

FRIENDLY MESSENGER

May 2023

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
Pastor Josh - pastor@fcc-worcester.org - cell phone 610-750-2688



*"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord,
plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." – Jeremiah 29:11*

Trusting in the Journey

Beloved People of First Church,

As I write my final *Friendly Messenger* article as your Pastor, I am drawn to the words of the Prophet Jeremiah I reflected on when writing my very first article for March of last year. As I held those words of trusting in God's plan for a future of hope, I said, "Overall, I trust that God has called us together and that God will inspire each step that we will take as First Church in the years to come." This remains forever true in my heart. I do believe that God called us together for the time we have shared. I believe that God has inspired the work that has begun to move the church toward renewal. I believe God has shown us the power of community connections and reaching out beyond the church walls. Holding all of the wonderful things of this past year, I also believe that God is in the step now of our parting.

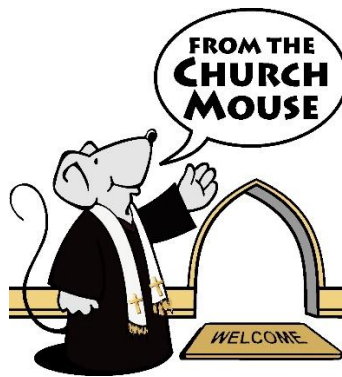
On Sunday, May 28th, I will lead my final service as your Pastor. At the end of that service, we will offer vows of release to one another as part of our goodbye as we are now journeying forward on separate pathways. In that parting, while I will forever hold you in my heart and I hope you will do the same for me, we too make intentional space for the new journeys which are beginning. We make space for a new pastoral relationship to form, for First Church to thrive on a new journey, and for myself and Mason to thrive on this next journey as well. This means holding some intentional distance and honoring that, after May, I will no longer be the Pastor here. This can be hard, as all transitions can be. Just know that, even with the distance, I will forever love and cherish you.

Our time together has been short but beautiful. I have valued the chance to get to know so many of you and to see the potential held within First Church. I trust that God's plans of goodness and hope will still abound here. Until we meet again... God bless you all!

Trusting in the Journey,

Rev. Josh Fitterling

P.S. If you would like to schedule a time to meet with me before the end of May, please reach out! My email is pastor@fcc-worcester.org and my cell is 610-750-2688.



Dear me...I've been thinking about Pastor Josh leaving us at the end of May. I sure will miss him and Mason but I can't say that I'll miss Pumpkin or Nutmeg! Hehehe!! Maybe that's why I never had a chance to meet Charlie, Josh's mouse. I hope those kitties didn't gobble him up! YIKES!! Hero is a pretty laid-back kind of pup. He didn't bother me and I didn't bother him. All in all, I'll miss the whole family but wish them well on this next leg of their journey. Thank you, Pastor Josh, for the time and energy that you put into our church. You've truly been a blessing!

I was simply in awe with our Easter services! Maundy Thursday's Soup Supper was yummy...Pea Soup by Marianne, Chicken Noodle Soup by Ruth, Beef Stew by Sue, Salad by Josh and Irish Soda Bread and Sweet Rolls by Scott; Good Friday was very solemn as it should be. The First Congregational Church of Paxton shared in that service with us; Easter Sunday was joyful, with a great quartet playing for us! What a glorious way to celebrate Christ's resurrection!

Life is one great big adventure, isn't it? I'm looking forward to whatever comes next. As Bill Keane said — 'Yesterday is **history**, tomorrow is a **mystery**, today is a gift of God, which is why **we call** it the present.'

See you in church!

Your friendly church mouse, Nick



Carty Cupboard

A big THANK YOU goes out to everyone for their Carty Cupboard donations. Our church contributed 15 bags of groceries in April! Keep up the good work!! YOU ARE APPRECIATED!

Congratulations and God Bless You on Your Baptism!
Charlotte Elizabeth Hatstat



Joey LaRiviere



"You are a child of God, you are wonderfully made, dearly loved and precious in his sight." ~ Psalm 139



Welcome to Our Church Family, Shelly Hoyle & Deb Holmes!
We're so happy to have you with us!



"Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. "
Romans 15:7



Confirmation Class Retreat – May 6th and 7th



This month, as Confirmation class draws to a close, we will be going on a weekend retreat to Lakefalls Lodge in Stoddard, New Hampshire as we prepare for the joyous celebration of Confirmation on May 21st!



"And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

– 1 Corinthians 13:13

Confirmation Sunday – May 21st at 10am



Join us as we celebrate the Confirmation of Khloe Kapinos and Joey LaRiviere! On this day, Joey and Khloe will officially become members of First Church in Worcester!

A joyous coffee hour in celebration of these two amazing young people will follow, hosted by Lynn Kapinos and Shelly Hoyle!



Happy Paws Sunday – May 21st at 10am



Khloe Kapinos, one of our Confirmands at First Church, is in the midst of completing her Silver Award Project with the Girl Scouts. She has chosen to support the Worcester Animal Rescue League (WARL). In addition to making fleece blankets and homemade toys for the animals served, Khloe is spearheading Happy Paws Sunday! With the support of the Missions Committee, we will be collecting cat & dog food (Purina Brand is preferred), treats, blankets/towels (new or gently-used), and toys. Please bring items to worship on May 21st.

The Missions Committee has agreed to donate \$100 worth of items to kickstart this effort. All donations are greatly appreciated!



Last Month of Open Sanctuary – Wednesdays from 2 to 3pm

Do you need a little midweek sanctuary time in your life? All are invited to *Open Sanctuary*, a moment each week for folks to spend time in the peace of our sanctuary space to sit, pray, listen, and ponder. Soft music will be playing and Pastor Josh will be available for anyone who wishes to have a conversation. All are always welcome!



Treasurer's Corner (March 2023) - A Quick Glance at our Church's Financial Health

Month of March

Pledges/Offerings: \$3,304.00
Other Income: \$24,810.26*
Expenses: \$26,035.11
Net: \$2,079.15

Year-to-Date (as of 3/31/23)

Pledges/Offerings: \$10,597.00
Other Income: \$46,665.44*
Expenses: \$58,720.80
Net: -\$1,458.36

*March included the annual payment from National Grid for their steeple usage. Other income includes funds from the cell towers in the steeple, facility rentals (churches, baker, AA, etc.), weekly contributions from Dodge Park worship services, and other miscellaneous income sources.

**When net is negative, this means we need to use savings and/or endowment funds to cover expenses.



Service of Farewell and Release - May 28th at 10am

On Sunday, May 28th, we will celebrate Pastor Josh's final Sunday service as Josh and Mason move back to Maine.

Rev. Carol Steinbrecher, the North Central Region Area Conference Minister for the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ will be with us to participate in the service of release.

All are invited to attend!



Our Plans for May in



Fellowship

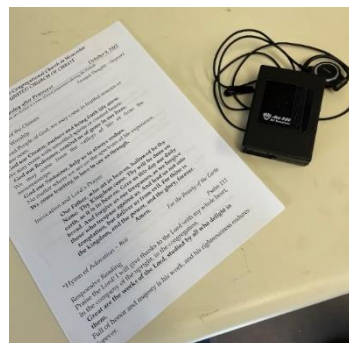
Join us on **Tuesday, May 2nd** as we take a trip to the **Barre Cross** followed by lunch at nearby **J & J Family Restaurant**. Then on **May 9th**, we'll be **making fleece blankets** to help Khloe with her Worcester Animal Rescue League project; on **May 16th**, you can join us for lunch at **Worcester Technical High School**. Their meals are always scrumptious! On **May 23rd**, we hope you'll join us for some fun and laughter as we play the game of **Apples to Apples**! **May 30th**, Ruth is planning a **craft** for us to do.

For more information on any of these events, you can call Bev Bean at 508-799-7035 or email her at bevbean@charter.net.

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.

Do you need assistance making worship more accessible for you? Please reach out to Pastor Josh!



