

# FRIENDLY MESSENGER

January 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**



We have much to be thankful for this Christmastide. Scott and Bill worked with the Deacons to once again provide us with a truly Holy night. The Lessons and Carols service was both reverent and joyful, befitting the wonder of creative love finding a way to be present among humanity so that we too might grasp what love is and participate in its evolving quest to bring all things to Shalom. Scott outdid himself as both a servant and a leader. We are so blessed to benefit from his deep insights, wisdom, and knowledge, concerning sacred music as well as his passion for worship among us.

As I become more familiar with the congregation, I am seeing the many burdens and struggles people carry in their lives. I am also seeing a vibrant system of mutual love and support, albeit in a low key, "New England Style", discreet and circumspect manner. This active love is no less vibrant for being purposely hidden and ever mindful of dignity and privacy... not showy. I only wish the culture at large understood better the subtleties of community love and support offered here.

I have been overwhelmed by your thoughtfulness and kindness as I make a major transition during a difficult time in my life. I want to share my joy and gratitude as God and you have brought "comfort and joy" in remarkable ways into my life.

If you have time, please drop by New Years Day for an open house at the parsonage (7 Willard Ave directly next to the church). It will be from 12 noon on into the perhaps late evening.

We're planning music and games and there will be food, of course. Also, we're hooking up the television for New Years Day sports that are always better to watch with company.

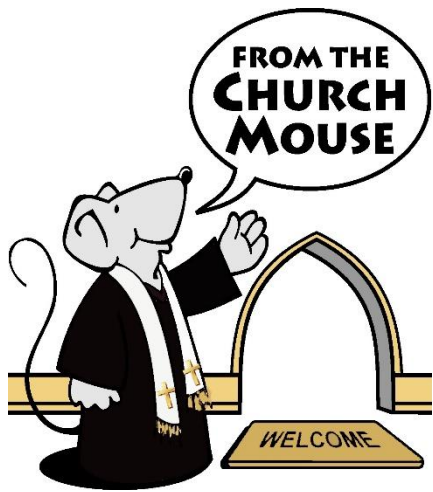
You are especially welcome if I haven't had a chance to meet you yet.

I am so excited about this new year for this congregation. I see God moving and have seen hints of the methods involved in God's "mysterious ways", as God manifests love in this community. God's creativity knows no bounds, and God is certainly creating wonder-full things in our midst.

*Pastor Jack*

May your heart be light, your days be bright, and your year be just right!

*God Bless You!*



Can you believe that 2024 has arrived?! It doesn't seem possible! 2023 was a great year for me, especially seeing our pulpit filled by Pastor Jack.

Have you made a New Year's resolution this year? I'm gonna try to limit my cheese intake but I'm not so sure about Swiss cheese cuz it's just so much fun to pop in and out of those holes, nibbling as I go. It's my favorite!

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas. I loved the beautiful Christmas Eve service of Lessons and Carols, especially when everyone passed the light from one person to the next, symbolizing the message that Jesus Christ is born. It was beautiful! What a true miracle!

I'm still waiting for the snow to come so I can jump off the slide ladder in the play-yard, into a pile of snow. It's so much fun! I got a new coaster for Christmas too, so I can run up the slide ladder with it and slide down. When I get the snow packed just right I can go clear across the play-yard, right up to the fence on the other side! It's sooo much fun! When I get cold, going inside for a cup of hot chocolate with marshmallows in it is perfect for warming me right up. I see that besides regular white marshmallows, we....er....I mean you....also have fruity mini marshmallows both regular and dried AND big, puffy, peppermint flavored ones. I hope you don't mind sharing - I don't eat much but oh, what a treat!

Wishing you a very Happy, Healthy, New Year!  
Your friendly church mouse, Nick



### MISSIONS PROJECT



**m.s.p.c.c.**  
A DIVISION OF ELIOT

The gifts that we donated to this wonderful cause, were well received. **Thank you for yet another successful year!**

