

FRIENDLY MESSENGER

First Congregational Church, 1070 Pleasant Street, Worcester, MA 01602
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July-August 2021



A Word From Rev Jackson



Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Hard to believe that the summer season is upon us. Flowers and trees are in bloom and everything is green all around us! We hope you will join us on the lawn each Sunday for worship at 10:00 am.

In the spirit of "Christmas in July", I want to lift up a line from the beautiful Christmas spiritual, Sweet Little Jesus Boy, where it says, "*The world treats you mean Lord, treats me mean too. But that's how things are down here, we didn't know it was you.*"

Persecution of Christians outside the church and within the church has been a problem from day one. We are naive to assume that "mean treatment" only occurs out in the world. Driving people away from Christ is a continuous threat and seems to be a lifelong goal for some "Christians".

Denzel Washington wrote some great words when he said, "You must become OK with not being liked. No matter how loving or kind you are, you will never please your way into collective acceptance. You could be a whole ray of sunshine and people will still dislike you because they are used to rain. Be OK with shining regardless."

The apostle Paul struggled with this problem as well and writes about it in II Timothy 4: 14-18. "*Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will requite him for his deeds. Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. At my first defense no one took my part; all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the word fully, that all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.*"

The back story is that Alexander had initially joined the start-up Christian church. But, as Christianity spread and people no longer bought his metal idol gods, Alexander and others lost money. So he opposed the church and abandoned Christ. He became a cancer from within and his words did a great deal of harm to Paul's ministry. This betrayal and subsequent gossip continues today even in the church. We need to be on guard against this kind of behavior. We should claim the verse, "*But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength ...*" This is our hope and promise in the midst of negativity.

As Paul said to the Corinthian church in II Corinthians 12:9-10, "*but he said to me, 'My*

grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong." Paul's ministry continued to be fruitful in spite of his difficulties. The strength, power and effectiveness of Christ's ministry was revealed through Paul's struggles.

We are called to always remember who is keeping our ship afloat in the future. When we encounter persecutions or receive bad press as we attempt to do good, always remember who is behind us protecting us from the storms of life.

May God grant each of us a fruitful summer and may He use our spiritual gifts to touch and encourage the lives of those we will encounter.

See you in the church yard!

Because He Lives,
Rev. Bob Jackson



WELCOME



Outdoor Worship Service

Please join us every Sunday, as we worship outdoors, weather permitting. Bring your favorite lawn chair, maybe don a hat and your sunglasses and you'll be all set. We also have metal folding chairs that we can bring out for you. There's plenty of sun as well as shade, whichever you prefer.

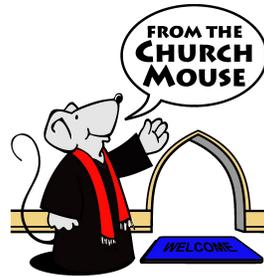
We will continue holding our services outside until September 5th and if the weather cooperates, maybe even longer. We will worship inside if we have rain.



Thank You

A hearty thank you goes out to Greg Waters, who built new back stairs for the parsonage. They're well made and look beautiful!





Happy July! Happy 244th Birthday America! Time for all of us to celebrate! We seem to be getting back to normal, well whatever normal is. It is nice to know that the COVID pandemic is waning. I had almost forgotten that all of you people have noses and mouths. It has been a long time since I've seen people around the church without their masks. It is nice to see the outdoor services happening again on the side lawn. I, for one, enjoy being outdoors. It makes me feel closer to God being out in his creation. Have you been to the seashore yet this summer? I am looking forward to checking out the shoreline and the beach. Reminds me of one of my favorite poems, a version of the original poem by *Mary Stevenson*, called **Footprints in the Sand**. It goes like this:

Lord you said that once I decide to follow you,
We would walk side by side through life;
but when I needed You the most,
I saw only one set of footprints in the sand.
The Lord replied, "I love You and I would never leave You.
During your times of trial and suffering,
when you see only one set of footprints,
it was then that I carried you."

I carry those words close to my heart. It reminds me of how important it is to remember that God is always with us, ready to help us when we need Him. But we should also never forget that we have our families, our friends and our church family who also walk with us through life, and boy, there are plenty of times we are lucky to have them along with us. In the Old Testament, Joshua was reminded by God that he, Joshua, was never alone. God told him, "Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Don't you forget that either! I sure don't.

I hope you have a happy, healthy and safe summer. I will be around the church, probably seeking shade from the heat, and definitely listening to the outdoor services, especially the music. Keep singing 'cause I hear you!
I remain your faithful church mouse,
Nick



Save the date – **Wednesday, July 14th at 11:00 am.** We've made reservations at Val's Restaurant in Holden. We can car pool or meet there.

If you'd like to join us, you can call Bev Bean at 508-799-7035 or Sue Anderson at 774-253-0715.

We're looking forward to gathering and catching up with everyone!



Gordie Holstrom with Rev. Bob

Gordie is a retired firefighter from Sturbridge, MA. He is a member of the Worcester Fire Brigade Pipes & Drums.



