

FRIENDLY MESSENGER

First Congregational Church, 1070 Pleasant Street, Worcester, MA 01602
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A Word from Rev. Jackson

Greetings and Happy New Year in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Welcome to 2018, the year of our Lord! Standing at the threshold of a new year gives us an opportunity to contemplate what we would like to accomplish in the year that lies ahead of us. Is there anything we would like to develop in our spiritual life? Are there ways we could develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ in 2018? In other words, what are our spiritual resolutions?

May I suggest that we write some of these things down so we can reflect upon them in December of 2018. The Apostle Paul gave a spiritual resolution to the early Christians in the book of Hebrews:

Hebrews 10: 23-25 - “²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

This letter was written to Christians who were suffering severe persecution. Paul’s resolutions were given to help these Christians from falling away from the mission of Jesus Christ.

Verse 23 to paraphrase: “Hold fast” to our Lord Jesus who gives us hope without wavering because we can trust in the “faithfulness” of Jesus’s promise. These were powerful and assuring words to Christians who have and would face terrible persecutions in the future. They are words of assurance to us as well as we look into the future... for we go into this New Year with the Lord Jesus at our side... and He will not fail.

Verse 24 - “provoke one another to love and good deeds.” The other meanings for the word provoke would be “to spur, stimulate, stir up, excite, arouse, or call into action.” All for the purpose of love and good

deeds. Imagine if this were one of our goals as a Christian church. Purposely *encourage* one another to put our love and good deeds into action. This is what made the early church stand out, because no one else was doing this! There were evil temptations dragging one another down, but no positive uplifting to care and nourish a love for each other in Christ. Acting on this verse still works today!

Verse 25 “not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” The verse is indicating that the more we meet together, the more we can encourage one another to love and do good deeds, so that we are doing this when Christ returns. The verse was an admonition to help keep the persecuted Christians from backsliding.

There is a saying that 85% of life is *showing up*. The more frequently we are present to one another, the more we can help each other in our struggles. This is what “church” is supposed to be all about. The daily grind of life can be very discouraging and pull us down. Being *present* to one another in Jesus Christ in His church gives us an opportunity to put God’s gifts of love and good deeds into action. Then, and only then, spiritual growth can really happen. Combine this with daily prayer and Bible study, and the year ahead looks brighter already!

I pray that 2018 will be a year that enables each of us to have hope and excitement for the future that will carry us through the next twelve months and beyond.

Remember, because He Lives, so do we!

See you in church!

Rev. Bob

FRIENDLY MESSENGER DEADLINE:

The *hard and fast cut-off* date for the February issue is **Thursday, January 18th**. If your article(s) aren't in by that date, we'll be happy to include it(them) in our February, 2018 issue. Thank you!

January Birthdays

04	Ava LaPointe
06	Mark LaPointe
08	Jenna Johnston
10	Jackson McGrail
13	Melanie Anderson
15	Kristine LaPointe
17	Josephine Morrow
24	Doug Perkins, Jr.
25	John Hakkila

January Anniversaries

23	Phillip & Lorna Cardin
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From Hospitality

Anyone wishing to bring in treats for Sunday Coffee Hour through the end of 2018, please sign up in the Narthex. Thank you!

Stewardship Reminder

It's not too late to return your Pledge Form for 2018. You may place it in the offering plate or mail it in to the office. If you don't care to pledge but would like giving envelopes, please contact Charlotte Perry, Ray Bull, or Judy Nally. You may also contact the church office. Thank you!

A Message from the Church Mouse

Happy 2018 everyone! Also, Happy Three Kings Day on January 6th. We are reminded of the visit of the Magi who came to worship the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. Their story is in the gospel of Matthew 2:1-12. It's time to find a warmer place to spend the winter. I'll be looking to visit some of my "southern" relatives. Hope you all have a peaceful, safe and healthy New Year.

Blessings, Nick, the church mouse

Laundry Love



Final collection day for January is Sunday, January 7th to be delivered that week.

Your December donations were very generous and welcomed by the crew. Twelve large jugs, 1 mega-jug, 3 liquid pouches, 5 books, 1 box of dryer sheets, 2 boxes of Capri Suns juice and 1 box of hand sanitizers. Also, \$20 in cash to keep the machines humming.

We are truly in cold and flu season now, so please remember the hand sanitizers and hand creams from the Dollar Store. Also, any items for the first-aid zip bags and zip sandwich bags are most welcomed.

Prayer Requests

Hampton Bagdasarian requests prayers for June Kemp; Sue Cardin requests prayers for Helga Siam and David Siam; Helen Wronski requests prayers for Josephine Morrow and Elaine Wronski; Susan Anderson requests prayers for her daughter, Melanie, and for Justin and Catherine; Sue Carrow requests prayers for her brother, Michael Curran; Sally Hetfield requests prayers for Karen, Erin, and Donna; and prayers are requested for Dawn Ahaesy's father, Francis Lajoie; Bruce Kabasinsky, for the healing of his leg; Roland Fournier, husband of Maryann and son-in-law of Wes and Betty Dalbeck; Murdock Snair; Mary Kay McGrail's Aunt Shirley and Uncle Roy; Sis Prefontaine; Ronald Taylor; Charlotte Perry's nephew, Peter; Sally Day; and Helen Wronski.

