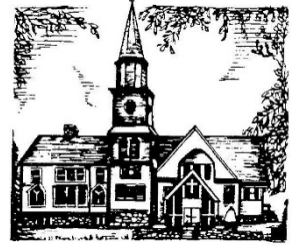


FRIENDLY MESSENGER

First Congregational Church, 1070 Pleasant Street, Worcester, MA 01602
 Website: www.fcc-worcester.org · E-Mail: office@fcc-worcester.org
 Office: 508-752-4635



A Word from Russ Goliger

“Vengeance is Mine”

Okay, I’ll admit the title was meant to catch your eye, as I hope it did. It is curious to think that this phrase appears in St. Paul’s letter to the Roman church and even more curious that editors of the Bible set as its header “Marks of the True Christian.”

Three words. Three simple words that carry so much weight today. As you read it and when you hear it in your mind’s ear, where do you place the emphasis? Do you emphasize “Vengeance?” I’ll admit, there are times when I am so deep in conflict that I emphasize this word. When we are in conflict with one another, sometimes we yearn to set the scales of justice back into balance. This feeling rears its head in our political system, in our public discourse, in our family relations, sometimes in our very own church. It manifests as micro-aggressions, sarcasm, sniping, triangulation, parking lot conversations, and the drama triangle where we each play alternating roles of persecutor, victim and rescuer.

When I pray over these three words, I find my mind drifts on the emphasis. When I am particularly conflicted, I start out emphasizing “Vengeance” and as I work through my disappointment and frustration, the emphasis drifts to the word “Mine.” “Vengeance is Mine.” Understood like this, the “WHAT is mine” is less important than the WHOSE it is.” Understood like this, we realize that “we” are not responsible for enacting vengeance. “We” are responsible for turning it over to God, trusting that God’s justice is far more perfect, far more just than ours could ever be. And by turning it over to God, we are freed to be the “True Christians” that St. Paul challenges us to be. It is, indeed, a great comfort. Put into its fuller context, Romans 12:18-20 reads:

18 If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; (c) for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” 20 No, “if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.” 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (NIV)

As we look to the start of our church season, the truth is that the work of church often stirs up, in those who have been hurt, the feeling of vengeance. Most people expect church to be the place where everyone gets along. However, as we grow together, we learn just how difficult this is. This is nothing new. There has not been a church in all of history where everyone got along. Part of St. Paul’s mission was, in fact, to get churches to understand how to get along. So if you have found church difficult and frustrating and you have gotten so angry that vengeance crept into your prayers, know that you are not alone and you are in good company. Know also that getting along is what we are called to do. Church is where God wants us to practice because church is the place where we learn to keep Christ as our measure, and Love as our goal.

Blessings to you in your faith journey and blessings upon this congregation as we learn how to live out St. Paul’s exhortation to “live peaceable with all” as we serve and love the Lord.

Russ

FRIENDLY MESSENGER DEADLINE:
The hard and fast cut-off date for the October issue is Tuesday, September 19th. If your article isn’t in by that date, we’ll be happy to include it in our November, 2017 issue. Thank you!

Life Line Coming in October

We're pleased to again host this program on **Monday, October 23rd**. Register for a Wellness Package, which includes four vascular tests and an osteoporosis screening from \$149 (\$139 with our member discount). All five screenings take 60 to 90 minutes to complete. **In order to register for this event and to receive a \$10 discount off any package priced above \$129, please call 1-888-653-6441.**

From Hospitality

Anyone wishing to bring in treats for Sunday Coffee Hour through the end of 2017, please sign up in the Narthex. Thank you!

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; Sue Carrow requests prayers for her brother, Michael Curran; Sally Hetfield requests prayers for Jim Catoe, Erin, Donna, and Debbie; Pastor Russ requests prayers for John Ledoux; and the Deacons request prayers for Erika Vecsey; Murdock Snair; MaryKay McGrail's mother-in-law, Claire McGrail; Sis Prefontaine; Ronald Taylor; Melissa Castle; Charlotte Perry's nephew, Peter; Ruth Gauch; Holly Mahlert's son, Aaron; and Sally Day.

Coupons and More Coupons

Fall finds us back in the kitchen more, as we bring in goodies and snacks for meetings and coffee hours. Be sure to look closely for the Educational Coupons, cut them out, and drop them in Sally Day's "Poppy Box" in the Narthex, for the Elon School's supplies.

