

FRIENDLY MESSENGER

May 2024

First Congregational Church, 1070 Pleasant Street, Worcester, MA 01602
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Office hours are Tuesday - Thursday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
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Jonah not only ran away from God but he ran away from his calling, his vocation. God called Jonah to preach Shalom to the Ninevites. Jonah thought that to do so would be a suicide mission. He thought that the Ninevites were so war-obsessed and had such a warrior culture that to preach peace to them would only provoke a violent reaction, so he ran away. He did not trust God.

Then, through a series of misadventures involving superstitious sailors and a sea monster, Jonah improbably ended up preaching peace to the Ninevites anyway.

To his surprise the Ninevites repented of their warrior culture and from the King down to the domestic animals they sat in sackcloth and ashes to publicly and dramatically demonstrate their repentance, their “turning around” in favor of peace. Jonah had judged the Ninevites and in doing so lost all hope.

But God knew the truth. The truth is that all peoples from every region, clan and ethnicity long for peace. It wasn't a miracle that the Ninevites turned to peace. It is what human beings do whenever they are given the chance. God has built into us a soul that craves peace.

There has never been a war in which both sides haven't committed atrocities. War itself is an atrocity. In every circumstance peacemakers calling for a ceasefire that will last, have had to call upon human beings to do something they think they cannot do: stop killing an adversary that has killed, tortured and maimed friends and family and religious or national companions. Every time that there has ever been a truce, ceasefire or peace there has had to be a willingness to trust the spark of God in the enemy. The divine Love that dwells among every people everywhere.

While the amusing “tall tale” features of the Book of Jonah are instances in which the Bible should not be taken literally, (but read in the context of a books genre) the historicity and factuality of Jonah's message of hope cannot be denied. Scandinavians' no longer get into boats, induce themselves into a more berserk state and raid the shores of warmer climes. The indigenous North and South American Nations (tribes) are no longer at constant war. Germany and Japan are not aggressive, war-like nations. The states of the United States of America are indeed united and maintain traditions of working out their disputes with one another nonviolently. (Something we have to diligently keep renewing with such traditions as the peaceful transfer of power after an election.) This unity was unthinkable to many in the midst of the dreadful slaughter that occurred during the Civil War.

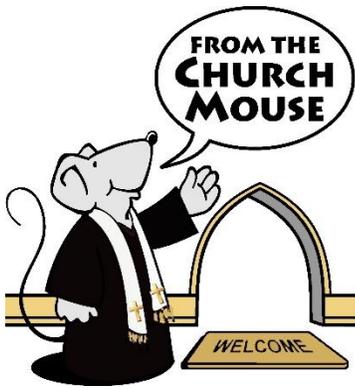
The “Jonahs” of their day who preached peace to all of these “hopelessly warrior culture” peoples were all mocked as hopelessly naive. They were considered people who believed in the “tall tale” that peace is possible.

But peace can and does happen even in the direst and seemingly hopeless circumstances, such as what we are witnessing today.

In our seemingly endless spirals of violence and escalation of hostilities may we preach and act and live for peace anyway in response to God's call to us. May God make us instruments of God's peace.

Peaceful blessings,

Pastor Jack



Well, hello there! I hope you've all been enjoying this beautiful spring weather. I'm getting our flagpole ready for a maypole dance. It's a lot of work, scurrying up and down the pole with crepe paper streamers between my teeth, but it will be so much fun! After the dance, we've made some cute little may baskets to surprise people with and brighten up their day, especially those who can't get out much. I have to admit that they're a little leery at first. I mean, seeing a mouse and all, but then they realize that we're friendly little mice, just trying to brighten their day. Then they smile and tell us how happy they are to see us. How

rewarding!

May 12th is Mother's Day and of course I think MINE is the BEST! She's always taken such good care of me, right from the time I was born. Cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, staying up all night with me when I was sick, picking me up whenever I was feeling blue...yep.... hands down, she wins the Best Mom Award in my book! This special day will be her day...she won't have to work at all. I bet she'll enjoy that! I heard that our church will be honoring mothers in a special way, too. I hope you're there!

With the end of the month comes Memorial Day. Do you do anything special on that day? I like to visit the cemetery and honor all of the brave soldiers who fought and died to keep our country free. I think it's both a happy, and a sad time but I'd say it's more happy than sad, because we do have our freedom and are here to celebrate it. Like so many people, I like to put flags on my ancestors' graves on Memorial Day.