Fellowship News

With 2017 behind us, we look forward to the New Year, 2018. We welcome everyone to join us. We meet Tuesdays beginning at 10:00 a.m., first for coffee and goodies, and then for our scheduled program. Unless otherwise noted, we gather in the church parlor to be warm and cozy. Please consider joining us for food, fun and fellowship! We look forward to seeing you. We have several things planned for January.

January 2: Happy New Year! No meeting today.

January 9: It's our Un-Birthday party! Join us to celebrate the New Year and all our birthdays. We will have a "Recycled" gift swap. (Our version of a Yankee swap). Bring something you've received, but maybe it wasn't your cup of tea. New items only please. Christmas or birthday wrapping will make it more fun.

January 16: Movie Day. Meet in Fellowship Hall: Let's watch a movie and munch on some hot popcorn. Title TBA. Any suggestions?

January 23: We hope our new District 5 councilman can join us.

January 30: Gab day. A time to visit or whatever...

One never knows about New England weather in January. Our schedule is flexible. If schools are closed in Worcester, we do not meet. If we decide it's not a good morning to be out, we will make some phone calls. Stay safe.

Coupon Clippers

With all the baking and meal preparation over the past month for the holidays, surely there will be lots of coupons in Sally Day's box for Elon School. Even if you did not use the handy holiday mixes, you keep the Reynolds Company in business with their bags, parchment, and wrap.

Look for the Red Poppy box in the Narthex for your drop off.

Pastoral Relations Committee

The PRC met with Pastor Bob on December 3rd, our first since his return from sabbatical, to discuss the goals we as a church can work on with him to move us forward in a positive direction.

We focused our attention to the goals as stated in your Congregational Letter for our starting point. The use of an adequate mic was priority one as it was the most often mentioned point from the box comments. Over the summer we had Scott look into a new mic that would be compatible with our sound equipment and easier for the Pastor to use.

A motion was brought to the Fellowship to ask them to purchase this piece of vital equipment for better clarity especially during our services. With an unanimous vote, the equipment will be ordered and in use early in the new year.

Thank you Fellowship - a spirit of "moving forward" at work!

A new item for our calendar is the Pastor's Office schedule to be published in the bulletin and newsletter, making it easier for all to know when he is available at church for your convenience, barring parish emergencies.

Several more goals will be implemented in the upcoming year as we move ahead in open communications in all areas of the church.

The comment box is in the narthex on Sundays and office during the week. We are happy to say it is used and there for everyone for any thoughts.

Thank you everyone for your support and communication.

The Pastoral Relations Committee

Bulletin Cover Donations

If you'd be interested in donating a Sunday bulletin cover for a special occasion, please stop in the office to pick one out from one of the many flyers we have available. The cost is only \$12!

Visitation Office Hours

Some of you were wondering when is a good time to stop in for a visit. My visitation office hours will be Wednesday and Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., as a general rule.

Inevitably, situations do arise that would call me away from the office. However, I will usually be present in the study during these times. As always, if you'd like to secure an appointment, please call me at 508-410-1585, and we can reserve a time.

Thank you, Rev. Bob



Thank You

The Deacons would like to thank everyone who purchased Poinsettia plants to decorate our sanctuary this Christmas. As you can see, they add that special touch to the decorations.

January 2018 - FCC Worcester Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<p>New Year's Day 10:00am Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm Boy Scouts 7:00pm AA Meeting</p>	<p>7:00pm AA Mtg</p>	<p>7:30am BNI 7:00pm Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Meeting</p>	<p>12:30pm Community Lunch 6:30pm AA Meeting 7:00pm First Choir practice in 2018</p>	<p>9:00pm Resurrection Ministries</p>	<p>Epiphany 10:00am New Hope SDA 12:00pm Church of God</p>
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<p>10:00am Worship 10:30am Resurrection Ministries 10:30am Church Council 6:30pm AA Meeting</p>	<p>10:00am Resurrection Ministries 6:30pm Neighborhood Watch Mtg 7:00pm AA Meeting</p>	<p>10:00am Fellowship 7:00pm AA Mtg</p>	<p>7:30am BNI 7:00pm Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Meeting</p>	<p>12:30pm Community Lunch 6:30pm AA Meeting</p>	<p>3:15pm Girl Scouts 9:00pm Resurrection Ministries</p>	<p>10:00am New Hope SDA 12:00pm Church of God</p>
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
<p>10:00am Worship 10:30am Resurrection Ministries 11:30am Trustees Meeting 6:30pm AA Meeting</p>	<p>Martin Luther King Day 10:00am Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Meeting</p>	<p>10:00am Fellowship 7:00pm AA Mtg</p>	<p>7:30am BNI 7:00pm Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Meeting</p>	<p>*Deadline for Submissions to the Friendly Messenger 12:30pm Community Lunch 6:30pm AA Meeting</p>	<p>9:00pm Resurrection Ministries</p>	<p>10:00am New Hope SDA 12:00pm Church of God</p>
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
<p>10:00am Worship 10:30am Resurrection Ministries 11:30am Deacons meeting 6:30pm AA Meeting</p>	<p>10:00am Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Meeting</p>	<p>10:00am Fellowship 12:00pm Missions meeting 7:00pm AA Mtg</p>	<p>7:30am BNI 7:00pm Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Meeting</p>	<p>12:30pm Community Lunch 6:30pm AA Meeting</p>	<p>3:15pm Girl Scouts 9:00pm Resurrection Ministries</p>	<p>10:00am New Hope SDA 12:00pm Church of God</p>
28	29	30	31			
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