

FRIENDLY MESSENGER

December 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.
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Greetings in the name of Jesus, Lord Most High,

As the most wonderful time of year approaches and Christmas hymns abound, I decided that writing a little story by putting hymn titles together would be challenging and interesting. Indeed, it was, as well as fun and thought-provoking. As I wrote, a smile crept across my face and the Christmas story came to life. How heartwarming and thankful I am that God sent His only Son to us, to be born into a world of sin, evil, and hate. He was to live His life solely to wake us up to the true meaning of life; to show us how we should be living; to beckon us to be more thoughtful and care for and about those around us, especially those less fortunate than us; the oppressed, sick and poor; to teach us humility and sacrifice and to live a good life, a life filled with love, hope, peace and faith, there-by assuring ourselves a place in His heavenly realm. I thank God every day for this most unfathomable gift!

Love Came Down at Christmas

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear, on a Silent Night, Once in Royal Davids City, the (O) Little Town of Bethlehem, the Angels from the Realms of Glory beckoned on a (O) Holy Night, "O Come All Ye Faithful! Go tell it to the Mountain!" As Shepherds Watched Their Flocks, the angels sang out, "Come, all ye Shepherds, Glory be to God on High! Joy to the World! Earth Today Rejoices! Christians Awake, Salute the Happy Morn! It's A Great and Mighty wonder! O Come O Come Emmanuel! A Boy Is Born in Bethlehem!" Mary spoke, "Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine, Unto Us A Boy Is Born, as Away in a Manger, Gentle Mary Laid Her Child. Ave Maria! It's The First Noel! Hark, the Herald Angels Sing! As with Gladness Men of Old, Good Christian Men Rejoice(d)! Off at a distance could be heard, "We Three Kings of Orient are, are coming From the Eastern Mountains!"

Have some fun and give it a try to see what you can come up with, you might surprise yourself!

Have a wonderful Christmas!

May God bless you with all that makes Him smile,

Sue Anderson



The Stewardship Committee would like to thank all who returned their pledges, helping to keep our church alive. We appreciate each and everyone of you!



We'd also like to thank you for making our "Potluck Luncheon of Thanks" such a big success. Everyone came together wonderfully and made it a very special, thankful, day. We couldn't have done it without YOU! For those who have not yet done so, please get your pledges to us ASAP. Your 2025 envelopes will be available in the narthex beginning Sunday, December 8th, or you can pick them up in the office on any Monday, Thursday or Friday between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM. If necessary, we can mail them to you. Just call the office and speak to Sue, or leave her a message at 508-752-4635.

"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



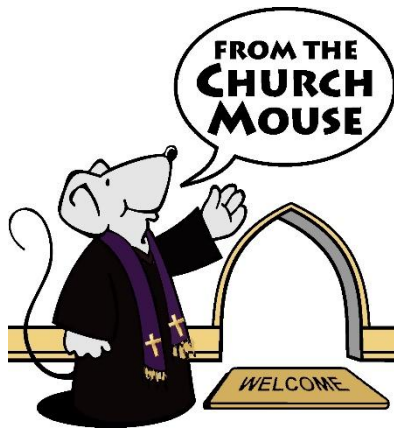
Fellowship

Fellowship is going strong. Lunch at the Old Mill in Westminster was delicious and of course, the company was the best! It's always great to get together. We also enjoyed an informative, interesting speaker from Project New Hope, an organization that helps veterans and their families "Rebuild with Honor".



Pastor Jack will be leading an Advent Program for us on Wednesday, December 4th. We're planning a trip to Barber's Crossing for lunch on December 11th, and we'll be doing a Christmas Craft on December 18th, our last meeting before the new year.

We'd love to have you join us whenever you can!