Whatever you do, do it safely, especially if you're driving because there are lots of crazy drivers out there! And above all, don't drink and drive!

Your friendly church mouse,
Nick





Do you have something you'd like to see in our newsletter?

If you have some **news**, an **article**, or an **announcement** that you would like included in the newsletter, please leave it in the office with Sue Anderson or email her at deegram@charter.net by the **20th of each month**.

Thank you!

ZOOM OR YOUTUBE



Our Sunday services will be available via Zoom and afterwards on YouTube! If you are at home and would like to join us virtually on Sunday mornings at 10 am, you can do so by following this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83102423294?pwd=RjhHZGNDZDZlODNHWVFabnRVZ2Vldz09>

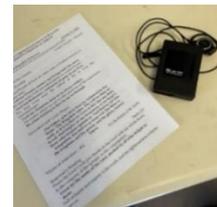


You can also find our latest services here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDQmijukLaC24hwdyayupdg> or by searching "First Church, Worcester" in YouTube.

Accessibility Items Available for Worship!

Did you know that we now offer large print bulletins? That's right! They are available in the narthex as you enter the sanctuary. We also have hearing assistance devices that make hearing what is said at the pulpit much easier! They are also in a basket on the table in the narthex.



Carpet Fund

Our sincere thanks for your continued contributions to our Teddy Bear Bank in the narthex before the service and in the parlor following it. You're filling him to the brim with exciting anticipation! We're getting there, slowly but surely!

Hospitality

Please join us in the parlor for coffee and goodies every Sunday after worship. If you are able to host a coffee hour, there is a sign-up sheet on the table. If you bring the goodies, we supply the beverages and paper goods. You don't even have to bake, store-bought is A-OK. It doesn't have to be fancy either. Fruit is always good and so are crackers and cheese. Also, two or more people can sign up together.



Hope to see you there and maybe adding your name to the sign-up sheet!

"Hospitality is about connection, not perfection." ~ Sandy, The Reluctant Entertainer

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP



catching up.

Come and join us on **WEDNESDAYS at 10:00 am** for some great fellowship and fun! Our plans for May include speaker Catherine Leary from the Alzheimer's Association, who will talk about Alzheimer's Disease; a delicious lunch at The Skyline Bistro at the Worcester Technical High School, 1 Skyline Drive, Worcester, MA 01605, making a spring craft, and a day of chit-chat and

Of course, our plans are always subject to change, so stay tuned!

Carty Cupboard

The First Sunday of Every Month



Many thanks for your Carty Cupboard donations! In April, we donated **9 more bags** of groceries! Donating not only non-perishable items, but also personal care items and/or baby items, are always welcome. Kids will be getting out of school soon, so donating snacks like fruit cups, pudding cups, jelly in plastic jars, condiments and such are good items to think about. They always appreciate your generosity and I know you feel good about giving.

Thank you for miles of smiles that appear on the recipients faces!

Deacons Fund

On the first Sunday of every month, we take up a collection that is used to provide one-time, emergency assistance to a neighbor in need. Special envelopes are included in your bulletin for this offering. Every little bit helps. Your contributions are greatly appreciated!



Thank you for the difference you make!

Large or Small, We Appreciate Them All

We are truly blessed to have such loving supporters in our church. Thank you for your generous contributions. Helping others is so rewarding!



Youth Outreach



Reach out to your friends and invite them to join our Youth Group. They'll see just how much fun it is and how much it enriches their lives!

"The youth is the hope of our future." ~ Jose Rizal



In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Please continue to hold Pastor Jack in your prayers as he works through his health issues. Connie MacInnes requests prayers for her niece Linda and friend Marie Samuelson whom is very ill; Judy Mitchell requests prayers for her granddaughter, Ellanora; Sue & Norman Anderson request prayers for their daughter, Melanie Anderson, Sue's brother, Danny Waskevich and their friend, Roger Waite. Dawn & Matt Ahaesy request prayers for Gina Ahaesy. The

Deacons request prayers for Dolores Trzcinski, Jeanne Fassett, Paul Scherdell, and Joyce & Armand Thienel. Our prayers are also with Normairis Rivera's son, Joey. Kristin Olson requests prayers for Mitch Bourque. We ask for continued prayers for Hampton Bagdasarian who is having trouble with one eye; and for Erika Vecsey as she continues her battle with cancer. Greg Waters and Cindy MacLaurin request prayers for Cindy's mother as she continues her battle with cancer and recovery from a stroke. The Deacons request prayers for Greg and Cindy and their family as they mourn the loss of Greg's mother. We also request prayers for Rev. Natalie Maynard, who is now in hospice. Ellen Dalbeck requests prayers for the McDermott Family.

