

FRIENDLY MESSENGER

First Congregational Church, 1070 Pleasant Street, Worcester, MA 01602
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APRIL † 2022



Journeying Again... Journeying Anew!

As we enter April, with over half of the Lenten season now behind us, Easter is fast approaching! Soon we will journey together through the roller-coaster of Holy Week, from triumphant entrances and celebratory meals, to betrayal, desertion, cruelty, death and the glorious wonders of an empty tomb. We will share the sacred stories of our faith and we will journey on, even as we remember the moments which can be hard to face yet again. We will wave palms of welcome, share the bread and cup of remembrance, sit by the cross pondering the crucified, and rejoice with loud, Easter morning proclamations of "Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!"

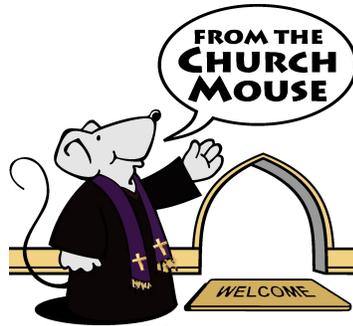
This is a sacred journey which has been walked for many years by the followers of Jesus Christ, and we walk it again. Still, as we prepare for this annual procession to the resurrection, one that you may have taken for many years, we at First Church are also preparing to embark on something new. As I write this note, I do so from my new office in the church, still surrounded by boxes which need to be unpacked. I write a few days before I "officially" begin but I cannot contain my joy and wonder as I think about what this next season of ministry for First Church will look like. I am excited for what we will do together in the name of the one who reminds us that love is so powerful that not even death can hold it. We will try new things, we will cherish the traditions which breathe life into our faith community, we will face ups and downs along the way. And yet, like the annual procession we soon embark on as we head toward Easter, we trust that even through the ups and downs, that God is with us and that, if love is our goal, we will rise! We will always rise!

I look forward to getting to know everyone at First Church even more and I cherish the opportunity to journey with you to Easter and beyond!

In Easter Anticipation,



Rev. Josh Fitterling



Good day everyone! Have you heard the exciting news? Our new pastor is here and has already started mixing in with our neighbors and our congregation! His official start date is April 3rd. He's been busy moving into the parsonage with his husband, Mason, their pup Hero and their cat (gulp) Pumpkin. They all seem pretty nice so far although I haven't met Hero or Pumpkin face to face...hopefully, I won't. If they stay over there, I'll stay right here and we'll all be happy. Hahaha!

Well, there's even MORE good news! We're preparing for Easter! Holy Week sounds awesome...well...because it IS awesome! Just imagine God giving us His only Son. Sending him here to live and die for us. And just try to imagine the suffering that Jesus did...carrying that huge cross...being NAILED to it...a crown of THORNS being shoved on His head...how He suffered! And He did it all just for US, so that our sins might be forgiven. Who else would have done that for us? Satan certainly wouldn't have! He even tried to lure Jesus in his cunning ways but Jesus was steadfast and chose to be strong. How amazing He was and still is. Imagine the look on His prosecutors faces when they found an empty tomb. Jesus had risen! Hallelujah!!!! Because of Him, we are promised eternal life! *John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

Oh, aannnd the Easter Bunny is coming with a basket full of goodies! Have a wonderful celebration but don't eat too many jelly beans or you'll get a tummy ache!

Loving Easter blessings,
Nick



Romans 10:9: "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

Holy Week Services

First Congregational Church in Worcester, UCC



Palm Sunday - 10:00am

We remember Christ's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem!

Maundy Thursday - 7:00pm

We remember the Lord's supper, and the growing shadow of the cross of Good Friday approaches.



Good Friday - 7:00pm

We remember the crucifixion and the darkness which fell over the land.

Easter Sunday - 10:00am



We remember the resurrection and the power of love!



All are welcome!!

Services will be held in the sanctuary, accessible through the front doors off Pleasant Street or the side doors facing the parking lot. Elevator access is available from the side door near the back of the building, facing the parking lot.

Sunday Coffee Hour



Please join us for Coffee Hour in the church parlor every Sunday after the service, we'd love your company! When you get to the back of the church...the narthex, turn right, go through two doors (they'll be open) and the parlor is on the left...through one more door but that one will also be open. You'll see others headed there, too. I can't wait to see you there!

Also, for anyone interested in hosting a Coffee Hour there's always a sign-up sheet on the table with the goodies on it. Sue Anderson makes the coffee and puts out the plates, napkins and plasticware that we provide. All you have to do is bring a smile and the goodies on the day you've signed up for.



