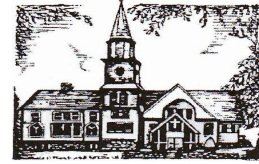


FRIENDLY MESSENGER

June 2024

First Congregational Church, 1070 Pleasant Street, Worcester, MA 01602
www.fcc-worcester.org · Office: 508-752-4635 · office@fcc-worcester.org
Office hours are Monday, Thursday and Friday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.
Rev. John R. Jones · jackfitzellejones@gmail.com · 401-632-8318



Keeping the Sabbath

The book of Exodus in the Bible recounts the oppression experienced by the slaves in Egypt. They were required to gather bricks by night and build with the bricks by day. They worked day and night, experiencing sleep deprivation while doing hard physical labor with no time for their muscles to recover.

Neurologists explain that sleep deprivation can cause hallucinations and even death. It is used as a torture technique. Losing sleep means that our brains are not able to clear the toxins produced by normal metabolic processes. Removal of these toxins occurs during sleep. Sleep deprivation literally poisons our brains.

Anyone who does weight training or resistance training knows that recovery rest is just as important as the exercise. Building muscle works by using resistance to tear muscle fibers. With rest the muscle fibers heal in a way that increases muscle mass and strength. It is one of the body's amazing ways of epigenetically adapting to the environment. The key to it is that rest, and sleep, is when the muscles recover and heal so that the rest and sleep are essential parts of the process.

God liberated the slaves from Egypt because he saw the pain and suffering of their oppression. He gave the commandment to keep a sabbath, a day of rest, specifically as a societal precaution against the tyranny of sleep deprivation and being worked to exhaustion.

As often happens, a law meant to liberate people evolved over time to oppress people by being carried too far and being applied without a sense of balanced wisdom. The fundamentalists of Jesus day especially liked to use the Sabbath laws to abuse people with irrational legalism. Jesus clarified the nature of the law, and the nature of genuine religious practice when he rebuked such hypocrites with the teaching, "God made the Sabbath for man, not man for the Sabbath."

Today millions of people suffer from sleep deprivation and exhaustion. Many work night shifts which have been found to take years off of people's lives. Night shifts create chronic stress and inflammation. Many of us become addicted or habituated to compelling programs such as Netflix and entertain ourselves to death by depriving ourselves of sleep. Our screens impact the brain and keep us awake. It is recommended by the medical community that one avoid television and computer screens for a period of time before going to sleep. (The specific amount of time depends on many variables and medical opinions vary.)

Sleep hygiene is one way of keeping the Sabbath. Powerful, wealthy and influential forces in our society want to keep us up late working to make them money, or to watch their commercials to consume their products. God is a Higher Power that can liberate us from unhealthy habituation and create new lifestyle habits that engender joy, vitality; health and celebration. May you receive the blessing of the Sabbath, God's loving intention of time for healing, wholeness and well-being for all of us.

Blessings,
Pastor Jack



Hi everyone! It sure feels like summer, doesn't it? Well, I guess it should cuz it's right around the corner, on June 20th. Beach time for sure...or maybe the mountains depending on whether or not you like the heat. I guess I like both, so maybe we can do a few trips this summer. Diving into the pristine pools in New England can't be beat! I love to go to Green Island Quarry up in Maine and jump off the rope swings! They're so much fun and really, I prefer fresh water over salt water but gee...the beaches are so beautiful and big, they seem to go on forever. I can see why people used to think the world was flat years ago, since looking out over the ocean looks like it just

goes on as far as the eye can see and I guess they thought it just dropped off. The same with land, I imagine. Anyway, wherever I can get ice cream into my trips is great, to me. My favorite is Ben & Jerry's in Vermont and don't squeal on me, but I scurry around taste-testing ALL of the flavors! Hehehe!!! I always make sure I save room for cheese though, cuz we stop into Cabot's on our way home an' you know me and cheese. Yum!!

