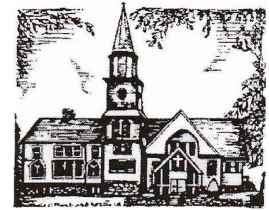


FRIENDLY MESSENGER

First Congregational Church, 1070 Pleasant Street, Worcester, MA 01602
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February ♥ 2021



A Word From Rev Jackson

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we enter this month of February, we are once again reminded of the importance of love. Our Lord Jesus knew that love can change lives and that there is no greater gift that we can share with one another. The apostle Paul put it this way when he wrote to the church at Corinth, "Eagerly desire the greater gifts. And I will show you the most excellent way", (I Corinthians 12:31) "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love". (I Corinthians 13:13)

Paul understood that this important gift would change lives and reflect the love of Jesus. One of the many ways I have seen the evidence of love in our church is by those who offer their support with time, talent and treasure. I have seen this outpouring of love in action so many times. Here are some examples of that love: Love in the past: Some of you are very dedicated to the history of our congregation. You remind those of us in the present about the love and devotion of those in the past. It is only through the generous and selfless giving of time, talent and treasure that our church continues to be part of the Tatnuck community. Past history can be an effective witness of the faith and devotion of those who came before us.

Love in the present: Even though our gathering together has been restricted by the pandemic, members of our church family have been generous in their financial support. It is a very effective testimony to support our church even if we must temporarily suspend worshipping together. We thank you for your ongoing financial support of the mission and ministries of our congregation. We wouldn't be here in Tatnuck without your continued gifts.

Love in the future: This past week I was speaking with a longtime member who wanted to support our church and guarantee our future. This person decided to make a generous donation to our Church Window Fund. This was being done to insure that our church building would continue to be there to provide shelter for those who would worship here in the future. This kind of financial devotion is love in action and is the reason we have a beautiful and sound edifice to worship in today.

So as you can see, love from the past affects the present. The actions of the past will assure us that we will have a place to gather in the future. Selfless love is not just about the here and now, rather it is about continuing to look forward. Christian generosity calls us to think about the future, so that our church can care for our children, grandchildren and all those who come after us.

As we approach this season where the word "love" gets used a lot, let us put our time, talent and treasure to use so that future church family members may be blessed by our other centeredness.

May Jesus richly use each of us for His kingdom.

Because He lives,

Rev. Bob Jackson



On February 1st, the Board of Deacons met via conference call and voted to reopen for service on Sunday **February 14, 2021**. We will be serving communion which is pre-packaged, for safety. It will still be important for everyone to continue to practice safe distancing and wear masks. The choir will not be singing yet but Scott will be gracing us with music. Valentines Day...what a fitting day to be returning to church. ❤️ With love in our hearts, joy in our souls and peace all around us, let us pray for this new beginning.



Fellowship is staying safe by not meeting at this time. Between the weather and COVID19, this is the best decision for us if we want to stay as healthy and safe as possible.

We are saddened by the death of Janice Santo, who lost her battle with COVID19 on Tuesday, January 19, 2021. She was a dear friend of Bev Bean and a devoted member of our Fellowship.

We pray for this terrible pandemic to decline as the vaccine is being administered. It will still be important for everyone to continue to practice safe distancing and wearing masks faithfully for as long as is necessary but an end IS in sight.

May God bless you with good health and happiness during this challenging time. ❤️



Our sincere thanks to all who have returned their pledges. Even though many of us aren't able to meet physically in church yet, we do need to try our best to keep it up and running and keep our bills paid to assure our return. We need your help! Even if you aren't able to pledge at this time, if you could make a contribution large or small, it would be most appreciated. Thank you!

Yours in Christ,
The Stewardship Committee



Greetings everyone. Happy February. One month closer to spring. This month we celebrate Mardi Gras and then the beginning of Lent as we prepare for Easter. I have so enjoyed hearing the bustle in the kitchen as Fellowship has prepared for their pancake breakfast. That event won't be happening this year due to the ongoing COVID pandemic. BUT, you could treat yourselves and your family to a special breakfast on February 16 with pancakes, sausage or bacon and King's cake or your own special coffee cake! We will have to work a little harder this year to bring the festivities alive and share the love.

Speaking of love, it will be Valentine's Day on February 14. Did you know there is a Valentine's Day connection to Worcester? The story goes that in 1847, Esther Howland hand-made the first American commercial valentine, that is according to the Worcester Historical Museum. She crafted her cards from lace and other materials. And you all thought I was just a mouse! Thought you might enjoy a little local trivia.

There are also lots of Bible verses that speak of love. "Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love", I John 4:8. But the best one is John 3:16 which says, "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". Love to all of my church family. I sure miss you. It is very lonely in this big church building without you. In the meantime, stay safe and healthy.

Yours truly, Nick, your faithful church mouse ❤️



We know that the pandemic has wreaked havoc with all of us but hopefully, we'll soon be able to return to normal. We are still in need of a Church Clerk and a Deacon. When we have no services inside the church, we meet by phone via conference call, keeping everyone safe while we keep our church alive. If this is something you are interested in, please speak with Matt Ahaesy. Your help is extremely important to us and is greatly appreciated.



