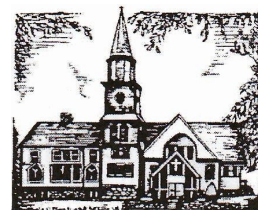


FRIENDLY MESSENGER

First Congregational Church, 1070 Pleasant Street, Worcester, MA 01602
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January 2021



A Word From Rev Jackson

Greetings and Happy New Year!

We praise our Lord Jesus Christ for safely bringing us to this point in our journey through life. I recently found some simple yet worthwhile resolutions for 2021.

1. Put God first.
2. Read the Bible more.
3. Pray more.
4. Trust God always.

Just imagine how much our lives would change for the better if we followed these four simple resolutions. How would our lives change? How would our faith grow?

At 6:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve, I rang the church bell for a few minutes. I did it for the glory of God and to remember the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ even in the midst of this horrifying pandemic. Most of all, I rang the church bell to send a message to our Tatnuck community that our church is still here to proclaim the good news in the midst of a surrounding darkness. The lights are still on and our witness continues to shine forth to a confused and troubled world. I rang it to proclaim that whatever the enemy throws against us, we will continue to do the work and mission of Jesus.

I am convinced this pandemic will pass and because of Jesus Christ, we can have hope as we begin this new year.

Our plans for reopening for in-person worship are as follows:

1. Our Deacons had a conference call on December 30 to discuss a date to reopen for in-person worship.
2. We will consider reopening on January 17.
3. The Deacons will talk again on January 12 to decide if it would be safe to reopen on Sunday, January 17. If the Board agrees it is not safe, we will stay closed until such time as it is safe to reopen.
4. Your Deacons will keep you informed and updated via email and phone calls.

I look forward to seeing you in this new year. In December, Carolyn, myself and several other members of our church family tested positive for the coronavirus. Each of us praise God for the healing we have received. I will see you in worship when we are able to gather as a church family once again. Sending you my love and blessings.

Because He lives,

Rev. Bob Jackson



Fellowship was unable to meet during the latter part of December. We had been meeting downstairs in the hall at 10:00 am on Tuesday mornings where we wore our face masks and practiced social distancing.

We will cautiously decide when to resume meeting. It will be after church services resume, so will possibly be Tuesday, January 19th, at the earliest.

Meanwhile, we pray for COVID to decrease as the vaccine is made more readily available and people continue to practice safe distancing and wearing masks faithfully.

Blessings to each of you in the New Year!



Happy New Year everyone. I certainly hope you had a blessed Christmas time. Like many of you, I did not spend my holiday with my family. It was a very different time, but we must all stay safe and try not to spread the virus to those around us. Thank you Scott for providing the Christmas Eve service on the website. I was able to listen in and share in the readings, prayers and hymns that make the season so special. Now it is a new year and we must all continue to keep in touch with those in our church family. Only virtual hugs please! Rev. Bob sends out a message each week with scripture and a hymn. It is a good way to take a few minutes each week and reflect on God's goodness and His love for us. Little did we know that this coronavirus would still be with us in 2021, but we know without a doubt that our God is bigger than any old virus. God has protected so many of us through this pandemic and we express our gratefulness to Him constantly as we go about our daily lives. I sure miss seeing my church family but I am thankful that you have been safe through these past months. It will take a miracle to make this all go away, but I hear that the scientists have come up with a vaccine that should bring this to an end. Oh how I look forward to the day that you will all be back in the sanctuary to pray and sing together! What a holy sound that will be! In the meantime, take care of yourselves, your families and one another. It is exactly what Jesus would want us to be doing, that is, taking care of each other. Meanwhile, I am going to find a quiet spot to settle in for a long winter's nap. Enjoy January, remembering we are one month closer to spring! God bless us everyone.

Your faithful church mouse,

Nick



In planning for the new year, we are in need of a Clerk and a Deacon Chairperson. If this is something you are interested in, please speak with Matt Ahaesy. Your help is extremely important to us and is greatly appreciated.



Greetings,

I hope all is well with you and your loved ones.

With Rev. Bob retiring in the fall of 2021, we are forming a Pastoral Search Committee. We would like it to consist of both men and women, with a total of five members. This is the most important position in our church to fill and requires a very responsible committee. If you would like to be a part of it, please contact me either in church or by phone at 978-868-5480.

I wish everyone a happy, healthy, and safe New Year.