Now that the nice weather is here and school is coming to a close for the summer, I see and hear the little ones screaming with delight as they play in the church play yard. They're always so happy.

June is such a busy month! First of all, it's **Pride** month...yes, ALL month. Everyone needs to be proud of who they are no matter what and we all have to respect one another, too. That's what my parents taught me and they're pretty wise! There will be all kinds of special stuff going on and lots of fun to be had by all!

I heard that there's gonna be a church cookout...well, at least one but maybe even more this summer. Won't that be fun!

Flag Day is on June 14. That's when the American flag was adopted in 1777. What a beautiful flag we have!

Right after that, is Father's Day! Happy Father's Day to all of you fathers and father-figures out there. I hope you have a terrific day!

Then comes Juneteenth, which is such an important and meaningful holiday. It's a day of truths and reflection of the past and hopes and dreams of the future. We've come a long way but must remember that we still have a long way to go.

Wherever you are, whatever you do, I hope you have a wonderful and blessed June.

Your friendly church mouse,

Nick



**"My name is 'Old Glory'!
Long may I wave
o'er the land of the free
and the home of the brave."**

From the poem, "I am the Flag" written by ~ Howard Schnauber



"A good father is one of the most
unsung, unpraised, unnoticed,
and yet one of the most valuable
assets in our society." – *Billy Graham*



"Juneteenth has never been a celebration of victory or an
acceptance of the way things are. It's a celebration of progress.
It's an affirmation that despite the most painful parts of our
history, change is possible – and there is still so much work to
do." – *Barack Obama, 44th President of the United States and
Civil Rights Attorney*



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=RjhHZGNDZDJyODNHWVFabnRVZ2Vldz09>

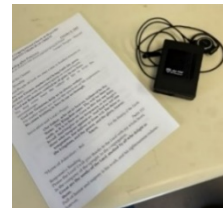


You can also find our latest services here:

<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 funds continue to grow, and we now have approximately \$600. Thank you for your continued contributions to the Teddy Bear jar in the narthex or parlor. They are greatly appreciated!



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



Mother's Day



What better way to begin Mother's Day, than in church? All of the women received beautiful pink carnations, symbolizing the love, faith and hope for their part in

raising our children, whether as a mother, aunt, grandmother or friend. They're all very special people.

Pentecost Sunday



While, not everyone remembered to wear red, we had strawberries and whipped cream, topped with a little white dove, a symbol of the receiving of the Holy Spirit by the early church.

"Mothers are smiles and hugs and caring, but most of all, they're love."

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP



Come and join us on **WEDNESDAYS at 10:00 am** for some great fellowship and fun! We will only have two meetings in June, before breaking for the summer. On June 5th, we're having a Ten Penny Auction. Everyone brings in a few gently used items that they would like to re-home and we lay them out for everyone to see and ponder whether an item would be a good fit for them. We sell tickets - ten for \$1 and you keep one half and put the other half in a cup in front of whatever you hope to win. YOU may be the lucky winner but only if you come and join us!

Our last meeting for the summer will be on June 12th, when we'll meet in the church parking lot at 11:00 am to go to Pinecroft Dairy and Restaurant at 539 Prospect Street in West Boylston for lunch and ice cream.



*"Our love to God is measured by our everyday fellowship with others and the love it displays."
~ Andrew Murray*



Carty Cupboard

The First Sunday of Every Month



Many thanks for your Carty Cupboard donations! In May, we donated **12 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 our generosity and I know we feel good about giving.

Thank you for your loving support!



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!**



Hello June



Joy finds you when you
Understand your value and
Nourish your need
Even when it feels hard.





Large or Small, We Appreciate Them All

Thank you for being such a blessing to others. Your support is truly appreciated and rewarding. Joyful blessings!



Let Us Pray



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. We also request prayers for Rev. Natalie Maynard, who is now in hospice. Ellen Dalbeck requests prayers for the McDermott Family.

Thank you!

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.