September Birthdays

- 04 Clarissa Nigro
- 04 Matthew Andes, Jr.
- 04 Brigitte Conlon
- 11 Jacob Stewart
- 11 Ronald J. Taylor, Jr.
- 19 Gabrielle Conlon
- 27 Gordon Cross

September Anniversaries

- 05 Scott Yonker and Bill Condon
- 07 Karl and Jennifer Marble
- 10 Matthew and Theresa Andes
- 30 Ronald and Nancy Taylor

Praise Banners



Do you like our church banners? Would you care to help us purchase new ones? These can be dedicated to loved ones as a memorial, or you can join with someone to share a banner purchase. We do our best to order them when they're on sale (they're approximately \$149 to \$200 each). We need a total of four new banners:

three appropriate for mid-winter, and one for Christmas. Please see Sue Anderson, Don Ansley, Sue Cardin, or Scott Yonker for more information. Thank you!

Fellowship News

The Adult Fellowship will have its first meeting of the season on **Tuesday, September 19th** in the church Parlor. Please join us at 10:00 a.m. for coffee and goodies. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend! The program committee has been working hard to find speakers and arrange for some activities this fall. We're planning to welcome a columnist and photographer from the T&G, learn from a dietician at the Big Y, and view the foliage while visiting the Barre Cross, just to name a few of our events. We'll publish a full schedule in the very near future. Our first meeting will be a time to reconnect after the summer. We can talk about our expectations for the year and perhaps tweak our list of activities. Be sure to come and join us. YOU and your ideas are important to our success. Dues will remain at \$5. Hope you'll join us. See you on September 19th!

Contact Info for Russ Goliger

If you need to get in touch with Russ for any reason, please contact the office, and the message will be gotten to him. If there's an emergency, such as a hospitalization, illness, or death, or a need for pastoral counseling, please contact Deacons Sue Anderson (774-253-0715), Hampton Bagdasarian (508-835-4060), or Sue Cardin (774-239-4900). The deacons have a list of pastors who will provide counseling support.

Sharing Network

Save the date: Saturday, September 16th, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. - The Friends Market Day - featuring fresh-baked apple pies, vendors, books, plants, coffee, and hot dogs.

Location: 901 Pleasant Street, Worcester.

Thank You !

Dear Members of the First Congregational Church in Worcester:

My son and I were baptized on Sunday, July 2nd by Reverend Jackson in a most wonderful ceremony.

I wanted to send something small in recognition of our appreciation for this wonderful service from Reverend Jackson and Deacons Sue and Norman Anderson, who took time from their day to accommodate us.

*Respectfully,
Elvisi Mena*

Bulletin Cover Donations

If you'd be interested in donating a Sunday bulletin cover for a special occasion, please stop by the office to pick one from the many we have available. The cost is only \$10!

Pastoral Relations Committee

Our deepest gratitude to all who have already given us their thoughts concerning the future of our church. It's shown us what matters to you, some words from the past, but mostly wishes and additions you'd like to see happen moving into the New Year.

This form of communication (the mail box) is an on-going staple to enable you to let us know what you're thinking as it enters your mind, not having to wait for the "proper" time to bring it up. Taking advantage of sending more than one missive to the box lets us know that you're truly using the opportunity to express yourself and helps us move forward in a positive way.

Your meaningful words are guiding us to correlate these thoughts into a future report highlighting the direction of our congregation. These are your words, on any subject, goal, criticism, or praise about our life at First Church.

Again, our thanks for contributing towards our committee goal of: ***"What's Best for Our Church."***

History Room



Let there be light... and there is light in the history display case on the way to the Parlor. The 300th Committee voted this gift to the church with the funds from the 300th Celebration.

It's a heat-safe LED light strip with a safety switch, which will better show our history updates minus glass reflection; a lasting memory of our 3-year journey from 2014 to 2017.

Also, thank you to Bev Bean for donating the picture of Dr. Hunter being baptized in the Jordan River. Dr. Hunter was able to join us for the Blessings Forward Banquet last October and renewed many acquaintances from his long service to our church.

Laundry Love



Thank you, everyone, for your local support of this inner-city outreach during the summer. Rev. Ward was so pleased to be able to provide all that came for laundry help with supplies and activities for the children.