Do you wonder how our church is being run and taken care of during this pandemic? It's been among us for a year now and although we haven't been able to always hold a service in the sanctuary, many hands have been hard at work handling the budget, paying the bills, keeping the books in order, keeping the church disinfected and clean, recording services, holding meetings... I could go on and on but would like to acknowledge those people who have worked so hard to keep us going.

Right at the top of our list is **Greg Waters**, who I don't think we could ever have managed without. His knowledge and expertise in every field have been our foundation. He's been a Godsend. Thank you, Greg! Right behind him in the office, has been **Bev Bean**, who does an amazing job working out our finances. Thank you, Bev! Without **Doug Perkins** always cleaning, disinfecting, doing repairs and working both inside and outside the church, we couldn't go back inside. Thank you, Doug! Of course without our pastor, **Rev. Bob Jackson**, we would have no Sunday messages or audio services nor would we know how anyone in the church is doing. He's been right on top of everything as our spiritual leader. Thank you, Rev. Bob! Helping him to record the services for us, doing the readings, playing the music, writing bulletins and putting it all on the church website for us is **Scott Yonker**. He's been incredible. Thank you, Scott! **Matt Ahaesy**, our Church Moderator, has done an amazing job keeping our meetings going, making sure we're on top of all that needs to go on regardless of whether we are able to hold services or meet in person. He's been right there for us every step of the way. Thank you, Matt! **Nancy Taylor** has been working right alongside Matt, assuring things were going smoothly and safely. She's been very instrumental in keeping us forging ahead. Thank you, Nancy! **Ruth Nickerson** has been attending meetings faithfully, as well as offering her help wherever needed. She's been very reliable and very much appreciated. Thank you, Ruth! **Carolyn Jackson** has been a real Godsend in every aspect, tying up loose ends, supporting us wherever she sees a need, ensuring a good outcome as she's worked hard behind the scenes. Thank you, Carolyn!

I hope I didn't leave anyone out but if I did, please accept my apologies and heartfelt thanks wherever you've helped us. We couldn't have done it without you and are truly grateful and humbled by your efforts. Yes, we're going back inside the church on February 14th. Let us pray that this is the beginning of the end of this nightmare, we can remain open, and soon get back to "normal", whatever that is. It will be a new normal and perhaps a better one.

Take care and God bless! ❤️



Our sincere thanks to everyone who volunteered to be on the Pastoral Search Committee. We truly appreciate you!

God bless,
Matt Ahaesy
Church Moderator



Hampton Bagdasarian requests prayers for June Kemp; Sue Cardin requests prayers for David Siam; Connie MacInnes requests prayers for her niece, Linda; The Deacons request prayers for Paul Scherdell, Sally Day, Marilyn Mildish, Melanie Anderson and the family and friends of Janice Santo.

Please let us know of any changes in our prayer list. Should we add or remove anyone?



♥ ♥ February ♥ ♥

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|----|---------------|----|-------------------|
| 04 | Richard Mason | 21 | Laura Waters |
| 05 | Molly Andes | 23 | Doug Perkins, Sr. |
| 20 | Scott Yonker | 27 | Connie MacInnes |

♣ ♣ March ♣ ♣

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|----|-----------------|----|------------------|
| 03 | Norman Anderson | 11 | Melissa Castle |
| 06 | Charlotte Perry | 18 | Annalise McGrail |
| 11 | Susan Anderson | 28 | Ellen Dalbeck |

Almond Flour Banana Muffins



Here's a super easy, delicious muffin recipe made with healthy ingredients.

Ingredients

- 3 large, ripe bananas with brown spots
- 3 large eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- 3 cups almond flour
- ¼ cup dark chocolate chips
- cooking spray

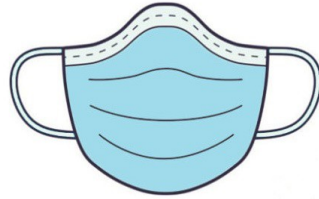
Instructions

- Preheat oven to 350°. Prepare a muffin tin with cooking spray. Set aside.
- Place bananas, eggs, vanilla, cinnamon, baking soda, baking powder, and salt in a food processor. Process until the mixture is smooth.
- Add almond flour. Process just long enough to combine the ingredients. Then, scrape the walls down and process again just enough to combine. Add in the chocolate chips, stirring with a spatula.
- Divide muffin batter into prepared muffin tin. Bake for 30 minutes, or until golden brown and an inserted toothpick comes out clean. Remove from the oven and let the muffins cool for 20 minutes. Enjoy!

Do you have a recipe to share? If you'd like to send it to me, I'd be happy to include it in our newsletter. My email is deegram@charter.net . I hope to hear from you!

Sue Anderson ♥

Some Helpful Hints for Glasses Fogging With Your Mask



- Try cleaning your glasses with soap and water before putting them on with your mask. Drying them with a microfiber cloth (like the one that comes with your glasses) so no lint will remain on the glasses will help.
- Tape the mask along the bridge of your nose and cheeks with micropore surgical tape. Then glasses on top.
- Another way is to put a folded tissue (dry or damp) across the bridge of your nose, under the mask.
- Apply a thin layer of shaving cream to the inside of your glasses, then gently wipe it off. The residual shaving cream will protect the lenses from misting up.

I hope one of these works for you. Good luck!



What do you get when you cross a snowman and a vampire?



Frostbite!
Be careful out there!

God Bless – Stay Warm – Stay Healthy – Stay Safe