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 | |

July

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 02 Sue Johnston | 05 Bruce Johnston | 10 Brittany Hinson |
| 13 Erika Vecsey | 18 Paul Scherdell | 19 Khloe Kapinos |
| 19 Nancy Dalbeck | 19 Elaine Miles | 21 Jim Capuzziello |
| 28 Richard Trzcinski | | |

"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

July
 24 Bruce & Sue Johnston 29 Matt & Dawn Ahaesy

Would you like to delve a little deeper into the bible?



Basic
Instructions
Before
Leaving
Earth

There are no wrong questions to ask about the bible and what better way to further understand what we read, than in a group. Sharing insights, making observations and asking questions about the text will no doubt help to understand what we read. There can be some interesting discussions. If you are interested in participating in a bible study in the fall, please let Pastor Jack know.

“The Bible is the greatest of all books; to study it is the noblest of all pursuits; to understand it, the highest of all goals.” — Charles C. Ryrie

**News You Can Use from Southern New England Conference
 United Church of Christ**

Ashes to Mission



June 2nd is the anniversary of the fire that destroyed the meeting house of the First Congregational Church United Church of Christ of Spencer. This year the 2nd falls on Sunday. We decided to hold a service at the site at 2:00 that afternoon. We want to invite people from the community and other churches to take part as we commit ourselves to continuing our mission to serve the Spencer area. As we plan a new facility to carry out what we believe God invites us to

do, we want to celebrate the support and encouragement people have extended, and invite them to help us meet some of the needs that we and they see around us.

207 Main St., Spencer, MA 01562

Contact Rev. Bruce MacLeod, interim_pastor.bcc@yahoo.com if you have any questions or would like to send words of encouragement. Rain date: Sunday, June 9 at 2:00 pm.

SAVE THE DATE!

JUNE 9, 2024

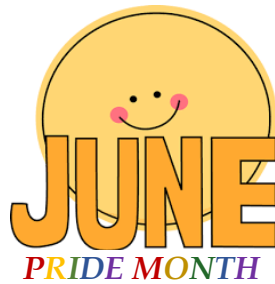


We would love it if you could attend! It will be held on the church lawn by the play yard, immediately following the service. All are welcome! Bring your friends and your appetite! Fun for all ages!

RSVP to Sue Anderson in the office @ 508-752-4635 or email her @ office@fcc-worcester.org. Alternately, you can let Ruth Nickerson, Ellen Dalbeck, or Marianne Bourgault know. There will also be a sign-up sheet in the narthex, and in the parlor at Coffee Hour.

We will supply the hotdogs, hamburgers and rolls. If you would like to bring a salad, fruit, beverages, condiments, individual bags of potato chips, dessert, or anything else you think people might enjoy, it would be great but is not necessary. We could also use your help with setting up or cleaning up.

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!



"In all that you are, and all that you do, take pride and exhibit respect."

Sunday

02 10:00 am FCC Worship Service ~ Communion Sunday ~ We use gluten free communion and non-alcoholic grape juice
Carty Cupboard Donations ~ Deacons Fund Collection

Wednesday

05 10:00 am Fellowship ~ Come and have some fun at our **TEN PENNY AUCTION**

Sunday

09 10:00 am FCC Worship Service



11:30 am **COOKOUT!**

Wednesday

12 11:00 am Fellowship ~ This will be our last meeting until September. We will meet in the church parking lot for a final lunch outing at Pinecroft Dairy in West Boylston.

Friday

14 All Day **FLAG DAY**



1:00 pm Trustees Meeting in the Conference Room

Sunday

16 All Day **FATHER'S DAY**
10:00 am FCC Worship Service



Wednesday

19 All Day **JUNETEENTH**



6:30 pm Deacons Meeting in the Conference Room

Thursday

20 All Day **FIRST DAY OF SUMMER**



Sunday

23 10:00 am FCC Worship Service
11:30 am Council Meeting in the Conference Room

Sunday

30 10:00 am FCC Worship Service

"June is nature's bridge from spring to summer."