December is here, the most wonderful time of year. It's my favorite cuz Jesus was born! What could be better than that?! I can just imagine how hard it was for Mary and Joseph to make that long journey with no cars, buses, trains or planes. All they had was their poor, tired feet and their little donkey, who carried Mary all that way, only to find that there was no place for them to stay; no place for Mary to rest in wait of her little baby boy, Jesus. But finally, there was a stable where they were welcomed, with a trough filled with hay for Jesus to lay in...yes, "away in a manger, no crib for a bed". They were just happy to have SOMEPLACE to stay and were thankful for it. And behold, our

Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ was born! Amen!

It's December, when the wind blows and snow flies; when it feels like icicles could hang from your nose, right down to your tippity toes! It's when the earth is blanketed in pure, white snow. It's magical! I love to go out in the church playyard with an ol' piece of cardboard and slide down the slide lightening fast. Wheeeee!!!! The snow makes you go THAT fast! I love it! I love toboganing, too...and ice skating...and snowball fights...and building snowmen...and...and....Christmas lights...and hot chocolate with lots of marshmallows. I love catching snowflakes on my tongue too, don't you? We string popcorn and cranberries for our tree. I'm not sure if I string more or eat more...hehehe...but it sure is fun. What I DON'T like is shoveling all that snow BUT, if I make one big pile with it, THAT'S where I can take my tobogan. Sometimes I make snow-steps on one side of it, sort of making my own slide, and if I really feel ambitious, I hollow out the big mound and make my own igloo! Inside, I even make a neat little seat! Winter sure is fun!

Well, I hope you have a wonderful Christmas! Stay warm and safe and watch out for that ice out there cuz I wouldn't want you to fall down.

See you next year!

As always, your friendly church mouse,

Nick



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 or office@fcc-worcester.org by the 20th of each month.



See it here first!

If you would like a copy of the newsletter sent to you via email, please email the office and we'll add you to our list. There are also copies in the narthex that you can pick up. If you don't have an email address or can't get to church, send us your address and we'll be happy to send you a hard copy every month.

ZOOM OR YOUTUBE



Although it seems to be hit or miss lately, we do try to broadcast our Sunday services via Zoom and afterwards on YouTube. Zoom seems to be acting up on us, not recording some Sundays.

Hopefully, this problem will be resolved promptly. In the meantime, if you are at home and would like to join us virtually on Sunday mornings at 10 am, you can try doing so by following this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83102423294?pwd=RjhHZGNDZDlyODNHWFVhbnRVZ2Vldz09>



You can also find our latest services here when we can record them:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDQmijukLaC24hwdyayupdg> or by searching "First Church, Worcester" on 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.



Hat, Mitten and Scarf Tree



Please help the Missions Committee keep our school children warm this winter by decorating our Christmas tree in the narthex with hats, mittens and scarves that will be donated to the Tatnuck Magnet School. Your donations are greatly appreciated!



Deacons Fund

Also, 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. Our 2025 envelopes have a Deacons Fund envelopes included, which will be nice. Whatever you can give, is truly appreciated.

You never know if someday the person in need is YOU. Thank you!



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. Most importantly though, is for you to join us in fellowship.

Hope to see you there!

"A life of hospitality begins in worship, with a recognition of God's grace and generosity. Hospitality is not first a duty and responsibility; it is first a response of love and gratitude for God's love and welcome to us."

— Christine Pohl



Carty Cupboard

The First Sunday of Every Month



Many thanks for your Carty Cupboard donations once again. In November we donated **14 bags of groceries!** After school snacks and quick and easy but nutritious breakfast foods as well as lunches would be great. Those in need truly appreciate whatever you can give. Snacks like fruit cups, pudding cups and granola bars are always welcome. Jelly in plastic jars, mac and cheese and cereal – hot or cold are great for this time of year, too. Donating not only non-perishable food, but also personal care items and/or baby items, are always welcome.

Your contributions mean so much to those in need.

Thank you for your thoughtfulness and generosity.



