



Steeple Notes

The First Congregational Church of Rowley, U.C.C.
175 Main Street • P.O. Box 364 • Rowley, MA 01969
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Kathy Olmsted, Secretary first.church@verizon.net
Rev. Lee Ireland, Interim Minister revlee4@gmail.com



OCTOBER 2019

Worship Watch for October

Worship at 10:00 AM every Sunday

Sunday, October 6th – World Communion Sunday

Scriptures: Lamentations 1: 1-6
Psalm 137
2 Timothy 1: 1-14

Sermon: "By the Rivers"

Sunday, October 13th

Scripture: Jeremiah 29: 1, 407
Psalm 66: 1012
2 Timothy 2: 8-15
Luke 17: 11-19

Sermon: "With gratitude comes deeper community"

Sunday, October 20th Laity Sunday

Scriptures: Jeremiah 31: 27-34
Psalm 119: 97-104
2 Timothy 3: 14 – 4:5
Luke 18: 1-8

Sunday, October 27th

Scriptures: Joel 2: 23-32
Psalm 65
2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18
Luke 18:9-14

Sermon: "Perseverance"

**DEADLINE for articles for June
the November issue of STEEPLE NOTES
is Tuesday, October 15th**

Upcoming Events



October 6th

**World Communion
Sunday**

Saturday, October 12th



Monday, October 14th

OFFICE CLOSED

Indigenous People's Day

Saturday, October 19th

Dress-a-Girl

10am – 2 pm

Autumn is a second
spring where every leaf is
a flower. - Albert Camus





Musings from Rev. Lee

Autumn Greetings to you all!

It was so wonderful to greet so many of you here on Rally Day and the Open House on September 8. May we offer a deep thank you to Patti, Lori, Dave, Mike, Neil, Liz, and so many more who have such a love for this church family that you gave it your all and new people came to experience this family's worship service and fellowship. With that experience we have launched into what looks to be a busy calendar of activities for the fall, being mindful that so many families also have the school and sports calendars with which to dance.

One of the things I've learned this past month is that many of you have not been reading the monthly newsletters in which I have been focusing on certain things each month during this Interim process. They are all on our church's website :

<http://www.firstchurchrowley.org/>

As you see in this newsletter, the various boards and committees have described their ongoing work and upcoming events. You will also see an update from the Pastoral Search Committee and where they are at this point in the process. Having done this with several other churches, I see we will be together through the holiday season, so I invite you to come and enjoy all that is here with those who are a part of this family of faith. Come and experience God's presence in the midst of worship, at coffee hours, at our Kerygma Bible Study sessions (come and see), at our committee and board meetings, at the Trick or Treat event on Oct 20, the Pancake Breakfasts, and the work to prepare for our Church Fair in November. I also invite you to consider the names listed in our prayer list and either visit them or send a card. For we know that "where 2 or 3 are gathered, God is also there," Matthew 18:20

I'll share with you that each morning, I have a ritual where I sit in my car with my coffee at the town green beside the circular gazebo listening to Elton John sing "The Circle of life" and consider the day's events and what is here. Meditation and prayer are a part of my daily life... and many of my afternoons conclude at the Plum Island beach where I enjoy the beautiful waves and watching people and birds and giving thanks for the wonder of life. I've learned to listen within in order to let go of concerns and find peace. I hope you have a practice as well.

I was at a group meeting, when we read a passage and someone reflected how it made her think of the story of how life is like a tapestry..... that many times... all we can see is the underside of the work with all the threads tattered and loose and it can look like a mess. That we can't see the topside that has become this beautiful scene. She was sharing that God sees the top of the tapestry and marvels at all that we are becoming, but we feel like those threads being pulled hither and yon in the work of the creator. We can get irritated and worn down- because- we can't see the topside. Except on a few occasions.

The interim process is like that ... and I've been observing certain things of which you've not been aware ... as signs of the progress that you are making to be ready for your new pastor whenever he or she presents herself to the Pastoral search committee and they recognize each other and the celebration takes off.

Many of you will may remember Carole King's song, that I've been singing ever since that day, "My life has been a tapestry of rich and royal hue; An everlasting vision of the ever-

changing view; A wond'rous woven magic in bits of blue and gold; A tapestry to feel and see; Impossible to hold.” Kathy Olmsted knew of a Story and poem which is just beautiful and I include it following my message, entitled “God’s Tapestry” by Tim Challies..

As we go into this fall season of its rich and royal changing colors and hues, let’s trust that God is at work in us making a beautiful tapestry. Let’s come together to worship and laugh, play, weep for and comfort one another. Let’s add our love as we remember the beautiful tapestry that we are all creating here in Rowley. Let us give thanks for the grace, love and light that our God is pouring upon us each day and being revealed through each of us. As Patti taught at VBS, we are each ‘unique and special’ creations of God. May we give thanks and worship and share our love as the body of Christ here in Rowley.

