

FRIENDLY MESSENGER

March 2025

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.



The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, March 5, 2025. This is an opportune time for self-reflection and growth. Our faith has taught us that God loves us all so much that He came near to us to remind us all of how truly valuable we are. He is always with us, knowing that at times we struggle to trust in the value of one another. If we don't take time to pause, pray, assess and set our intentions, we can easily be pulled by forces of social anxiety, perhaps seeing our neighbors as enemies, or seeing our community resentfully, and feeling all alone in this world. The more we think about it and worry about it, the more these feelings escalate and can easily overcome us, leading us to feel isolated and burned out.

Lent gives us a time to reflect – to see the world in a different light, and engage ourselves in it, forcing out our anxieties and limitations. We can challenge ourselves, reminding ourselves to overlook the chaos of the world and find hope and stability within ourselves. Listening to and learning from our all-knowing, all-loving God we can once again, become centered, look at life with a new perspective of grace and compassion. Lent offers us this opportunity; we just have to reach out and grab it; run with it, and know how pleased God will be as He smiles down on us.

Lent offers us the opportunity to re-boot our lives, and allows us to view the world in a different light – one of faith in ourselves and the world around us. If we commit to the values of our church, we can continue our lives grounded in God's grace, compassion, humility, and love thereby making the world a better place in which to live.

How will you spend your Lenten season? In the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter (minus Sundays) we can re-establish our relationship with God. Perhaps you can begin with small changes and as they increase, you refocus on the important things in life – you become more patient, more tolerable, more loving. You'll grow and nurture God's loving presence in your life.

Peace,

Sue Anderson



"By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." – Genesis 3:19

Lenten Services

As we undergo changes in our church, we face challenges as well but by putting our heads together, by the grace of God, we are overcoming them. Our Lenten services was one of them, and another one we've resolved. With the Deacons and Moderator's overwhelming approval, Scott Yonker has made arrangements with the First Congregational Church of Paxton, to join together for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday. Here is the schedule and the address of their church:

March 5 ~ Ash Wednesday ~ 7:00 PM ~ Paxton
April 17 ~ Maundy Thursday ~ plans are underway ~ Paxton
April 19 ~ Good Friday ~ 7:00 PM ~ Worcester

First Congregational Church of Paxton
1 Church St
Paxton, MA 01612



Fellowship



February was a topsy-turvy month with lots of snow and wind but we managed to gather for Fellowship three times despite it. We had two informative, interesting speakers from the City Council, made the cutest little birdfeeders and had a day of chatting and catching up. Our plans for March are lunch at Peppercorn's on Park Ave., an exciting game of BINGO, Painting a ceramic at Clayground Paint Your Own Pottery at 65 James St. with lunch out to follow for those who are interested, and we're going to bring in baby pictures of ourselves for everyone (including the congregation) to guess who they are. You're welcome to join us, along with friends and/or family!

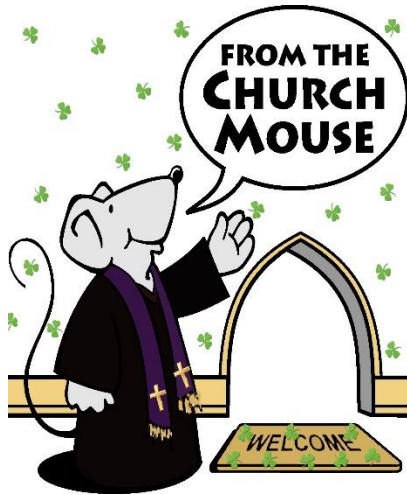


Hospitality

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!



"Hospitality is the key to unity and understanding." ~ St Brigid



Top o' the mornin' to ya! Can you believe March is here already?! They say...whoever they is...."March winds blow" but heck....ya coulda fooled me with February! Good thing I'm low to the ground or I woulda gotten blown clear away! "In like a lion and out like a lamb" is another March saying and THAT'S what I'm hoping for. I was out by the office door trying very hard to see if the daffodils are peeking up through the snow, but nope, not quite yet. But then I looked up at the office window and saw the start of tulips in the window! Now THAT is surely a sign of spring! With the few nice days we had at the end of February, I thought I might be able to find a four-leaf-clover but they were still covered with ice and snow. Sigh

I can hardly believe that lent begins on Wednesday, March 5th! Here are some fun facts about Ash Wednesday. It's the day after Mardi Gras, which is when lots of people have a big party to use up their flour and other stuff. The history of Mardi Gras can be traced back to the Middle Ages, when people would eat heartily the night before they had to start fasting on Ash Wednesday. Other traditions sprang up during the Middle Ages including the serving of the king's cake in 12th century France. In early England, this day was a religious day where people confessed their sins in order to get ready for Lent. It was also common tradition to use up all the eggs, milk, and butter in the kitchen prior to Ash Wednesday. These ingredients were often used to make pancakes.

In the Middle Ages ashes were sprinkled on the head instead of drawn in a cross on the forehead like they do now. Many people keep the ashes on their forehead for the entire day. It's a sign that they are sinners and need God's forgiveness.

Since observing Ash Wednesday is not commanded in the Bible, it's optional in some Christian churches to observe it. This includes Lent as well.

The period of 40 days is often used in the Bible.