If you would like to add a prayer concern or update our list, please email the church office at office@fcc-worcester.org or call the office at 508-752-4635.

May

07 Dawn Ahaesy	16 Donna Spaulding	17 Robert Olson
21 Christina Dalbeck	25 Beverly Bean	25 Heidi Hinson
25 Marsha Huntoon	25 Deborah Mirick	26 Phillip Cardin
	26 Marianne Bourgeault	

June

03 Jane Boggs	03 Marcos Rivera	04 Bob Lingner
05 Daniel Ames	05 Cindy MacLaurin	10 Steven Hinson
11 Erin McGrail	13 Joyce Thienel	19 Eileen Miles
22 Deb Holmes	23 Bruce Kabasinsky	

"Our age is merely the number of years the world has been enjoying us!"

June

01 Mac & Connie MacInnes	08 Richard & Renee Mason
24 Jim Capuzziello & Jamie Sullivan	



May Concert



Rough Seas, Safe Harbor

A concert of seafaring songs by **WINGS OF SONG** community chorus

Saturday, May 11 at 7:30pm

Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish Church

16 East Main Street, Webster

Saturday, May 18 at 7:30pm

First Church of Monson, Congregational

5 High Street, Monson

Sunday, May 19 at 2:30pm

St. Anne-St. Patrick Parish

16 Church Street, Fiskdale (Sturbridge).

Admission to all three concerts is free, with a freewill offering collected at intermission. "Rough Seas, Safe Harbor" will take audiences on a huge sea voyage, much of it aboard a whaling ship that might have left New Bedford, Mass. in, say, the 1850s, and sailed practically around the world, separating crew members from their families for as long as four years.

Nym Cooke, Music Director, has combined 29 stirring, eloquent songs of the sea into a seven-part odyssey. The individual sections of the program are titled "Home Port," "Setting Sail," "At Sea," "Shipwreck!," "Foreign Ports," "Wives and Mothers at Home," and "Return and Reunion."

This is sure to be an unforgettable adventure – both musically and narratively. All venues are handicap-accessible. Audience members will be invited to sing along on seven songs, and to join us for tasty (and free!) refreshments after each concert.

These concerts are sponsored in part by the Monson and Sturbridge Cultural Councils, local agencies supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. Wings of Song is grateful for this support – and for the continued support of their many faithful audience regulars, supplemented by first-timers whom we're always glad to see!

Anyone needing more information is encouraged to email Music Director Cooke at nymcooke@gmail.com or Wings of Song President Carol Curtin at carolcurtin77@gmail.com. You can also visit their website, www.wingsofsong.org



Wednesday

01 All Day ~ **MAY DAY** ~ "Be like a flower and turn your face to the sun." - Kahlil Gibran
10:00 am Fellowship ~ Speaker on Alzheimer's Disease

Sunday

05 All Day ~ **CINCO DE MAYO**
10:00 am FCC Worship Service ~ Gluten free communion and non-alcoholic grape juice
Carty Cupboard donations ~ Deacons Fund Collection

Wednesday

08 10:00 am Fellowship ~ Come and have fun playing Apples to Apples 

Friday

10 1:00 pm Trustees Meeting in the conference room

Sunday

12 10:00 am FCC Special Mother's Day Worship Service



All Day ~ **MOTHER'S DAY**

Wednesday

15 10:30 am Fellowship ~ meet in the parking lot for a trip to Worcester Technical High School for a scrumptious lunch

Sunday

19 10:00 am FCC Worship Service

Wednesday

22 10:00 am Fellowship ~ a spring craft
6:30 pm Deacons Meeting in the conference room

Sunday

26 10:00 am FCC Worship Service
11:30 am Council Meeting in the conference room

Wednesday

29 10:00 am Fellowship ~ chit-chat and catching up



31 All Day **MEMORIAL DAY**

"At last came the golden month of the wild folk-- honey-sweet May, when the birds come back, and the flowers come out, and the air is full of the sunrise scents and songs of the dawning year."

— Samuel Scoville Jr.