In faith, hope, trust and love,
Blessings to you all,
Rev Lee

[God’s Tapestry, Tim Challies January 19, 2015](#)

Have you ever compared the front and back of a tapestry? The front of a tapestry is art. In the hands of a skilled weaver it displays incredible artistry and fine detail. The world’s best art museums collect the world’s best tapestries and display them there as examples of a rare but beautiful form of art. The back of a tapestry is a mess. A tapestry is made by weaving together different-colored threads, and the images and designs are created by the interplay between the different colors and textures. What is clear on the front is opaque on the back. The back shows something of the image, but it looks more like a child’s attempt than a master’s: it lacks nuance and clarity and detail. Where the front is smooth, the back is covered in knots and loose ends.

We are meant to see and admire the front of the tapestry, not the back, and this has often served as an illustration of the truths of Romans 8:28: That God promises to use every single event in our lives to bring about good. Though I have often heard Joni Eareckson Tada use the illustration, I believe it originated with Corrie Ten Boom and her poem “The Master Weaver’s Plan.” “Oft’ times He weaveth sorrow; / And I in foolish pride / Forget He sees the upper / And I the underside.” It serves as an effective illustration for the truth that for now we get to see only the underside of all God is weaving together in this world, while clinging to the promise that someday we will see the upper side and marvel at what he has been doing.

But it illustrates something else equally well. I have been thinking a lot lately about good deeds—not the good deeds people do to try to earn the favor of God, but the good deeds people do when they already know that Christ has earned them the favor of God. Titus 2 calls us to be people that are zealous for good works; in Matthew 5 Jesus tells us to let our light shine before others by doing good works; Ephesians 2 tells us that God’s very purpose in saving us was enabling us to glorify him by the good works we do for others. As Christians we are to be known for our good works—those things done for the glory of God and the good of other people.

And so we go through life doing these good works, and far more often than not, these are small and seemingly inconsequential deeds. We rarely talk a person out of recklessly taking his own life; we rarely write a check that utterly transforms a life or ministry; we rarely save a drowning child or defuse a ticking time bomb. Instead we interact with people for moments at a time and attempt to say something—anything—that may be encouraging; we write small checks and place them in the offering basket; we have brief conversations with children, and we share just a shred of the Good News with that taxi driver.

Most of our good deeds go unnoticed and unmarked by others. I suspect that even we ourselves fail to notice or remember the majority of the good deeds we do. But not God. God sees them all, knows them all, remembers them all, and uses them all.

Just as some day we will see the beautiful tapestry God has been weaving through our suffering, through the events we never would have chosen, in the same way we will see the tapestry this Master Weaver has been creating through those good deeds. We will see how a kind word resonated in a person's heart even days and weeks later; we will see how that small amount of money was used to accomplish something amazing; we will see how that little shred of the gospel was the pebble in the shoe of the person who had hardened himself against God.

Some day God will show us his tapestry, we will see how God has woven each of these little deeds together to his own glory, and we will rejoice.

Here is Corrie Ten Boom's poem:

My life is but a weaving
Between my God and me.
I cannot choose the colors
He weaveth steadily.
Oft' times He weaveth sorrow;
And I in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper
And I the underside.
Not 'til the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
Will God unroll the canvas
And reveal the reason why.
The dark threads are as needful
In the weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned
He knows, He loves, He cares;
Nothing this truth can dim.
He gives the very best to those
Who leave the choice to Him.



VBS was a Polar Blast! We learned that each of us are as unique and special as a snowflake and we made our own snow. The Open House was a wonderful success! It was great to meet new families and to enjoy each other's company at the BBQ and bouncy house.

Sunday School is off to a great start. We have a thriving nursery, a K-5th grade class and a 6th-12th grade class. Please remember to fill your Heifer banks and to bring them to church on November 3rd.

And be sure to pick up your Heifer Project bank to collect for this mission project. Banks to be returned on November 3rd





NOTES...

It's a crisp autumn morning with brilliant sunshine outside and the furnace turned on inside! We all have a way to respond to such a day depending on what we're facing for the next twenty-four hours. What are you feeling? Composers, lyricists, preachers and people everywhere are always searching for a way to respond. Shall we jump for joy, cry, mope, celebrate, be angry, pray or praise God? Praise God, well maybe but how? Christians have been joining to worship God for two thousand (2000) years because God affects our lives in both positive and negative ways. Our response is important. It does matter!