The Worcester Fire Department held its annual “Memorial Sunday” to gather and honor the departed, active and retired firefighters who have left a legacy of service. The ceremony took place at Fire Department Headquarters on Grove Street, Sunday, June 13, 2021.

CHRISTINE PETERSON/TELEGRAM & GAZETTE

We were fortunate enough to have Gordie come straight to church from the ceremony, in full dress, looking amazing!



Congratulations Jaime Moehring



On June 26th we took a little trip to Sturbridge to attend Jaime's Studio Open House. It's conveniently located at 407 Main Street, inside The Sturbridge Coffee House. What beautiful work she does! She and her staff are truly friendly and welcoming. She has some of her work displayed and one picture is more beautiful than the next. She has a huge blackboard for kids to write on, all sorts of props and backdrops all nestled in a perfectly relaxing setting. She photographs babies to adults as well as pets and can provide endless settings for you to choose from. Jaime is filled with creativity and it shines through all of her work!

To contact her or to see some of her work for yourself, you can go to www.jaimecaitlyn.com. You can also call her at 508-784-6554 or email her at jaime@jaimecaitlyn.com.



If you have something you would like to see in our newsletter, please email it to me at deegram@charter.net, call or text me at 774-253-0715. I will continue to do the publishing until we have a secretary.

Please note that this is the last issue of the newsletter until September.

Have a wonderful summer!

Thank you!

Sue Anderson





July

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

August

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 03 Mary Kay McGrail | 17 Mark Mason |
| 05 Kahlan (Cardin) Plant | 19 George Boggs |
| 05 Judy Mitchell | 25 John Waters |
| 06 Dolores Trzcinski | 26 Milton MacInnes |
| 11 Chelsea (Mason) Arvin | 31 Theresa Andes |

September

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



July

- 29 Matt & Dawn Ahaesy

August

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 09 Donald & Sheila Ansley | 14 Jim & Deborah Mirick |
| 13 Steven & Linda Ann Coy | 16 Norman & Susan Anderson |

September

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 05 Scott Yonker & Bill Condon | 10 Matthew & Theresa Andes |
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Prayers worldwide, as we continue to thank our Lord for the COVID-19 Vaccine after this very long year; We would like to keep Hampton Bagdasarian in our prayers and he also requests prayers for June Kemp; Connie MacInnes requests prayers for her niece Linda; Judy Mitchell requests prayers for her granddaughter, Ellanora; The Deacons request prayers for Sue Cardin and her family as they mourn the loss of her nephew, David Siam who lost his valiant battle with cancer. We also request prayers for the family of Donna Robertson, sister-in-law of Judy Robertson, who also lost her courageous battle with cancer. May they rest peacefully in the arms of our Lord, until they meet again. The Deacons also continue to hold Lynn Kapinos, Paul Scherdell, Melanie Anderson, Sally Day and Marilyn Mildish in prayer.

If you have a prayer request or would like us to remove someone from our prayer list, please let us know.



Window Fund



Our Windows Project is ready to begin! Please save your loose change for September, when you can add to the Teddy bear bank because as you know, it's been growing! We haven't brought it out for the summer but if you wish to make a contribution at this time, you can put it in an envelope and place it in the collection plate.

Sincere thanks to everyone for your continued efforts to complete this job.

May God's blessings surround you!



Dates to Remember in July

01 Thursday – All Day – National Postal Worker Day



04 Sunday – All Day – Independence Day



04 Sunday – 10:00 am – Church Service

11 Sunday – 10:00 am – Church Service

11 Sunday – 11:00 am – Trustees Meeting

15 Thursday – All Day – National Give Something Away Day



18 Sunday – 10:00 am – Church Service

18 Sunday – All Day – National Ice Cream Day



25 Sunday – 10:00 am – Church Service



Dates to Remember in August

01 Sunday – All Day – American Family Day



01 Sunday – 10:00 am – Church Service

07 Saturday – All Day – National Lighthouse Day



08 Sunday – 10:00 am – Church Service

08 Sunday – 11:00 am – Trustees Meeting

10 Tuesday – All Day – National Spoil Your Dog Day



15 Sunday – 10:00 am – Church Service

16 Monday – All day – Tell a Joke day – **Laughter is the best medicine!**

22 Sunday – 10:00 am – Church Service

29 Sunday – 10:00 am – Church Service



Dates to Remember in September

- 05 Sunday – 10:00 am – Church Service
- 05 Sunday – 11:00 am – Deacons Meeting

- 06 Monday – All Day – Labor Day 

- 12 Sunday – All Day – Grandparents Day
- 12 Sunday – 10:00 am – Church Service
- 12 Sunday – 11:00 am – Trustees Meeting



- 13 Monday – All Day – National Bald is Beautiful Day



- 19 Sunday – 10:00 am – Church Service

- 22 Wednesday – First Day of Fall 

- 26 Sunday – 10:00 am – Church Service
- 26 Sunday – 11:00 am – Council Meeting



WITHOUT GOD
 our week would be
SINDAY
MOURNDAY
TEARSDAY
WASTEDAY
THIRSTDAY
FIGHTDAY
SHATTERDAY
 7days without God
 makes **ONE**WEAK