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 whom is very ill; Our prayers are also with Mac MacInnes as he recovers from a shoulder replacement; Judy Mitchell requests prayers for her granddaughter, Ellanora; Sue & Norman Anderson request prayers for their daughter, Melanie Anderson, Sue's brother, Danny Waskevich, Norman's brother Stephen, and their friend, Roger Waite. Dawn & Matt Ahaesy request prayers for Dawn's dad, Francis Lajoie and also for Gina Ahaesy; The Deacons request prayers for Betty Dalbeck, Dolores Trzcinski, Jeanne Fassett, Paul Scherdell, and Joyce & Armand Thienel. Our prayers are also with Normairis Rivera's son, Joey as he undergoes a kidney transplant. Kristin Olson requests prayers for Mitch Bourque. Prayers also for MaryKay McGrail as she battles cancer and for Erika Vecsey, who's cancer has returned.

Please let us know of any prayer requests you may have.



Coffee Hour



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 provide the coffee and paper goods. Hope to see you there!



THANK YOU!

Our heartfelt thanks to those wonderful volunteers who worked so hard sprucing up our church grounds. How beautiful! You are truly appreciated!



Carpet Fund

Our sincere gratitude for your continued contributions to our Teddy Bear Jar in the narthex before the service and in the parlor following it. They are greatly appreciated!



"Every charitable act is a stepping stone toward heaven." ~ Henry Ward Beecher



ZOOM OR YOUTUBE

zoom

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.



May

07 Dawn Ahaesy	16 Donna Spaulding	17 Robert Olson
21 Christina Dalbeck	25 Beverly Bean	25 Heidi Hinson
25 Marsha Huntoon	25 Deborah Mirick	26 Phillip Cardin
	26 Marianne Bourgeault	

June

03 Jane Boggs	03 Marcos Rivera	04 Bob Lingner	05 Daniel Ames
05 Cindy MacLaurin-Waters	10 Steven Hinson	11 Erin McGrail	
13 Joyce Thienel	19 Eileen Miles	22 Deb Holmes	
	23 Bruce Kabasinsky		



**HAPPY
ANNIVERSARY!**

June

01 Mac & Connie MacInnes	08 Richard & Renee Mason
24 Jim Capuzziello & Jamie Sullivan	





Tuesday

02 10:00 am Fellowship ~ Trip to Barre Cross, followed by lunch at J & J's

Wednesday

03 2:00 - 3:00 pm Open Sanctuary with Pastor Josh

Sunday

07 10:00 am Fifth Sunday of Easter ~ FCC Worship Service Communion Sunday with
Gluten Free Communion and Grape Juice
Carty Cupboard Collection

Tuesday

09 10:00 am Fellowship ~ Making Blankets for the WARL for Khloe's Girl Scout Project

Wednesday

10 2:00 - 3:00 pm Open Sanctuary with Pastor Josh

Sunday

14 10:00 am Sixth Sunday after Easter ~ FCC Worship Service ~ **Mother's Day**



11:30 am Trustees Meeting

Tuesday

16 10:30 am Fellowship ~ Out for Lunch at Worcester Technical High School

Wednesday

17 2:00 - 3:00 pm Open Sanctuary with Pastor Josh

Thursday

18 All Day ~ Ascension Day

Sunday

21 10:00 am Seventh Sunday after Easter ~ FCC Worship Service ~ Confirmation of
Khloe Kapinos and Joey LaRiviere
Happy Paws Sunday - Remember your contributions to help Khloe earn her
Silver Award!

11:30 am Deacons Meeting

Tuesday

23 10:00 am Fellowship ~ Apples to Apples game 🍏 🍏

Wednesday

24 2:00 - 3:00 pm Open Sanctuary with Pastor Josh

Sunday

28 10:00 am **Pentecost Sunday** ~ Remember to wear **red**! ~ FCC Worship Service ~
Special Service of Farewell & Release for Pastor Josh

Monday



29 All Day ~ **Memorial Day**

Tuesday

30 10:00 am Fellowship ~ Craft with Ruth

Wednesday

31 2:00 - 3:00 pm Last Open Sanctuary with Pastor Josh!