As always, your friendly church mouse,

Nick O'Mouse



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=RjhHZGNDZDJyODNHWFabnRVZ2Vldz09>



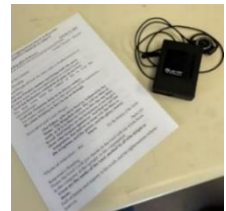
Sunday's service is usually uploaded to YouTube on Monday. You can see it here, and can also find our latest services here when we can record them:

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



Accessibility Items Available for Worship!

Did you know that we offer large print bulletins? They are available in the narthex as you enter the sanctuary. If you don't see any there, just ask and we'll be happy to provide them. We also have hearing assistance devices that make hearing what is said at the pulpit much easier! They are in a basket on the table in the narthex.



The First Sunday of Every Month

Carty Cupboard



Many thanks for your Carty Cupboard donations once again. In February, we donated **9 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 are great, too. Donating not only non-perishable food, but also personal care items and/or baby items, are always welcome.

Also on The First Sunday of Every Month

Deacons Fund

Thank you also for your generous contributions to the Deacons Fund. This is an on-going fund, set up for someone in desperate need of help. It is a one-time emergency fund.

"Make a difference in someone's life with a simple donation. Your support can bring hope to those in need."

Ellen D. requests prayers for her nephew, Tyler M. and his family. Tyler is undergoing treatment for cancer. Connie M. requests prayers for her niece Linda; Sue & Norman A. request prayers for their daughter, Melanie A., Sue's brother, Danny W. and her sister, Lee C. They would also appreciate prayers for their doctor, Phillip F. The Deacons request prayers for Ann S., Dolores T., Paul S., and Joyce & Armand T. Kristin O. requests prayers for Mitch B. We ask for continued prayers for Erika V., as well as for Jane B. Please also keep our Pastoral Search Committee in your prayers.



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 is the raising of one's mind and heart to God" - St. John Damascene



March

02 Elianna Miles
18 Mason Martin
29 Myles Martin

03 Norman Anderson
18 Annalise McGrail
28 Ellen Dalbeck

11 Susan Anderson
20 Molly Martin
29 Greg Waters



April

10 Kristin Olson 16 Khyllie Richard 22 Susan Cardin
24 Leanne Jezerski 26 Judy Langlois

"The way I see it, you should live everyday like it's your birthday." ~ Paris Hilton



March

24 Bill & MaryKay McGrail

April

05 Dolores & Marie Trzcinski 18 Steve & Heidi Hinson



"The best thing to hold onto in life is each other." - Audrey Hepburn





Easter Sunday Flowers



Our Sanctuary will be decorated with tulips and daffodils on Easter Sunday, April 20, 2025. If you would like to help with our beautification by ordering these plants, please indicate your choice on the form below. You can place your order in the Offertory Basket or leave it in the office with Sue.

PLEASE PRINT

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

I would like to provide _____ daffodil 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 **Friday, April 11, 2025.**

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Please check one:

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

_____ I will leave my plant/plants for someone else to enjoy.



Sunday

02 10:00 FCC Worship Service (*Sanctuary*) ~ Communion Sunday ~ Gluten free communion and non-alcoholic grape juice are used.

Today is also the day we collect non-perishable items for **Carty Cupboard**; We also collect an offering for our **Deacon's Fund** today.

Monday

03 10:00 am - 2:00 pm Church Office Open

Wednesday

05 All Day - **ASH WEDNESDAY**

11:30 am - Fellowship ~ Join us at Peppercorns on Park Ave. for lunch

7:00 pm - **Ash Wednesday** service at the First Congregational Church of Paxton

Thursday

06 10:00 am - 2:00 pm Church Office Open

Friday

07 10:00 am - 2:00 pm Church Office Open

Sunday

09 ALL DAY - **DAYLIGHT SAVINGS** ~ Remember to Spring Ahead Saturday night!

10:00 am FCC Worship Service (*Sanctuary*)

11:30 am Deacons Meeting (*Conference Room*)

Monday

10 10:00 am - 2:00 pm Church Office Open

Wednesday

12 10:00 am Fellowship ~ (*Parlor*) Join us for an exciting game of BINGO!

Thursday

13 10:00 am - 2:00 pm Church Office Open

Friday

14 10:00 am - 2:00 pm Church Office Open

1:00 pm Trustees Meeting

Sunday

16 10:00 am FCC Worship Service (*Sanctuary*)

Monday

17 **HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY!** 

10:00 am - 2:00 pm Church Office Open

Wednesday

19 10:00 am Fellowship - Join us at Clayground on James St. to paint pottery, then for lunch somewhere to be decided for those who would like to.

Thursday

20 **HAPPY FIRST DAY OF SPRING!**

10:00 am - 2:00 pm Church Office Open



Friday

21 10:00 am - 2:00 pm Church Office Open

Sunday

23 10:00 am FCC Worship Service (Sanctuary)

Monday

24 10:00 am - 2:00 pm Church Office Open

Wednesday

26 10:00 am Fellowship ~ Baby Picture Mystery

Thursday

27 10:00 am - 2:00 pm Church Office Open

Friday

28 10:00 am - 2:00 pm Church Office Open

Sunday

30 10:00 am FCC Worship Service (Sanctuary)

11:30 am Council Meeting (Conference Room)

Saturday Night ~ March 8th



'Is the spring coming?' he said. 'What is it like?'... 'It is the sun shining on the rain and the rain falling on the sunshine...'

~ Frances Hodgson Burnett, The Secret Garden