

FRIENDLY MESSENGER

February 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 Tuesday - Thursday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
Rev. John R. Jones · pastor@fcc-worcester.org



Throughout my brief tenure at FCC I have fallen more and more in love with the church and more and more excited about both what is happening now and the hopes, dreams and aspirations that seem to be percolating up everywhere.

It was a great blessing to be getting oriented to the church during the holiday season. I was able to meet many of you in wonderful conversations. It was truly a special high point to experience this congregation's Christmas Eve traditions. Scott outdid himself preparing wonderful music in a wonderful Holy Night.

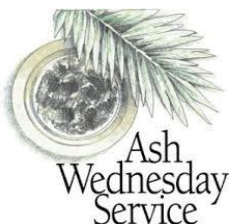
I have mentioned this often but it bears repeating: the congregation's welcome and hospitality has been remarkable. I was helped to feel at home with many acts of thoughtful kindness.

As I have experienced some perplexing health challenges you have continued to be a great blessing to me. This past month I had fainting spells, dizziness, vision problems, and extensive bouts of fatigue. When I had some complications that would come and go affecting my ability to walk, the nurses at the nursing home where I hold a service during the week, called an ambulance. It turned out that I had had another stroke. Fortunately, I have been recovering very well. Your prayers and well wishes have been most appreciated.

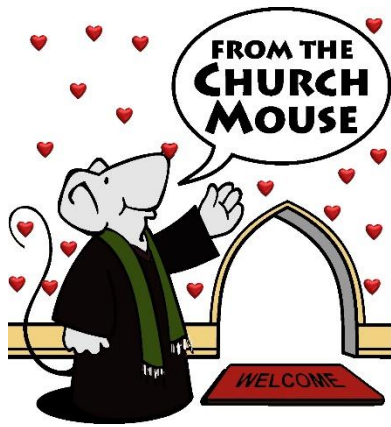
My bout with COVID is over now so that I am ready to return to leading worship. I am looking forward to meeting more of the congregation and doing a lot more listening. I am also excited to begin taking baby step initiatives towards consensus goals: getting some form of church school, choir and Bible study up and running or at least in a strong position to launch in the fall.

In the hospital I found myself saying "God is good all the time." Then the nurses would respond, "All the time, God is good." Isn't that the truth?

Peace,
Pastor Jack



Please join us at 7:00 pm on February 14th as we begin the Lenten Season with a meaningful worship service that will include the administering of ashes.



February's here and love is in the air! This is such a nice holiday and is placed just right on the calendar because we go from celebrating Christmas with the birth of Jesus, to Valentine's Day...the first filled with the love of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and the second filled with the love of one another. Now, if we can follow through with that love for the rest of the year, wouldn't life be wonderful? I wish we could bottle it up and open it whenever we're feeling a little blue. Sounds silly, I know, but I can dream, can't I? Some people exchange cards, maybe candy or some meaningful little gift but let's back up here.... candy.... well...that's MY favorite. I think I like the chocolate nut

clusters and the turtles the best cuz they're both mostly made of nuts...YUM! Anyway, in my opinion, the most important point is showing your love with kindness...kind words or doing something kind for someone else, or even just a smile. Parents, partners, friends, relatives, pets or even someone you don't know. Kindness is free but it's the best gift anyone can both give and receive. You never know what a difference you might make in someone else's life and at the same time, it will make a difference in your life, too.

Happy Valentine's Day!

Your friendly church mouse,

Nick



*The First Congregational Church in Worcester
Call for the Annual Meeting*

The Annual Meeting of the church will be held on Sunday, February 25, 2024 following worship at 10:45 AM.

The Annual Meeting will be held in person and via Zoom Meeting. For the quorum for Annual meeting, we need 15% of members either in person or on zoom which will be 10 members.

Nancy Taylor

Clerk



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 Shelly, give it to Sue Anderson or email her at deegram@charter.net by the **24th** 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=RjhHZGNDZDJyODNHWFabnRVZ2Vldz09>



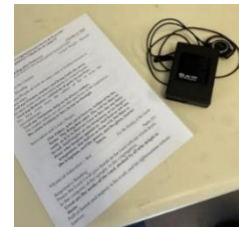
You can also find our latest services here:

<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 sincere thanks for your continued contributions to our Teddy Bear Bank in the narthex before the service and in the parlor following it. You're filling him to the brim with exciting anticipation! We now have over \$500 towards our goal.



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, at this time of year, we provide the coffee, tea, hot chocolate, hot cider 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 simply an opportunity to show love and care"



*A warm welcome back to Pastor Jack.
It's great to have you back and feeling so much better.
We've missed you!*

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Come and join us on **WEDNESDAYS at 10:00 am** for some great fellowship and fun! January started off with snow, LOTS of snow, but we did manage to get together a couple of times but decided not to have a snowball fight or build a snowman. It's much warmer inside! On February 7th, we'll have a Lenten Program lead by Pastor Jack.



On the 14th we'll meet in the church parking lot at 10:45, where we'll car pool to The 122 Diner at 1392 Main Street in Holden for a delicious lunch and engage in some interesting conversation.

Activities for the meetings on the 21st and 28th will be determined at a later date.

Of course, our plans are always subject to change especially during this time of year when the weather is so unpredictable.



Carty Cupboard

The First Sunday of Every Month



Thanks a million for your Carty Cupboard donations! In January, we donated **11 more bags** of groceries! Donating not only non-perishable items, but also personal care items and/or baby items are always welcome.

Thank you for being the ray of sunshine in so many lives!



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. Blue envelopes are included in your bulletin for this offering. Your contributions are greatly appreciated! **Thank you for the difference you make!**



Large or Small, We Appreciate Them All

We are truly blessed to have loving supporters like you. Thank you for your meaningful contributions that help us to help others.