God bless,
Matt Ahaesy
Church Moderator



Hampton Bagdasarian requests prayers for June Kemp; Sue Cardin requests prayers for David Siam; Connie MacInnes requests prayers for her niece, Linda; The Deacons request prayers for Paul Scherdell, Sally Day, Marilyn Mildish, Sue Cardin, Janice Santos and Melanie Anderson.



January

10 Jackson McGrail	13 Connor Hill Johnston
13 Melanie Anderson	25 John Hakkila

February

04 Richard Mason	21 Laura Waters
05 Molly Andes	23 Doug Perkins, Sr.
20 Scott Yonker	27 Connie MacInnes



January

23 Phillip & Lorna Cardin



Christmas Eve Festival of Lessons and Carols

A huge thank you goes out to Scott Yonker for the wonderful Christmas Eve Festival of Lessons and Carols that he so carefully planned and recorded for us. It was beautiful and most welcome, especially during these difficult times when so many of us have had to be alone. He made us feel like we were right there in church with him. Our sincere thanks to both him and Bill for touching our hearts with the love, peace and joy of Christmas. If you missed it, it's posted on the church website.

Button Soup

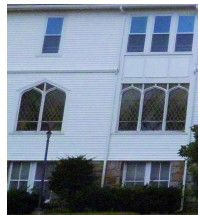


I was going to put a soup recipe in this month's newsletter since it's that type of weather right now. Well, as I thought about which recipe I'd use, I decided to make some while I was thinking and now here I am, writing about it. You never know where your pen and ink will take you but this time, it was right here.

The pot of soup I have simmering on the stove is just a general beef soup so I guess it can be called Stone Soup or Button Soup. I like Button better since Stone sounds more like I'd crack a tooth eating it. I started with the bone from the beef rib roast that we had for Christmas dinner. I had a small slice of meat left, and some gravy, so I tossed those in the pot, covered them with water and simmered them for about an hour. Then I sliced a couple of ribs of celery into it. Looking in the fridge, I decided to add the rest of the green beans left over from Christmas dinner, too. To that, I added a dozen or so of baby carrots, and a small summer squash, slicing both. Next was a small onion that I sliced into the pot along with a couple of teaspoons of minced garlic. I thought some low-sodium V8 juice sounded good, so I added about a cup of that, too. A bay leaf, a spoonful or so of oregano and basil and that was it. I simmered it for about another hour and it was done. Since the gravy had enough salt in it I didn't add any more. Delicious!

What do you do with your leftovers? Would you like to share it with us here? If you'd like to send it....or have a favorite recipe you'd like to share, I'd be happy to include it in our newsletter. My email is deegram@charter.net . I hope to hear from you soon!
Sue Anderson

Board of Trustees Window Project



We are happy to share that we are continuing our project to refurbish and paint the church windows. They are in great need of repair and painting.

Would you consider making a donation to this worthy cause? The estimated cost is \$5,000. We have raised about \$1,725 with \$3,275 to go. With your help and God's provision, we can paint and restore our windows for the future. Thank you for your help in the past....we appreciate your help for the future.

Another Way to Help Build Our Window Fund



Many thanks for your Window Fund deposits in our Teddy Bear Bank in the narthex. It's adding up! We'll have it there every Sunday, so please continue with your contributions and before we know it, our windows will look beautiful!

Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children



Due to the pandemic this year, the MSPCC had requested gift cards or money instead of gifts for the children. Thank you so much for helping us provide for these children once again. It was truly appreciated.

Thank you and God bless!
Sue Anderson & Ruth Nickerson
Missions Committee

A New Year's Prayer

As I think of the past year, I'd rather just leave it in the past. I pray that the New Year brings new hope for good health.....and more..... more happiness, more joy, more kindness, more peace, more understanding and more love.

Rather than dwell on the past, let us rejoice in a brand new future, where we can count our blessings and praise our Lord for all we have. My mother always said, "If you have your health, you have your wealth." This couldn't hold more truth especially as we see out 2020 and welcome in 2021.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Sue A.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

WORD SCRAMBLE

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uemtrieasqs

eirmsome

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The First Congregational Church in Worcester
1070 Pleasant Street
Worcester, MA 01602
www.fcc-worcester.org
Rev. Robert H. Jackson

Return Service Requested

Purpose Statement

It is our purpose to joyfully celebrate Christ's presence and God's grace in our lives; to respect one another in love, actively seeking and embracing those who wish to grow with us in faith, hope and love; to follow the example of Jesus, as we minister to the spiritual and physical needs of the community. Through service we flourish.

Join Us!
