

FRIENDLY MESSENGER

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

Greetings in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

As we enter the month of June, we find ourselves in a different place from anything we could have imagined. Fear and warnings about the coronavirus abound all around us. Yet, it is at a time like this that we need the words of Mark 4:35-41 most of all: ³⁵ *that day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."* ³⁶ *Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him.* ³⁷ *A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.* ³⁸ *Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"* ³⁹ *He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.* ⁴⁰ *He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"* ⁴¹ *They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"*

The disciples in that boat were extremely afraid because their lives were literally on the line. Remember, it is pitch black at night, no light whatsoever, no life jackets, no coast guard, or radios or cell phones, and their boat is nearly underwater. Traveling in a boat at night, during a storm was an extremely risky thing to do. Only a madman would try something like this. But they left the safety of the shores in spite of their fears. They started out with faith. But when the storm swamped the boat and they were literally faced with impending death, they cried out to Jesus: "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

The answer is: of course He cared. As the disciples journeyed on through life, they would face other violent storms and life threatening situations – many times. Perhaps this was a test to see how they would respond in the future. They understandably failed.

Jesus stands up, rebukes the wind and waves, which He created, and the sea goes completely calm. I've been on the Sea of Galilee twice in my life. The tour guides showed us how high the storm waves can get on that 7 mile by 14 mile stretch of water. They showed us examples of the violence of the waves during a storm and how small the disciple's boat actually was. No wonder they feared for their life when death stared then in the face. Jesus asked them, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" The disciples were terrified at what they just witnessed and asked, "Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey Him.

In our current world situation we are asked the same question. How does our faith affect our outlook on this scourge that seems to be all around us? I would simply remind us of this: remember this story and who is really in charge of our life, our church, and the lives of those around us. Our church is in God's hands.... Jesus promised He would be with us in this life and the next. Our job is to claim the promise, hope and faith found only in Him.

As I write this to you, know that your church council is working out the details of how we can safely meet for worship. The details of when, how and where are being addressed now. We will be in touch with the plans by phone, letter and email when they are assimilated. Meanwhile, let us remain in prayer for one another and our church. The mission and the ministry continues.

I would also like to personally thank all of you who continue to support our church with your pledges and contributions to our deacon's fund. Thank you for your faith giving....we could never carry on this mission without you. Meanwhile, keep your eyes on the empty cross and the living Savior.

See you at church! Because He Lives,

Rev. Bob

Regarding the opening of the Church

The Church Council is meeting via telephone on Friday, May 29th @ 7pm. They will discuss the plan of how and when and where to reopen the church for services. Once a decision has been determined you will receive via mail a flier with the reopening plans. Thank you for your patience and understanding. If you have any questions, please call the office at 508-752-4635. God Bless and Stay Safe!

Sunday Offerings Please Read

Our Church services and all other activities are cancelled until further notice due to the COVID-19 virus. If you can, we are asking you to please send in your weekly offerings to help keep the Church afloat during these troubling times. Any amount will be much appreciated. Please contact the Church Office with any questions at: 508-752-4635. God Bless!

Birthdays



June

- 03 Jane Boggs
- 05 Daniel Ames
- 10 Steven Hinson
- 11 Cassandra Olson
- 11 Erin McGrail
- 13 Joyce Thienel
- 17 Linda Ann Coy
- 19 Eileen Miles

July

- 01 Carolyn Jackson
- 10 Brittany Hinson
- 11 Judith Nally
- 11 Cody Hill Johnston
- 13 Erika Vecsey
- 18 Paul Scherdell
- 19 Nancy Dalbeck
- 28 Richard Trzcinski
- 29 Rev. Bob Jackson

Anniversaries



June

- 01 Mac & Connie MacInnes
- 08 Bob & Luz Smith
- 21 Richard & Renee Mason

July

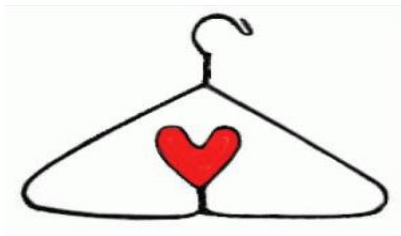
- 29 Matt & Dawn Ahaesy

Laundry Love



Due to the circumstances surrounding COVID-19, Laundry Love is unable to continue its mission for the time being. Rev Ward and several of her Team are still a presence in the South Main area, but their building is closed. When they are able to open the building partially, later in the summer, they will be needing water, juice boxes, sun screen, and prewrapped snacks.

Concordia's Closet



Due to a variety of changes at Concordia, along with the COVID-19 guidelines, they are unable to store our spring donations. They are very grateful for all our donations over the past 10 years. A suggestion to you that have already sorted and bagged your donations, is to support the clothing bin in our parking lot. You have been planning a June drop off, so why not continue with that idea and have everything taken to the drop box by that same date, Tuesday, June 2nd. I am sure they will be gratefully accepted.

Thank you for your cooperation.

A Special Thank You

My birthday was unique – I received many cards, emails, phone calls and well wishes from family and friends. I want to especially thank you, my church family, for making it an amazing day during this time when we cannot be with each other. Stay safe ---- God be with you ---- until we get together again. Bev Bean

Fellowship



Greetings to all. It has been a while now since we have been able to share fellowship together. In light of the ongoing restrictions and limitations to gathering, we will not be meeting in June. Then we will be on our summer hiatus for the months of July and August. Our church council is still hard at work to make decisions about when our church building will be able to reopen for services and other meetings. For the time being, we can continue to stay in touch with one another with a phone call or a note. We can continue to pray for each other. This is all part of fellowship and we have missed those connections. When we are able to meet again, we hope that Beverly, as president, Ann, as secretary, and Ruth as treasurer will agree to continue in those roles. Put on your thinking caps over these next few months and help us to come up with some ideas for programs and guest speakers for the 2020-2021 season. It will be greatly appreciated. Have a safe, peaceful and healthy summer. We look forward to seeing everyone again soon!

A Note from the Church Mouse



Hello to all my church family. I miss seeing you around the church. I was sure hoping this pandemic would be over by now, but not yet. Have you been keeping busy? I have been decluttering my nest of all the excess stuff that I have accumulated. It has been quite a task, but it has brightened up my outlook on life. We sure can get bogged down with the "stuff" in our lives. I have spent quality time with my family members, but I have also followed the "social distancing" guidelines, and have missed getting together with friends. I bet that's how you are all feeling too. This church has great fellowship among its members, like a family. It has been difficult not to meet together. Just remember, God is the glue that holds us all together, and He promises to never let us down. What a wonderful promise. If you ever need some encouragement, just call on Jesus, He is my best friend. I hope He's yours too. Be safe, be healthy, and be well. Looking forward to seeing you around church...real soon! Happy summer, Nick, your faithful church mouse.

Prayer Requests



Hampton Bagdasarian requests prayers for June Kemp; Sue Cardin requests prayers for David Siam; Susan Anderson requests prayers for her son, Danny; Sue Carow requests prayers for her brother, Michael Curran; Connie MacInnes requests prayers for her niece Linda; The Deacons request prayers for Paul Scherdell & Rev. Natalie Maynard, former interim minister at our church; prayers for Sally Day; prayers for Marilyn Mildish; prayers for Sue & Norman Anderson and their family and especially their daughter Melanie who has been diagnosed with the coronavirus

FRIENDLY MESSENGER DEADLINE:



The due date for the July & August issue is on Tuesday, June 23rd. If your article(s) are not in by that date, we'll be happy to include it (them) in our September 2020 issue. Thank you!