Ellen Dalbeck requests prayers for her nephew, Tyler McDermott and his family. Tyler is undergoing treatment for cancer. Connie MacInnes requests prayers for her niece Linda; Sue & Norman Anderson request prayers for their daughter, Melanie Anderson, Sue's brother, Danny Waskevich and their friend, Roger Waite. They would also appreciate prayers for their doctor, Phillip Fournier, who's battling cancer. Dawn & Matt Ahaesy request prayers for Gina Ahaesy. The Deacons request prayers for Ann Scherdell, Dolores Trzcinski, Jeanne Fassett, Paul Scherdell, and Joyce & Armand Thienel. Kristin Olson requests prayers for Mitch Bourque. We ask for continued prayers for Erika Vecsey, as well as for Jane Boggs.

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.

"Think of what He can do, and how He delights to hear the prayers of His redeemed people. Think of your place and privilege in Christ, and expect great things!" – Andrew Murray



Order your Poinsettias for Christmas!

Our Sanctuary will be decorated with Poinsettias on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. If you would like to order flowers in memory of a loved one, to honor someone, or just like to help with our holiday beautification, please indicate your preference on the form. Return the form to the office, or place in the offering plate (in an envelope), with your check or cash by **Sunday, December 15th**.

I would like to give _____ poinsettias at \$10.00 each. *

_____ In memory of _____

_____ In honor of _____

_____ In celebration of the season!

My name** _____

My phone and/or e-mail contact** _____

My post-Christmas distribution preference:

Leave _____ plants for a person who is ill or shut-in

Pick up _____ plants after the Christmas Eve service

* Recognition will be in the Sunday Bulletin

****Please Print**



December

- 01 Carlo DiBonaventura 05 Kenneth Sawyer
- 11 Sienna Rucinski 16 Barbara Chad
- 18 John Dalbeck 26 Marie Trzcinski
- 28 Jim Mirick 29 Lynn Kapinos

January

- 10 Jackson McGrail 02 Rev. Jack Jones
- 13 Melanie Anderson 25 John Hakkila

Celebrate the day God chose to bring you into this world. Happy Birthday!



December

- 08 Deb & Ken Holmes

January

- 23 Phillip & Lorna Cardin

"As you celebrate another year of marriage, we pray that God continues to shower you both with blessings and grace."



Be sure to join us for a beautiful **Christmas Eve Service**,
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2024
 at 7:00 pm, when we will celebrate with candles, candle lighting,
 Silent Night, more special music, and the Service of
Lessons and Carols.



The Legend of the Candy Cane



*Look at the candy cane.
 What do you see?
 Stripes that are red like
 the blood shed for me.
 White is for my Savior
 who's sinless and pure.
 "J" is for Jesus, my Lord,
 that's for sure!
 Turn it around and
 a staff you will see.
 Jesus, my shepherd,
 was born for me!*



author unknown



Sunday

01 10:00 am **HOPE** ~ FCC First Sunday of Advent Worship Service
Communion Sunday

We use gluten free communion and non-alcoholic grape juice
Carty Cupboard Donations ~ Deacons Fund Collection

Wednesday

04 10:00 am Fellowship ~ Advent Program with Pastor Jack (Parlor)

Sunday

08 10:00 am **PEACE** ~ FCC Second Sunday of Advent Worship Service
11:30 am Trustees Meeting (Conference Room)

Wednesday

11 10:30 am Fellowship will be meeting in the church parking lot for a trip to Barber's
Crossing for lunch

Sunday

15 10:00 am **JOY** ~ FCC Third Sunday of Advent Worship Service

Wednesday

18 10:00 am Fellowship - **Christmas Craft**
6:00 pm Deacons Meeting (Conference Room)

Sunday

22 10:00 am **LOVE** ~ FCC Fourth Sunday of Advent Worship Service

Tuesday

24 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols

Wednesday

25 All Day **MERRY CHRISTMAS**

Sunday

29 10:00 am FCC Worship Service

Tuesday

31 All Day **Happy New Year's Eve**

