

FRIENDLY MESSENGER

First Congregational Church, 1070 Pleasant Street, Worcester, MA 01602
www.fcc-worcester.org · Office: 508-752-4635 · Parsonage: 508-459-9085



A Word from Rev. Jackson

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ:

The season of Advent is upon us and Christmas will be here in about four weeks. Time wise it's a short season, but it is a month packed with spiritual significance. Traditional images of the Bethlehem manger are challenged by its relevance for today. Actually, the Christmas miracle couldn't be more relevant. The Angels pronouncement of what Christmas is couldn't be more appropriate for our time.

Luke 2:10-11

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

If there is anything our world needs it is joy. The only way to find joy is to embrace the savior.

Advent is all about taking definitive steps in our spiritual journey to ensure that we may experience joy on Christmas Day.

1. Refuse to allow "busyness" to rob your time in God's presence. Remember the only perfect Christmas was the first one.
2. Over the course of the month, be sure to embrace the Christmas carols and Christmas scriptures surrounded by prayer. These activities will keep the emphasis of the season where it should be; on Jesus.
3. Set aside time to review and revisit your friendship with Jesus. No doubt you'll be seeing and visiting with friends and family you don't always see during the year. Remember to spend most of your time with our Lord on his birthday.

Obviously, there are many other activities you could do or already do that enrich your Christmas season. Be sure not to allow trappings to crowd out your time and energy this month. Stay focused on our savior Jesus Christ.

Then on December 25, 2018 you will find joy, hope and peace with God's love and experience true celebration within. See you in Church!

Because He Lives
Rev. Bob Jackson

FRIENDLY MESSENGER DEADLINE:

The *hard and fast cut-off* date for the January issue is Thursday, December 27th. If your article(s) aren't in by that date, we'll be happy to include it (them) in our February 2019 issue. Thank you!

Prayer Requests

Hampton Bagdasarian requests prayers for June Kemp; Sue Cardin requests prayers for David Siam; Helen Wronski requests prayers for Josephine Morrow and Elaine Wronski; Susan Anderson requests prayers for her daughter, Melanie; Sue Carrow requests prayers for her brother, Michael Curran; Connie MacInnes requests prayers for her niece Linda; The Deacons request prayers for Sis Prefontaine, Paul Scherdell, Dawn Smilie; and Mary Lou McCright who is now at the Oakdale Rehab on 76 N. Main Street, W. Boylston, MA, 01583

From Hospitality

Anyone wishing to bring in treats for Sunday Coffee Hour through the first quarter of 2019, please sign up in the Narthex or call the Office. Thank you!

December Birthdays

05 Kenneth Sawyer
05 Helen Wronski
12 Doreen Mitchell-Gainedy
18 John Dalbeck
18 Kimberly Day
20 Courtney Brady
26 Marie Trzcinski
27 Natalie LaPointe
30 Jim Mirick

December Anniversaries

30 Rev. Bob & Carolyn Jackson

Concordia's Closet

You did it!

You filled the Explorer with your donations to our twice-a-year mission of supplying the Concordia's Closet with much needed essential clothing and business attire.

It may have been raining outside, but there was plenty of sunshine inside as we stacked up the bags in their church. They send everyone their thanks and gratitude as we enter our 9th year of support to their intercity mission.

Great Job Everyone!

Minutes of Meetings

The Council would like to remind all members that minutes of Council and Board meetings are posted on the bulletin board opposite the Tower Door entrance.

The Christmas Fund

Provides direct financial assistance to retired and active United Church of Christ authorized ministers and lay employees and their surviving spouses, including pension and health premium supplementation, emergency assistance, and Christmas thank-you checks. A ministry of the Pension Boards, the offering is received annually at Christmas time. Please give generously!

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED
SUPPORT!**

From the Church Mouse,

Didn't want to let the time go by without wishing my favorite congregation a "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year." Even though it can be cold, Christmas is my favorite time of the year. I think about all of the animals that were in the manger when the baby Jesus was born. Oh how I wish I could have been one of them. Maybe He would have smiled at me! I am just so glad that God loved all of us enough to send His son to earth. Mary and Joseph must have been pretty good parents to have raised such a remarkable son. God trusted them with an awesome responsibility. I'll be heading south soon for the winter. Cousin Minnie invited me to spend New Year's Eve with them. So I will soon be on my way and humming "Joy to the world, the Lord is come! "Follow the star. Peace on earth and goodwill to all the people of the earth.

