

FRIENDLY MESSENGER

February 2024

First Congregational Church, 1070 Pleasant Street, Worcester, MA 01602

Pastor T • Drop-in Pastor's Office Hours: By Appointment

Email: pastorT@fcc-worcester.org • After Hours and Emergency Calls or Texts
(336) 410-4107 • Office - Sue: 508-752-4635 • office@fcc-worcester.org

Website • www.fcc-worcester.org



“Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away:
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things.
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices. Amen.”
– A prayer by Saint Teresa of Ávila

These words feel especially fitting this February.

The past month has reminded us how vulnerable we are to weather, illness, and the limits of our own strength. Snow and bitter cold have kept us from gathering in worship for two of the four Sundays this month. The sanctuary has been quieter than usual – not because the church is absent, but because the church has been scattered.

And in that scattering, we are reminded: the church is not only the building we long to return to, but the people we continue to hold in prayer.

We are especially mindful of those who are housebound, elderly, or living with fragile health – those for whom winter is not merely inconvenient, but isolating. We hold close the sick and the grieving, those whose days are measured not by snowstorms but by appointments, medications, memories, and loss. If that is where you find yourself, please know: you are not forgotten. You remain held in the heart of this congregation and in the steady mercy of God.

Saint Teresa's prayer reminds us that while circumstances shift and seasons change, God does not. Patience, she says, “obtains all things” – not because patience is passive, but because it teaches us to trust the One who holds all things together.

As February turns us toward Ash Wednesday, we begin to look ahead to the season of Lent. Lent is not about adding burdens to already-heavy lives. It is about returning – returning to prayer, to honesty, to humility, to hope. It is a season that meets us exactly where we are and gently invites us to remember who we are: dust, yes – but dust deeply loved.

When we gather again, marked by ashes and grace, we will do so as a people who have known interruption, uncertainty, and longing – and who still confess together that God alone suffices.

Until then, let us continue to watch out for one another, to reach out where we can, and to trust that even in quiet weeks and missed Sundays, God is at work among us.

ever your.... Pastor T



New Members

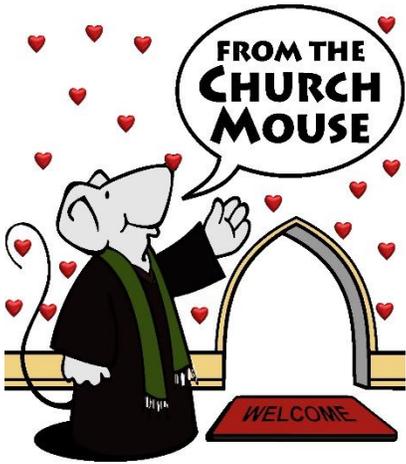


We are excited to announce that on Sunday, February 15th, we will be receiving new members into our church! Please let Pastor T know if you are interested in joining. We would love to have you join us!



On Ash Wednesday, February 18th, we invite you to gather for a simple meal before our church service. This meal will take place in the parlor at 5:30 pm, prior to the service at 7:00 pm.

This is a wonderful opportunity to share fellowship and prepare our hearts for the Lenten season. We look forward to seeing you there!



Greetings Church Family! Happy Valentine's Day! I just LOVE this holiday, don't you? I love chocolates 'n flowers, gifts 'n surprises 'n all the love that seems to be in the air. The cute cakes and cookies that go so well with hot chocolate...yummy! (I like to put little marshmallow

hearts in my hot chocolate for Valentine's Day.) Is that what you're having for Coffee Hour on February 15th? I promise I won't show up and scare everyone. You humans are so funny, letting a little guy like me scare you but a promise is a promise and I promise to stay away. Besides, I

don't want to get under-foot...literally, under....foot...now THAT'S a scary thought! Anyway, my favorite part of Coffee Hour is the clean-up. I do a pretty good job, don't I? (squeak, squeal, hehehe) I was wondering how Valentine's Day came about and found this interesting information in the Oregonian, written by the Homes & Garden Staff. It seems that the history of Valentine's Day is rather unclear. The Roman Catholic Church recognizes at least three martyred saints named Valentine or Valentinus. One legend says that Valentine was a Roman priest in the third century. Emperor Claudius II had decided that single men made better soldiers so he outlawed marriage for all young, single men. Not agreeing with this practice, Valentine continued to secretly perform marriages. Once he was discovered, he was put to death.