Ruth Nickerson & Sue Anderson



### Hats, Mittens & Scarves

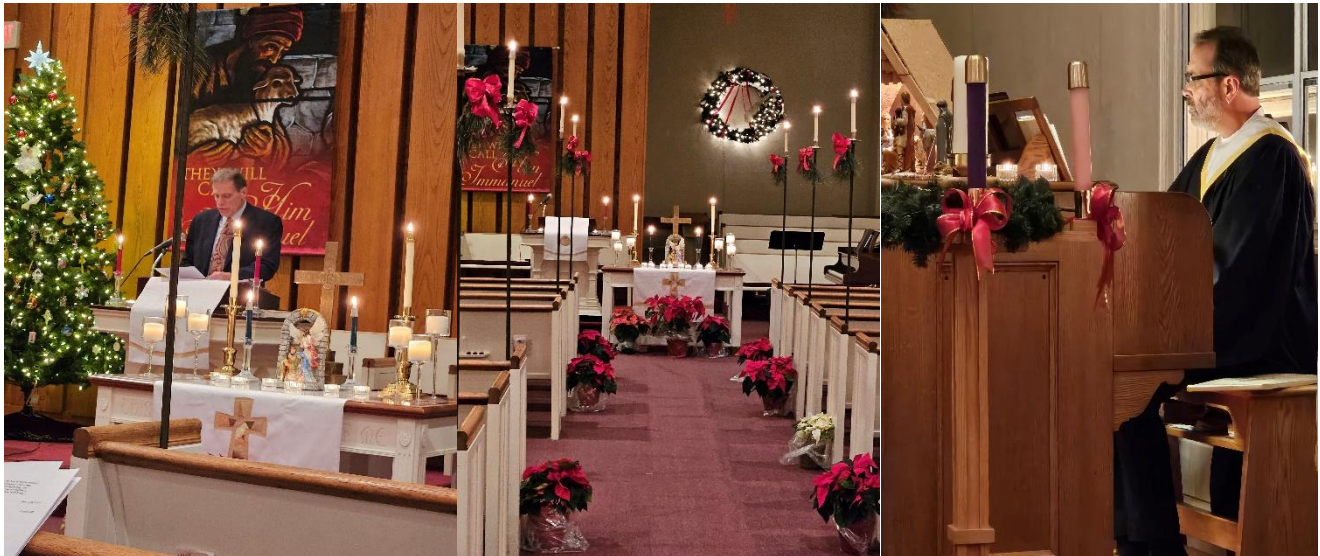
The folks at Tatnuck Magnet School were so thankful for the nice warm, hats, mittens and scarves that we so lovingly presented to them to keep the little ones warm. **Thank you once again!**



JOY TO THE WORLD, THE LORD HAS COME



Our Advent services were beautiful, culminating in an inspiring Candlelight Service on Christmas Eve. We walked away with renewed hope, peace, joy and love that only the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ could bring. The poinsettias that you so lovingly donated adorned the sanctuary perfectly once again this Christmas season.



In the words of Tiny Tim, God Bless us everyone!



**Pledge Envelopes**

If you haven't gotten your envelopes yet and they're not in the narthex, they'll be available in the office. If you didn't request any but would like them, please let our secretary, Shelly know. Alternatively, you can request them from Sue Anderson.



If you have some news, an article, or an announcement that you would like to put in the newsletter, please leave it in the office with Shelly, give it to Sue Anderson or email her at [deegram@charter.net](mailto:deegram@charter.net)

## TRIBUTE TO BETTY DALBECK



What a beautiful tribute Pastor Jack gave, honoring Betty Dalbeck on Christmas Eve! He requested a few words from all who knew Betty throughout the years and wasn't disappointed. She had been a great asset to our church as well as our community and was extremely deserving of this tribute. As Betty served her church, she did so with a smile and with that same smile, she served our community especially organizing, planning, purchasing groceries for and overseeing the preparation of our Senior Lunch program. In addition, she was blessed with a beautiful voice and was always eager to share it with us in the church choir.

In this picture, Betty shows her positive attitude. We were on a trip to Lake Winnepesaukee in 2017 when our bus broke down. Of course, there was Betty as always, thumbs up with a smile on her face. God bless this beautiful woman. Pastor Jack has bound our words in a booklet that he will present to Betty at a home visit.

**Thank you, Betty!**



### 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>



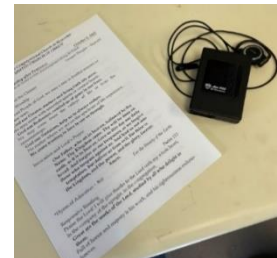
**You can also find our latest services here:**

<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!

*"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." – Mahatma Gandhi*



## CHURCH FELLOWSHIP



**We had a wonderful Christmas Party with the Holden Senior Center folks at Val's Restaurant!**

Come and join us on **WEDNESDAYS at 10:00 am** for some great fellowship and fun! We'll be starting back up on **January 10<sup>th</sup>**, with a time of chatting, as we catch up on our holiday happenings during our break.