Sending Christmas! Love, Nick, the church mouse

Mission Corner

CARTY CUPBOARD REQUESTS

PERSONAL CARE ITEMS THAT ARE ALWAYS NEEDED

Deodorant, Toothpaste, Shampoo and Body Wash

ITEM OF THE MONTH

DECEMBER: Dessert Mixes, Cake and Brownie Mixes

Of course anything you are able to donate is most welcome.

Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

This is a private, non-profit society dedicated to leadership in protecting and promoting the rights and well-being of children and families. They provide pregnancy and parenting support, child and family counseling, foster care and adoption and advocacy.

It's that time of year again when we are beginning our Christmas shopping and once again, we will be collecting Christmas gifts for children in need. We will be getting the names and ages of 50 children and at the end of November, we will hang tags on our Christmas tree for you to choose from. It's always fun choosing gifts for little ones! I hope you'll join us once again.

Laundry Love



Soap bubbles and that clean laundry smell has been on all our minds this month as we have had 2 occasions to donate to this important mission.

Our regular visit to Walking Together...Laundry Love brought several people out to the sidewalk to unload the car. You donated: \$30 in cash, 11 large jugs of detergent, 1 giant jug of detergent, 1 bag of Oxy-clean pods, 3 boxes of dryer sheets, 9 hand sanitizers, 2 hand creams, 1 multi-pack of tissues, 4 books, 1 large box of crayons, 8 winter hats, 3 pairs of socks, 1 pair of gloves, and 1 60 count box of packaged cookies.

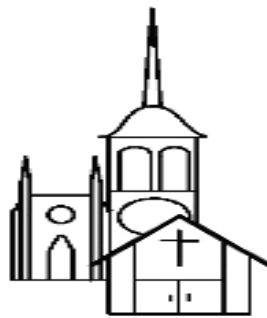
In addition, our friends at Spencer Congregational Church that were unable to hear Meredyth speak, donated 11 knitted hats from their Harvest Sale. Thank you, Pat and helpers.

Thank you FCC - for the extra support as we start the next 4-5 months needing more items for cleaning, first aid, and flu prevention.

Next collection day is Sunday, December 9, 2018 for that week's delivery.

Think Cleaning – Think Flu – Think First Aid!

History Room



We hope with all the activities of the holiday, that each of you have a chance to be quiet for a bit and think about a few special moments from a holiday past that, for reasons known only to

you, stay quiet in that little corner of your heart.

No matter where we have lived, whenever Christmas Eve got closer, I always thought back to the preparation and rehearsals we had for the 11:00pm service. Mrs. Leroy Burnham, organist and director, would have the most beautiful music for us to sing (some she wrote) and soloists that seemed to bring more feeling to the words than ever before.

An excitement surged through the choir as we lined up in the parlor, and it was almost magical as we stepped into the sanctuary to the sound of the organ, the lights and the candles. Not an open seat was to be found as the story and the music carried us through the service.

The real magic happened when the choir filled the side aisles and as the last two carols were sung, were sung, we offered our lit candles to those on the ends and the light went across the sanctuary like spreading stars. As we left the sanctuary, Mrs. Burnham played the tower's chimes for us, and all of Tatnuck, to hear more beautiful carols. More often than not, a light snow fell or the ground just sparkled as we went home.

May your holiday be filled with new activities, but also with those beautiful memories from the past.

From a grateful congregation – **Thank You.**

Fellowship Speaker Series Reminders

When Rev. Ward spoke at Fellowship on October 30th, we provided 2 laundry baskets filled with donations for Laundry Love from all that came to hear her. That day alone was another show of generosity from this church for the program she leads, giving all that have heard her deeper appreciation for the multi-tasking she and her workers do on a daily basis – as a living testament to God in the neighborhood.

Your donations on that day were: \$42.50 in cash, 8 large jugs of detergent, 6 boxes of dryer sheets, assorted books, crayons, wooden puzzles, first aid supplies, 12

hand sanitizers, 5 hand creams, and assorted tissue packages.

Thank you for your support and we thank her for all she shared about the daily life in Main South.

Carissa Rodrigues was our speaker on November 27th. Hope you had the chance to be at Fellowship to hear her journey towards becoming an ordained minister.

The next speaker on Tuesday, February 12, 2019 at 10:30am is Fr. Timothy Burger from St. Luke's, our neighbor. Come early for coffee and fellowship.

Fellowship News

We hope you will join us this month for our activities. We meet on Tuesdays at 10:00am in the church parlor. Here's what this month looks like:

Dec 4 Advent Program

Dec 11 Deadline for receiving hats, mittens, and scarves for the children at Tatnuck Magnet School.