The **Missions Committee** received several thank you notes recently that we would like to share with you. **Together, we make a difference!**

FROM WAMS:

“The Worcester Area Mission Society gratefully acknowledges receipt of your contribution of \$100 in support of our organization’s mission.

We are excited to share some of the ways we are implementing our mission: through Summer CUBS, an educational enrichment program; by nurturing future leaders through experiential learning opportunities; by advocacy on issues important to children and families; and by creating a culture of creative collaboration in our community. We collaborate in a Pre-K program for children who will be entering kindergarten and it continues to grow with the number of children that we service. We have been privileged to expand the program with the collaboration into the Fitchburg School District.

Your donation allows us to work toward our goals. Thank you for your generous gift!”

FROM DISMAS HOUSE:

“Thank you for your kind donation of \$200.00 to Dismas House. We appreciate your generosity.

Dismas House provides services and a welcoming hand to former prisoners in need. At Dismas, we strive to provide lasting opportunities for employment, housing and community to promote healthy reintegration at Dismas House, the Father John Brooks House, and the Dismas Family Farm, a holistic, rehabilitative and vocational reentry model, on a working farm in Oakham. Each year, Dismas House touches the lives of 100 men, women and children through our programs and services. Dismas programs reconnect former prisoners with the fabric of society, while also instilling in residents a new sense of hope, self-worth and purpose.

Thank you again for thinking of us. Please visit our website at www.dismasisfamily.org for an update on all of the programs in the Dismas family.”

FROM MSPCC:

“We cannot thank you enough for all the holiday gifts you sent this year. Your generosity was yet again overwhelming! All the gifts were distributed among the children in our Healthy Families program. Healthy Families works with first time parents who are 23 years old or younger. Many of these parents are in need of support and guidance. Your kindness has gone a very long way to make this time of year a happy one for these families. Thank you so much for helping us to help others!”





Bring your friends to Youth Group and show them how much fun it is! The joy, laughter, and knowledge that comes with going to youth group is something everyone should be a part of. It's a great place for community!

"Believe in yourself, for you are the architect of your dreams and the creator of your destiny."



Valentine Blessing

"God bless you on this special day, God keep you in His care, and may His blessings and His love go with you everywhere."



"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

- 1 Corinthians 13:4-5



We would like to keep Hampton Bagdasarian in our prayers as he is having trouble with one of his eyes; Connie MacInnes requests prayers for her niece Linda and friend Marie Samuelson who 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. Prayers also continue for Erika Vecsey, as she continues her battle with cancer. Greg Waters and Cindy MacLaurin request prayers for Cindy's mother, who is battling cancer once again. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Betty Dalbeck, who died peacefully in her sleep at the age of 94. She was welcomed into the loving arms of Jesus on Sunday, January 14, 2024.

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.

"Prayer delights God's ear; it melts His heart." - Thomas Watson



Looking for something to do?

Celebrate FREE FEBRUARY all month long at · Worcester Historical Museum · Salisbury Mansion · **Admission and events are FREE!** Check their calendar for hours and enjoy!



February

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 04 Richard Mason | 12 Nancy Taylor | 20 Scott Yonker |
| 21 Laura Waters | 22 William McGrail | 23 Doug Perkins, Sr |
| | 27 Connie MacInnes | |

March

- | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 02 Elianna Miles | 03 Norman Anderson | 11 Susan Anderson |
| 18 Mason Martin | 18 Annalise McGrail | 20 Molly Martin |
| 29 Myles Martin | 28 Ellen Dalbeck | 29 Greg Waters |



February

- 15 Rob & Kristen Olson

March

- 24 Bill & MaryKay McGrail



Are You Aware of This Gem?

As many of you know, some of us in Fellowship have been attending different activities and functions at or with the Holden Senior Center. This month, I'd like to showcase them in our newsletter. They have a lot to offer, some are free and others charge a nominal fee. They offer Photography, Yoga, Knitting, a Book Club, Blood Pressure checking, Low Impact Exercising, Bingo, Tai Chi, Adult Coloring, Piano lessons, Needlework, Painting and Card Games to name a few. They also serve lunch for a mere \$2.50 and they have a Caregiver's Group. Additionally, they have different Concerts throughout the year as well as Trips that you can sign up for and go to. I've found the staff to be very pleasant and helpful. On the last Monday of every month, they have a free movie which includes free soda and popcorn. They ask that you sign up for most activities however, drop-ins are welcome unless it's a special event. It doesn't cost anything to join but the benefits are numerous. You can see their Schedule online or ask for one to be mailed to you. Their hours are Monday - Friday 8am - 4pm. Join or drop in today!





FEBRUARY

"Happy first day of February, only 47 days to spring."

Friday



02 All Day

Sunday

04 10:00 am Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany ~ FCC Worship Service

11:30 am Deacons Meeting

Wednesday

07 10:00 am Fellowship ~ Lenten Program lead by Pastor Jack

Sunday

11 10:00 am Last Sunday after the Epiphany ~ FCC Worship Service

11:30 am Trustees Meeting

Wednesday

14

All day



All day



11:00 am Fellowship ~ Meet in the church lot for lunch at the 122 Diner in Holden

7:00 pm FCC Worship Service with Ashes being administered - First day of Lent

Sunday

18 10:00 am First Sunday in Lent ~ FCC Worship Service

Monday



19 All day

Wednesday

21 10:00 am Fellowship

Sunday

25 10:00 am Second Sunday in Lent FCC Worship Service

11:30 am Council Meeting

Wednesday

28 10:00 am Fellowship

"Can February March? No! But, April May." - Anonymous