountain Food Shelf.

Sunday March 30<sup>th</sup>, we will collect a special Lenten offering for One Great Hour of Sharing.

Gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing provide sources of clean water, food, education, health care, small business micro-credit loans, advocacy, resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, emergency relief and rehabilitation, as well as disaster preparedness and response. **The is one of our 5 for 5 contributions to Our Church's Wider Mission.** Jane Malmberg



Rev. Sarah Marean and Ellie Shaw

Rev. Sarah Marean, Associate Conference Minister, preached and took part in communion on Sunday, February 2. At that time, she presented our church with a fabulous banner from our sister church in Chiredzi.





## Trustees

The Trustees met for their February meeting to work on the 2025-26 budget and discuss the current affairs of the Church. The budget was an effort to preserve the status quo. Job done. The east side siding project is still on hold. Likely until June. In the context of budget, we discussed getting estimates for replacing the siding on the south side. We are going to ask for this to be broken into top half and bottom half and let finances decide on how much we get done. In conjunction with Women's Fellowship, the Trustees are collecting estimates for work on the kitchen.

It was noted that a section of plastic storm window blew off one of the sanctuary-stained glass windows. We'll look for reinstallation while there is a lift on the property. It's currently stuck in the snow, so we are unaware of possible damage.

Are we all looking forward to warmer days?

For the Trustees, Dale

It has come to our attention that objects have been left on the Communion Table, which is kept in the southeast corner of the sanctuary when not in use. This has resulted in scratches on the tabletop. With the exception of objects used in the celebration of Holy Communion, please do not leave anything on the Communion Table, out of respect for the sacrament and for the memory of Marion K. Rhodes, in whose memory the table was donated.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

—Pastor Richard



## Church Calendar March 2025

Sunday, March 2	Worship Service w/ communion in the sanctuary and on Zoom	10:00 am
Tuesday, March 4	Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper with St. John's in Fellowship Hall	5:30 pm
Wednesday, March 5	Ash Wednesday Service with Communion	7:00 pm
Saturday, March 8	Council Meeting in Fellowship Hall	8:30 am
Saturday, March 8	Community Potluck Supper in Fellowship Hall	5.30 pm
Sunday, March 9	Sunday Worship in the sanctuary and on Zoom	10:00 am
Saturday, March 15	Missions Drive-by/Drop off Peanut Butter and Jelly for Fall Mountain	10-12 pm
Sunday, March 16	Sunday Worship in the sanctuary and on Zoom	10:00 am
Sunday, March 23	Sunday Worship in the sanctuary and on Zoom	10:00 am
Sunday, March 30	Sunday Worship and One Great Hour of Sharing Lenten Offering In the sanctuary and on Zoom	10:00 am
<b>Church Office Hours:</b>	<b>M-F 9 am – 12 pm</b>	
<b>Monday, March 24</b>	<b>Deadline PV April</b>	

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