Also, make a holiday boxwood tree with our friends from Berg Florist. The cost is \$12. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall this morning.

Dec 16 Today we will host coffee Hour after our Sunday service.

Dec 18 We will make cookie trays today for our shut-ins and staff. Please bring a dozen of your most delicious homemade cookies. We will also have an easy Christmas craft to do.

Dec 25 Merry Christmas to All! Celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem.

Dec 30 No meeting today. We wish you a Happy New Year! We have decided not to meet during the month of January 2019. We will welcome everyone back on Tuesday, February 5, 2019 for our "Un-birthday" party and potluck lunch. If you are able, we will be collecting gifts of school supplies for the Tatnuck Magnet School.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Call for a Special Congregational Meeting

The Council is calling a Special Meeting to be held on **Sunday, December 9, 2018** after the 10:00am church service.

Business:

1. To authorize the Trustees to negotiate a space use lease with Across the Board Learning Inc. for an after-school program. Specific items to be included in the lease are:
 - Time of occupancy is 3:00 p.m. to not later than 6:00 p.m. M-F when school is in session. Premises must be vacated by no later than 6:15 p.m.
 - Monthly period of occupancy is nominally the Worcester school year – approximately September through June.
 - Specific space of occupancy: Parlor, Conference Room and Nursery Room
 - Maximum number of children during any daily session: 40.
 - All staff must pass a CORI check.
 - Lease may be terminated by either side upon 2 months written notice.
 - In the event any regulating agency require upgrades to the FCC property requiring an investment by FCC exceeding \$1,000, this lease will self-terminate at the end of the grace period allowed for the upgrades without requiring a 2-month notice.
 - The requested rent is \$1,000 per month of occupancy to be paid by the first Friday in each month of occupancy.
 - The tenant shall provide FCC with proof of insurance in accordance with details provided by our carrier.
 - The tenant will be responsible for any damage to the building or its contents.
 - The tenant agrees to leave the building in a clean and usable state at the end of each day's occupancy.
2. To authorize the Trustees to engage a contractor to replace the broken Office door providing the cost does not exceed \$2,000.
3. Other business that may properly come before the Church.

FCC Worcester Calendar

December 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 10:00am New Hope SDA 12:00pm Church of God
2 First Sunday of Advent 10:00am Worship 10:30am Resurrection Ministries 11:15am PRC Meeting 6:30pm AA Meeting	3 First day of Chanukah 10:00am Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm Boy Scouts 7:00pm AA Meeting	4 10:00am Fellowship, Advent Program 7:00pm AA Mtg	5 7:00pm Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Meeting	6 6:30pm AA Meeting 7:00pm Choir	7 4:30pm Girl scouts	8 10:00am New Hope SDA 12:00pm Church of God
9 Second Sunday of Advent 10:00am Worship 10:30am Resurrection Ministries 11:30am Trustees Meeting	10 10:00am Resurrection Ministries 6:30pm Neighborhood Watch Mtg 7:00pm AA Meeting	11 10:00am Fellowship. Deadline for scarves, hats, mittens, plus a movie 7:00pm AA Mtg	12 7:00pm Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Meeting	13 6:30pm AA Meeting	14 4:30pm Girl scouts	15 10:00am New Hope SDA 12:00pm Church of God
16 Third Sunday of Advent 10:00am Worship 10:30am Resurrection Ministries 11:30am Deacons meeting	17 10:00am Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Meeting	18 10:00am Fellowship. Cookie Trays & Christmas crafts 12:00pm Missions Meeting 7:00pm AA Mtg	19 7:00pm Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Meeting	20 6:30pm AA Meeting 7:00pm Choir	21 Winter Solstice 1:00pm Tatnuck Magnet School Concert 4:30pm Girl scouts	22 10:00am New Hope SDA 12:00pm Church of God
23 Fourth Sunday of Advent 10:00am Worship 10:30am Resurrection Ministries 6:30pm AA Meeting	24 Christmas Eve 10:00am Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Meeting	25 Christmas Day *Deadline for Submissions to the Friendly Messenger 10:00am Fellowship 7:00pm AA Mtg	26 7:00pm Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Meeting	27 6:30pm AA Meeting	28 4:30pm Girl scouts	29 10:00am New Hope SDA 12:00pm Church of God
30 10:00am Worship 10:30am Resurrection Ministries 11:30am Church Council Meeting 6:30pm AA Meeting	31 New Year's Eve 10:00am Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Meeting					