Your summer totals were: 23 jugs of detergent, 2 boxes of dryer sheets, 3 activity packs, 21 bottles of bubbles, as well as chalk, juice boxes, 43 individual assorted toiletries, and \$2.50 in cash.

We'll be looking for the individual sanitizers and hand creams starting in October, but for September there's a big need for individual zip bag first aid kits. Would you please donate boxes of alcohol wipes, bandages, individual antiseptic tubes or bottles, pocket tissues, etc. that could help with a small cut, blister, or burn. The Dollar Store and Walmart have great prices on these items. If you can bring the supplies, we'll see that the kits get made up and delivered.

Walking Together Ministries is an active, caring community of people giving help and support to those around their neighborhood. You're met with this feeling from the sidewalk through the door to whatever activity of the day is going on.

Thanks to all of you, we're able to be a regular contributor to all this great work.

Change of Address !

Please note the following for Charlotte Perry:

Charlotte Perry
Colony Homes
Apt. 22G
485 Grove St.
Worcester, MA 01605

Community Luncheon News !

We have a real need for help in the kitchen on Thursdays during Community Luncheons, for setup, cooking, and cleanup. We're in danger of having to cancel or at least cut down on the luncheons if we don't get the help we need. Please contact Holly Mahlert at 508-864-2406, or Deb Mirick at 508-245-8948, if you can lend a hand anytime between 8:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Menu for September: Please remember to call the church office (508-752-4635) to make reservations.

September 14: Salisbury steak with mashed potatoes, carrots, a dinner roll, and birthday cake

September 21: Ham with baked beans, carrots, a muffin, and a chocolate chip cookie ice cream sandwich

September 28: Chicken 'N Swiss with rice pilaf, cranberry sauce, mixed vegetables, a muffin, and apple crisp

Hurricane Harvey Relief

First Church in Marlborough will be accepting Church World Service Emergency Cleanup Buckets for the victims of Hurricane Harvey and will ship them at First Church's (Marlborough) expense to CWR services. Please consider putting one together - by yourself or by teaming up with others - and bring it to First Church (FCC) - Russ will bring them to Marlborough for shipping!

Each bucket is \$75 worth and must contain:

- One five-gallon bucket with resealable lid (If bucket has been used, clean well but do not use if it has held chemicals of any kind.)
- Four scouring pads
- Seven sponges, including one large
- One scrub brush
- Eighteen reusable cleaning towels (e.g. Easy Wipes)
- One 50 oz. or two 25 oz. bottle(s) of liquid laundry detergent
- One 16-28 oz. bottle of liquid disinfectant dish soap

- One 12-16 oz. bottle of household cleaner that can be mixed with water (no spray bottles)
- One package of 48-50 clothespins
- Clothesline, two 50 ft. or one 100 ft.
- Five dust masks
- Two pairs non-surgical latex gloves
- One pair work gloves, cotton with leather palm or all leather
- 24-28 heavy duty or contractor-type 30-45 gallon trash bags on a roll and removed from carton
- One 6-9 oz. bottle of non-aerosol insect repellent

Please DO NOT add anything to them. All cleaning items must be new - all liquid items must be capped and securely tightened. Place all items into the bucket, making sure they are packed securely to avoid damage during shipment. Snap the lid on tight and seal with packing tape.

Buckets can be brought in on Sunday before or after worship at 10:00 a.m. or during office hours.

Buckets will be accepted from all people of goodwill and if requested we will "donate in kind." Right now we are hoping to put together and ship 25 buckets - but we will do our best to ship any that are donated. At the moment we have set aside at least \$500 for the shipping costs.

A special collection for the victims will be taken this Sunday, during the 10:00 a.m. service.

Please team up to put a bucket together and SHARE THIS POST.

Don't just Like it - share it!

Hope for Housing

On **Sunday, September 17th**, Ann Gibbons-Smith, who works for CMHA (Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance), will join us and present some current information about this wonderful program. Their mission and vision statements are printed here for your information. Hope for Housing is one of their programs to help those in need of assistance.

Mission: Recognizing the dignity of all, CMHA leads a collaborative response to homelessness that fosters long-term housing stability, through prevention, quality services, education, and advocacy.

Vision: Leading the way to create a community where everyone has a home, through accessing the tools and resources to obtain residential and economic stability.

Please feel free to ask Ann questions after the service at the HfH table in the Narthex. See you there!