We'd love to have you join us for Fellowship on Tuesdays at 10:00 am. There's always coffee, tea, goodies and best of all, great company! We meet in the Church Parlor where it's comfortable and cozy. You can help us plan our future meetings, too. We love going on outings as long as the weather is good. We had a great time at City Line recently! We're pretty flexible so we did this on a Wednesday at 11:00 am. It was lots of fun! Rev. Josh even joined us! Maybe YOU'LL join us someday soon!



Luke 23:46-47: "Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' When he had said this, he breathed his last. The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, 'Surely this was a righteous man.'"



Church Office Hours

Starting in April, Shelly will be in the office Tuesday – Thursday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.



PASTOR JOSH'S OFFICE HOURS

You are likely to find Josh in his office or around the church throughout the week during the times when the church office is open (NEW CHURCH OFFICE HOURS are Tuesday – Thursday from 9am to 1pm). If you wish to schedule a time to chat to ensure he is in the office, reach out to him directly. Josh can be reached by email at pastor@fcc-worcester.org or by cell phone at (610)-750-2688.

PASTOR JOSH'S DAYS OFF

Josh will generally hold Friday and Saturday as days' off for rest and renewal. On Friday, his email will not be checked. If there is a pastoral emergency, Josh can always be reached on his cell phone at (610)-750-2688.



The Christian Education Committee recently met with Rev. Josh. He had a great idea that he shared with us and we loved it! We now have a "Kids Corner" in the narthex where kids can choose a book to read or an activity to do. They can then bring them into the sanctuary and do them as they sit with their parents or whoever they came with. There are even chairs in the narthex for them to sit on before or after the service as they look at what they've chosen.

If you would like to help with funding for this great project, please give your donations to Cindy MacLaurin, Connie MacInnis or Sue Anderson. It would be greatly appreciated! Thank you!



Carpet Fund



Our New carpeting fund continues to grow! Please continue to add whatever you can spare to the Teddy Bear jar in the narthex. Your contributions are greatly appreciated!

May God Richly bless you for your generosity!

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. ~ 2 Corinthians 9:11



Carty Cupboard



On the first Sunday of each month, FCC gathers non-perishable food items for the Carty Cupboard Food Pantry at Wesley United Methodist Church in Worcester. Items are collected in the baskets in the front of the church. They can use just about anything that has a good shelf life. Please **check the expiration dates** before donating. They also feature different items every month which are posted on our bulletin board in the narthex. They can also use personal items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, diapers, etc. If you would like to support the effort with a financial contribution, please make checks payable to Wesley United Methodist Church – Carty Cupboard. The Missions Committee delivers everything to Carty Cupboard.

What does Carty Cupboard do?

Carty Cupboard Food Pantry provides a three-day food supplement for hungry individuals and families who find themselves in need, regardless of age, gender, race, nationality, religious affiliation or personal circumstance. Cupboard visitors are kept confidential in a computer database, and are allowed to pick up food once each month. Mondays 6:00 – 7:00 pm; Wednesdays 1:00 – 3:00 pm and Fridays 10:00 am – noon. It is open to any resident of Worcester County.

Thank you in advance for your generous support!



Easter Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us this day. May this meal be blessed as we gather to celebrate together. May your love be shared amongst us as we enjoy the gift of fellowship.

May we remember to give out the grace and forgiveness that you have freely given us. And may we always give thanks for your sacrificial love. Amen.

— *Unknown*

Dates to Remember in April

03 10:00 am Church Service - Communion Sunday -
We have both regular and gluten free communion -
- Early Cupboard food collection -

05 10:00 am Fellowship

10 10:00 am Church Service - Palm Sunday
11:30 am Trustees Meeting



12 10:00 am Fellowship

17 10:00 am Church Service - Easter Sunday



19 10:00 am Fellowship

24 10:00 am Church Service
11:30 am Council Meeting

26 10:00 am Fellowship



How does the EASTER BUNNY KEEP HIS FUR looking so nice?

HE USES HARE SPRAY! 



WHY is the EASTER Bunny so lucky? BECAUSE HE HAS FOUR rabbits' FEET!



Knock, Knock! Who's THERE?

Wendy.

Wendy who?

Wendy EASTER Egg Hunt gonna start?





Easter Sunday Flowers



Our Sanctuary will be decorated with tulips and lilies on Easter Sunday, April 17, 2022. If you would like to help with the beautification and order tulips or lilies, please indicate your choice on the form below.

I would like to provide _____ tulip plant(s) at \$10.00 each

I would like to provide _____ lily plant(s) at \$10.00 each

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

In celebration of _____

From _____

*****Recognition will be in the Easter Service Bulletin*****

Please return this completed form along with cash or a check by Wednesday, April 14, 2022.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Please check one: _____ I will leave my plant for a someone else to enjoy.

_____ I will pick up my plant after the Easter Service.