Another legend has it that a martyred Valentine might have sent the first valentine greeting. In that version, Valentine fell in love with a girl who visited him while he was in prison. Before his death, he sent her a letter signed "from your Valentine," and that expression is the one that has been carried down throughout the ages.

In 496, Pope Gelasius I declared February 14th the day to pay homage to St. Valentine. By the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in Europe. Lovers were exchanging homemade cards as early as the 15th century, copying verses from books of valentine poems.

Valentine customs:

During the Middle Ages, young men and women drew names from a bowl to see who their valentine would be. They would wear the name on their sleeve for one week, perhaps the origin of the expression "wearing your heart on your sleeve."

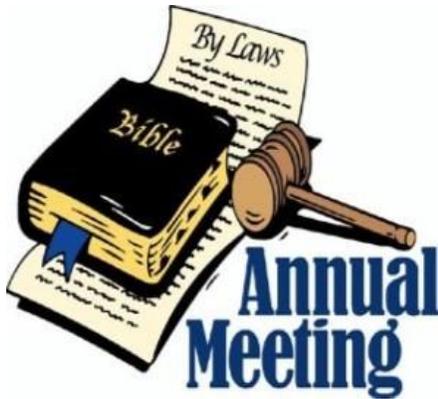
In Wales, wooden love spoons were carved and given as gifts on February 14th. Hearts, keys and keyholes were common motifs on the spoons, meaning "you unlock my heart."

As always, your faithful church mouse,

Nick



ANNUAL MEETING



Please remember to join us for our
61st Annual Meeting following
worship,
prior to the sending hymn,
on Sunday, February 8th @ 10:45 AM.
Your voice matters!



Picnic in the Parlor Following the Service

Church Picnic!

Sunday, February 8 @ 11:30 AM

Join us for hotdogs,
beans, chips, corn
bread, brown bread,
coleslaw, cookies,
beverages, etc. and
most of all, Fellowship!





Fantastic Fellowship Festivities

♥ Join us on Wednesdays at 10:00 AM! ♥

It's hard to tell what we'll be doing in this unpredictable weather but whatever it is, it's better than sitting at home.

Tentative Schedule

4 ~ A Craft

11 ~ Speaker ~ Our Representative

14 → Happy Valentine's Day!

18 ~ BINGO!

25 - Lunch at Table Twelve



Gathering Our Thoughts in Prayer For



Marsha's friend's husband, **Theodore** and his family. Theodore's cancer has spread to his bones and he is going into Boston for treatment; **Kim**, who Debbi requests prayers for as she recovers from a traumatic leg injury; Ellen's nephew, **Tyler** and his family. Tyler is undergoing treatment for cancer; Connie's husband, **Mac** as he recovers, and also for her niece **Linda**; **Sue** requests continued prayers for her daughter, **Melanie**, her sister, **Lee**, and her brother, **Danny**; Members **Hampton, Dolores, Paul, Erika, Jane, Carol, Joyce & her husband, Armand**; Kristin's friend, **Mitch**; The family of **Bob Robertson**, who joined his wife in heaven on January 19th; **World Peace**.

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 link between God's inexhaustible resources and people's needs."

- Max Lucado



Hospitality Bring Your Special Touch!



Come and share your favorite snacks with us at Coffee Hour, which is held in the parlor every Sunday after our worship service! We make the coffee and other beverages and we supply the paper goods. All you have to do is bring some goodies. There's always a sign-up sheet on the table and two or more people can sign up together. We'd really appreciate your help!

"A true welcome is not just a hand extended on a Sunday morning but a way to live the Christian life."



Hats & Mittens

This year, we donated our hats and mittens to the MSPCC (Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children). They truly appreciated them, especially with the cold weather we've been having.



