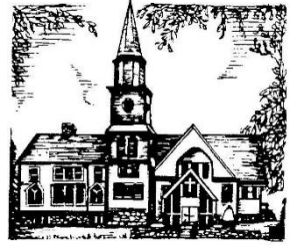


September  
2020



# 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:

Already the summer is drawing to a close and we stand at the threshold of the Autumn season. This has been a Spring/Summer like none other in our collective memory. I do recall reading about churches shutting down in the pandemic of 1918, but this one is a first for all of us. Our faith has been challenged with worldwide fear. Our contact with one another has been redefined by social distancing, face masks and minimal contact. As my doctor said to me recently: "This thing has sure turned your world upside down." Indeed, he was right....it certainly has for all of us.

The real challenge now will be how do we adjust to the new normal? As we work to go back inside our church on Sept 13th, the answer would be "slowly". We are all called to take one step at a time on our way back to the new normal worship setting. There will be changes as we gather for worship with the intention of keeping everyone as safe as we can. Our plan is to keep the format we have been using for the outside service and use the same format on the inside. The re-entry committee in conjunction with church council has planned to keep the basics from our outside service. There will be a call to worship, invocation and Lord's Prayer, joy's and concerns. Offertory dedication, scripture lessons, sermon, closing prayer and benediction. \*The service will last approximately one half hour to 40 minutes. For the time being: there will be no responsive readings, passing of the peace, or singing. There will be a prelude, postlude and offertory music. Again, for the time being, there will be no coffee hour, but the congregation is invited to gather in the parking-lot and socially distance. \*This will occur after a "deep cleaning" has been done by a professional company. There will be on-going cleaning by the staff and volunteers.

I can assure you of this: I don't like this anymore than any of you. But I am committed to making our best effort to keep our church family safe. I already performed a socially distanced funeral this summer for a friend of our family who died of COVID-19. I do not want to perform anymore....especially for a member or friend of our church family.

If nothing else, this whole experience has forced us to remember that we are a church family whether we are inside our doors or not. Many of you have been calling and checking on fellow parishioners. To this I say "good job" and keep on using your gifts of

ministry to help bring the love of God to one another. Thank you! We move ahead in faith and hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

A special thanks to those who worked hard to enable us to have an outdoor service in our backyard. The Church of God who rents our downstairs has followed our lead and has been meeting in our backyard on Saturdays. I give thanks to God that as of this writing, so far, we have not been rained out. I pray that we may enjoy clear weather for the next 3 Sundays until we gather under the shelter of our roof once again.

Please keep us in prayer as we move through this transition back to our regular inside activities one step at a time. Your prayers for good health and protection from disease are very much appreciated. As always, if you have any questions, please call me and I will try to find an answer or direct you to someone who may be able to help.

See you at or in the church when the time is right.

Because He Lives,

*Rev. Bob*

## **A Note From Church Council**

The council was informed by Steven and Linda Ann Coy that after many years of chairing two intercity mission programs they have decided to step down. They have volunteered for 10 years with Concordia Closet and Laundry Love for 5 years respectively.

We thank them for their dedication, passion, and commitment to these missions. They are truly servants to the Lord's mission. They touched many people who truly needed help.

On behalf of the church council and the entire membership, we give a big thank you to Steven and Linda Ann!

Respectfully,  
Matthew Ahaesy  
Moderator/Church Council Chairman

## Birthdays



### September

04 Clarissa Nigro  
04 Matthew Andes, Jr.  
11 Ronald Taylor, Jr.  
27 Gordon Cross

### October

04 Jean Andes  
04 Matthew Andes, Sr.  
11 Benjamin Day  
15 Hampton Bagdasarian  
19 Ann Scherdell  
19 Armand Thienel  
23 Bob Smith  
23 Robert Olson  
25 Marilyn Mildish

## Anniversaries



### September

05 Scott Yonker & Bill Condon  
10 Matthew & Theresa Andes

### October

14 George & Jane Boggs  
17 Armand & Joyce Thienel

## THE RETURN TO INDOOR WORSHIP



As Bob has shared in his message, our congregation will be returning to worship in the sanctuary on Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup> and there are some things you should know.

The Sanctuary and Narthex will be professionally cleaned prior to the first indoor service. We will also be performing extensive weekly cleaning of all the areas that we'll be using for worship before each Sunday's service.

In order to minimize the scale of the cleaning necessary and to provide the greatest degree of safety, we will only be returning to certain parts of the church. Two entrances will be open on Sunday, the handicap entrance and the main doors facing Pleasant St. All other doors will remain locked to entry and signage will be present as appropriate. The designated entrance doors will be propped open to promote air flow and to eliminate any need for you to have contact with them. All doors leading into the Sanctuary will also be propped open for the same reasons. The doors from the Narthex to the Lady's Parlor and the office will be closed and signs present requesting that you do not use them, as the rest of the church has not been sanitized.

Everyone entering the church will be required to wear a mask. If you don't have one, then masks will be made available in both the Narthex and the handicap entrance.

Seating in the Sanctuary has been modified to ensure appropriate social distancing. The pews that we will be using will no longer be covered with cushions and all books have been removed from them to allow for efficient cleaning. Please do not sit in a pew that contains cushions. You may sit with those people that you have sheltered with during this crisis without social distancing. However, please practice social distancing from those individuals who are not part of your "bubble".

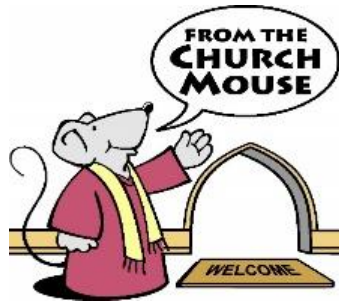
Only one bathroom will be available and that is the one immediately adjacent to the elevator outside the Sanctuary. It will be subject to our rigorous cleaning regime.

If you have any questions, please call me 774-701-2635 or email me at [clmgjw02@charter.net](mailto:clmgjw02@charter.net).

See you all in the Sanctuary soon!

Greg Waters

## A Note from the Church Mouse



Greetings everyone. September has arrived and the summer weather should soon be turning to the coolness of autumn. God will be using his giant paintbrush to color the leaves and trees around us. If you are a grandparent, then Happy Grandparents Day on September 13. I heard that our church family will be gathering in the sanctuary that morning for worship. I know it will be different, but it will be nice to have activity in the church and maybe even hear the organ. (But NO singing!) It will be nice when things can somewhat return to normal and we can all share fellowship together. But in the meantime, we need to follow the advice of those in authority and stay safe by social distancing and wearing our masks. We will welcome in autumn on September 22. It is my favorite season. I can smell the goodies like apple pie and pumpkin pie, but the orchards probably aren't going to let us visit and do our own picking. Guess I will just have to settle for a cup of warm cider and a donut or an apple dumpling. Take care everyone. Be safe. Stay healthy. Love to my church family. Your faithful church mouse, Nick

## FELLOWSHIP NEWS



Just a reminder. There will be no Fellowship meetings in September. We certainly hope before the end of the year that we will be able to meet in person. But for now, please continue to stay in touch with one another, and most important, please hold one another up in prayer. These are indeed unique times and we must continue to do those things necessary to keep our families, our friends and ourselves safe. If you have any concerns or know anyone who needs help, please do not hesitate to contact the church office or Rev. Jackson.

## DEADLINE:



The due date for the October issue is: September 22nd. If your article(s) are not in by that date, we'll be happy to include it (them) in our November 2020 issue. Thank you!