Sue Cardin

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
1070 Pleasant Street. Worc, MA
508-752-4635

FELLOWSHIP 2017 - 2018								
MONTH	DATE	DAY	PROGRAM	x	MONTH	DATE	DAY	PROGRAM
Sept	5		XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	x	Jan	2		No Meeting
	12	Thurs	Primary Elections	x		9		UnBirthday Party & recycled gift swap
	14	Thurs	Community Lunch start	x				Movie
	19		Welcome Back Meeting	x		16		Speaker -Councilman
	26		Q & A with Sister Paula	x		23		Gab Day
				x		30		
			October - Collect clothes for Concordia Closet	x	Feb	6		TBA
				x		11	Sun	Coffee Hour
				x		13		Mardi Gras Breakfast
Oct	3		Barre Cross /Barre Dam Picnic	x		20		Lenten Program
	10		Sr, Bingo	x		27		Show N Tell
	17		Trip to Big Y/Dietician	x				
	24		T & G Speaker	x	March	6		Rev. Alfred from the Resurrection Church
	31		Church CleanUp	x				Movie
				x		13		
				x		20		Berg's florist (\$12) & Cookie Trays
Nov	7		Election Day - No Meeting	x		27		Out to lunch
	14		Berg's florist (\$12) & Sort clothes	x				
	21		No Meeting	x				April - Collect clothes for Concordia Closet
	23	Thurs	THANKSGIVING	x				
			Put up Christmas Trees (mitten, parlor & Sanctuary)	x	April	1	Sun	EASTER
	28			x		3		President's Museum
				x		10		Speaker TBA
Dec	5		Advent Program	x		17		Craft
	12		Deadline for hats & mittens - and Rev Bob talk about Germany	x		24		Lunch with Sally & Beth
	17	Sun	Coffee Hour	x	May	1		Church CleanUp
	19		Cookie Trays, Cookie Swap & Christmas craft	x		8		Sort Clothes
				x		15		Lunch at Trade School
	25	Mon	CHRISTMAS	x		22		Speaker- Five Wishes
	26		No Meeting - Happy New Year	x		27	Sun	Coffee Hour & Church shower
				x		29		Ten Penny Auction
			XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	x				
			TUESDAY Meetings 10 AM	x	June	5		Final Meeting
			\$5 membership fee	x		12		No Meeting
						19		No Meeting
			XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX			26		TRIP

September 2017 - FCC Worcester Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					9:00pm Resurrection Ministries	10:00am New Hope SDA 10:30am Church of God
10:00am Worship 10:30am Resurrection Ministries 11:30am PRC Mtg 6:30pm AA Mtg	Labor Day 10:00am Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm Boy Scouts Mtg 7:00pm AA Mtg	OFFICE CLOSED	7:30am BNI 7:00pm Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Mtg	6:30pm AA Mtg	9:00pm Resurrection Ministries	10:00am New Hope SDA 12:00pm Church of God
10:00am Worship 10:30am Resurrection Ministries 11:30am Trustees Mtg 6:30pm AA Mtg	Patriot Day 10:00am Resurrection Ministries 6:30pm Neighbor Watch Mtg 7:00pm AA Mtg	ELECTION DAY	7:30am BNI 7:00pm Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Mtg	12:30pm Community Lunch 6:30pm AA Mtg	9:00pm Resurrection Ministries	10:00am New Hope SDA 12:00pm Church of God
10:00am Worship 10:30am Resurrection Ministries 11:30am Deacons Mtg 6:30pm AA Mtg	10:00am Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Mtg	*Deadline for Friendly Messenger 10:00am Fellowship Mtg 12:00pm Missions Mtg	7:30am BNI 7:00pm Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Mtg	12:30pm Community Lunch 6:30pm AA Mtg	Autumnal Equinox 9:00pm Resurrection Ministries	10:00am New Hope SDA 12:00pm Church of God
10:00am Worship 10:30am Resurrection Ministries 11:30am Council Mtg 6:30pm AA Mtg	10:00am Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Mtg	10:00am Fellowship 11:30am Shepherd's Mtg	7:30am BNI 7:00pm Resurrection Ministries 7:00pm AA Mtg	12:30pm Community Lunch 6:30pm AA Mtg	9:00pm Resurrection Ministries	10:00am New Hope SDA 12:00pm Church of God