"It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving," by Mother Teresa



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.

Our Daily Bread

Pick up your copy from the bookcase in the narthex. There are no large print issues this month. Available right now is the December – January – February issue.

On The First Sunday of Every Month Deacons Fund

The Deacons Fund is a financial resource provided by churches to assist individuals and congregations in need during times of crisis. It typically offers temporary support for basic needs such as rent, utilities, and emergency expenses, emphasizing mutual care within the community. Thank you for your support!

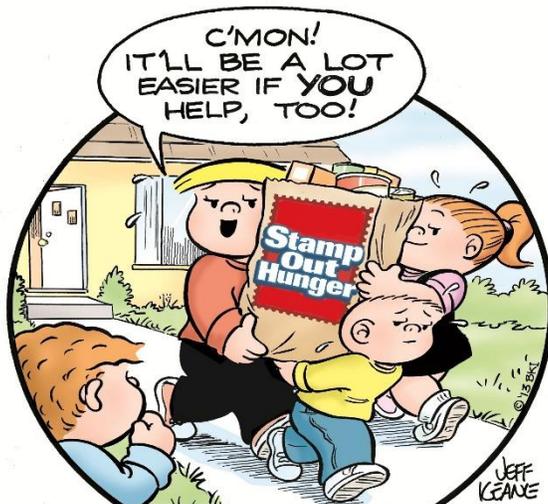
"It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving." – Mother Teresa



Carty Cupboard Every Sunday

Thank you for helping to make a difference to those less fortunate than us! We may be small, but we're mighty! Your generosity is like a warm, fuzzy blanket taking care of others. Pastor T. brings everything to Carty Cupboard for us, and we continue our mission. This "wagon Train" is just from one week!

Snacks like squeeze-up applesauce are fun and nutritious. Pudding, fruit, and Jello cups are good snacks, too. Granola bars provide a good source of energy and are quick to grab. Things like tuna fish, mac & cheese, beans, instant potatoes, hearty soup, shelf-safe milk, juice boxes, and condiments are some of the foods people can use. Besides food, they can also use personal care items and/or baby items.



"We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone." – Dr. Loretta Scott



February

04 Richard Mason 12 Nancy Taylor
 20 Scott Yonker 21 Laura Waters
 22 William McGrail 23 Doug Perkins, Sr.
 27 Connie MacInnes

March

02 Elianna Miles 03 Norman Anderson
 11 Susan Anderson 18 Mason Martin
 20 Molly Martin 29 Myles Martin
 28 Ellen Dalbeck 29 Greg Waters

"Count your age by friends, not years. Count your life by smiles, not tears." – John Lennon



February

15 Rob & Kristen Olson

March

24 Bill & MaryKay McGrail

"In the flush of love's light, we dare be brave, and suddenly we see that love costs all we are, and will ever be."



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 **23rd 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. You don't want to miss out!



Sunday

01 10:00 am Worship Service with Pastor T~ Communion Sunday –
gluten free bread and non-alcoholic grape juice are used

Wednesday

04 10:00 am Fellowship

Sunday

08 10:00 am Worship Service (*Sanctuary*)
10:45 am **ANNUAL MEETING**
11:30 am **JOIN US FOR A PICNIC IN THE PARLOR!**

Wednesday

11 10:00 am Fellowship

Friday

13 1:00 pm Trustees Meeting (*Conference Room*)

Saturday

14 **HAPPY VALENTINES DAY!** 

Sunday

15 10:00 am Worship Service (*Sanctuary*) Welcome to our **new members**, who
are joining the church today!
11:30 am Deacons Meeting (*Conference Room*)

Wednesday

18 10:00 am Fellowship(*parlor*)
5:30 pm **Ash Wednesday** ~ Simple Meal in the parlor before the worship
service, which will be at **7:00 pm.**

Sunday

22 10:00 am Worship Service(*Sanctuary*)
11:30 am Council Meeting (*Conference Room*)

***Please note: Everything is subject to change
during this unpredictable New England winter weather!
Be patient, understanding, and kind to one another!***