On January 17<sup>th</sup>, join us for lunch at Eller's Restaurant, 190 Main St, Cherry Valley, MA 01611, where we'll enjoy some fine food as well as captivating conversation.

On January 24<sup>th</sup>, we'll hope you join us for a fun-filled time of crafting. There's no need to fret...it will be an easy one.



We share lots of laughs playing Apples to Apples, which we have scheduled for **January 31<sup>st</sup>!**

*Of course, our plans are always subject to change but that doesn't happen very often.*

## Carty Cupboard

### The First Sunday of Every Month



Thank you so much for so many Carty Cupboard donations. In December, we donated **11 more bags and 2 boxes** of groceries! **Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!**

Donating non-perishable items, personal care items and/or baby items are always welcome.

**Thank you for the difference you make 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 and may God richly bless you!**



You may not have seen it but our youth group decorated the stage beautifully for the Tatnuck Magnet School's Holiday Program. Unfortunately, the school had to cancel because of inclement weather but the decorated stage could not have looked any better. Our AA groups had the pleasure of seeing it and could hardly believe their eyes! Great job, Pastor Jack and our terrific youth, Khloe, Joey and Zander!

They had a fantastic time ice skating! See Pastor Jack with outstretched arms, probably saying "Praise the Lord!" It didn't take Joe long to get the hang of it with the help of our pro, Khloe. What an awesome day! My thanks to Lynn for the terrific pictures.



*"Tomorrow, is the first blank page of a 365-page book. Write a good one!" – Brad Paisley*



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 Waskovich, and their friend, Roger Waite. Dawn & Matt Ahaesy request prayers for Gina Ahaesy; The Deacons request prayers for Betty Dalbeck who remains in hospice, 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. In addition, we request that prayers continue for Doug Perkins. Greg Waters and Cindy MacLaurin request prayers for Cindy's mother, who is battling cancer once again. Please pray for Ruth Nickerson's friend Debbie McClune, who lost her dear sister Cathy on December 21<sup>st</sup>. Debbie is a member of our Fellowship group.

**If you would like to add a prayer concern or update our list, please email the church office at [office@fcc-worcester.org](mailto:office@fcc-worcester.org) or call the office at 508-752-4635.**

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people." ~ Ephesians 6:18



**Large or Small, We Appreciate Them All**

While it seems that we request a lot on the first Sunday of the month, we are most appreciative of your contributions whenever you are able to give them.



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|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| <b><u>January</u></b> |                    |                     |
| 02 Rev. Jack Jones    | 10 Jackson McGrail | 13 Melanie Anderson |
|                       | 25 John Hakkila    |                     |

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|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b><u>February</u></b> |                    |                    |
| 04 Richard Mason       | 10 Leanne Jezerski | 12 Nancy Taylor    |
| 20 Scott Yonker        | 21 Laura Waters    | 22 William McGrail |
| 23 Doug Perkins, Sr.   | 27 Connie MacInnes |                    |



- January**  
23 Phillip & Lorna Cardin

- February**  
15 Rob & Kristen Olson





**Monday**

**Happy New Year**

**01 All Day** 12:00 pm into the evening ~ Open House at the parsonage with food, fun, music, games and even sports on TV - come and join in the fun!

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**Tuesday**



**02 All Day** Happy Birthday Pastor Jack!

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**Saturday**

**06 All Day** Epiphany

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**Sunday**

**07 10:00 am** First Sunday after the Epiphany ~ FCC Worship Service

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**Wednesday**

**10 10:00 am** Fellowship ~ Day of Chitter-chatter

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**Sunday**

**14 10:00 am** Second Sunday after the Epiphany ~ FCC Worship Service  
**11:30 am** Trustees Meeting

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**Wednesday**

**17 11:30 am** Fellowship ~ Lunch at Eller's Restaurant - Meet in the church parking lot

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**Sunday**

**21 10:00 am** Third Sunday after the Epiphany ~ FCC Worship Service  
**11:30 am** Deacons Meeting

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**Wednesday**

**24 10:00 am** Fellowship ~ Join us in the parlor for a craft


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**Sunday**

**28 10:00 am** Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany FCC Worship Service  
**11:30 am** Council Meeting

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**Wednesday**

**31 10:00 am** Fellowship ~ Join us for an exciting game of Apples to Apples 

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*"The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written. We can help write that story by setting goals." – Melody Beattie*