Musicians in churches are people who can lead and express the many feelings that are aroused in peoples' lives each day. How can we support each other through music in worship? How can musicians lift our spirits no matter our mood? Unfortunately, this is a difficult balance to reach. Over the centuries many resources in chants, hymns, solos, cantatas, requiems, and oratorios have been created to enhance the worship of God. We have a style of music that has not reached the doors of First Congregational Church Rowley. It's called praise music. "This music brings us closer to our grace-full, loving, justice-seeking God; it moves us with the message and mission of Jesus Christ and surprises us with the power, mystery, and playfulness of the Holy Spirit. It takes us to a spiritual place where words alone cannot, helping us to address God with heart as well as mind, expressing joy and lament, struggle and hope." We are still in an interim period of ministerial leadership. However, we have not been forbidden to try something new.

There has always been an unanswered question regarding what is appropriate music for worship. Church musicians are NOT employed to entertain us. Their job is to support our praise, prayers and thanks to God during worship services. I believe that it's important to have live musicians to encourage our participation. Type of musical instrument is not a priority but leadership definitely is! Let's incorporate some praise music during Sunday services. Let's use music that children can learn and in which youth and adults can find meaning. It will take dedication but I feel we can find the right balance for Rowley.

Marge Thurston, church member

Note: Quote is from *SING! Prayer and Praise* a UCC publication



"Music is an agreeable harmony for the honor of God and the permissible delights of the soul." — Johann Sebastian Bach

FCCR Missions Committee

Missions participated in a successful Round Table talking about our response to immigration and the humanitarian crisis on our southern border. We look forward to further discussion on this topic. We have also been working to gather items for the Triton Schools so that children are comfortable and not having to deal with clothing emergencies at school. Neighbors in Need is wrapping up on October 6th. That contribution adds to vital work being done on the ground by the UCC. Thank you for your support in our endeavors and your participation in Missions.

...And always remember...

Your support produces returns that multiply over and over.

...Every little bit helps fulfill God's Will.

Thank you all for your support...



Pastoral Search Committee Update

The Search Committee has conducted first and second interviews of candidates during the summer months. We have narrowed our selection to a couple of finalist and therefore are in the last stretch of the search process. With that being said, we still have a number of important steps to take before we are ready to finalize the process and make an offer. Our goal is to have a settled pastor by the beginning of the new calendar year.

Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or to one of the committee members.

Nancy Schmidt, Chair

Members of the Search Committee include

Mark Behringer

Patti Cummings

Mame Delaney

Lori Flodman, Recording Secretary

Jen Loring

David Irving, Chaplain

Sara Stafford

Nancy Schmidt

OUR FRIENDS IN IPSWICH SHARE THIS ANNOUNCEMENT: An Event for fellowship, learning, and encouragement Join us on **Sunday, October 6** at 5:30pm, to share a meal and hear from David and Kassie Kasali, co-founders of Congo Initiative (CI). CI is a transformational work in eastern Congo where there is ongoing insecurity from multiple militia groups as well as Ebola. With hope and resilience, brothers and sisters there are making a difference in the midst. Come and be encouraged! This is an opportunity for the church to be the church together, here in Ipswich and with our brothers and sisters in eastern Congo.

We ask that each household group bring a main dish or salad to share. Beverages, rolls, and dessert will be provided. We will **meet at Our Lady of Hope** (1 Pineswamp Rd, Ipswich, MA 01938). Please feel free to contact Meredith Joss at m.joss@verizon.net if you have any questions. Meredith is on the US board of Congo Initiative.



Olde Tyme Country Fair

Saturday, November 23, 2019

9AM to 2 PM

As the saying goes, mark the calendar and save the date because the biggest and most successful fundraiser, The **2019 Olde Tyme Country Fair** is only eight weeks away! We are very proud of the fact that in spite of the fact that many churches in the area have been forced to abandon their fairs for lack of interest, energy, new ideas and/or staffing, our fair is well respected within the community and not only gives us a chance to raise some serious money towards the health of the general budget but also allows us the opportunity to invite the public into our building to see a little of what First Congregational Church of Rowley is really all about. People look forward to it – many planning their day around our fair and luncheon.

Truly **FAIR DAY** is one of the best days of the year - not just for the money we generate but for the satisfaction of a job well done. People continue to tell us that this is one of the nicest fairs they've ever seen but we are always looking for new ideas. Have you been to another church and seen a great idea? Have you been part of another church's fair and have a suggestion? We need you!! The good news is that Lisa Nestor has decided that she's going to be around in November and has volunteered to oversee the Silent Auction ONE MORE TIME!! Thank you Lisa and Shawn but they need help funding all those baskets – think about putting together a basket or contributing an item that she can auction off. We need your help! See how it works? What do you want to do?

If you haven't been to the fair – we try to have something for everyone. We have Raffles and a Silent Auction, we have Attic Treasure area in the basement, Books, Handcrafts, Baked Goods, Plants (thanks to Country Gardens Florist), Zeke's General Store, Coffee, Donuts, Cabot Cheese and, of course, Santa Claus! - a wonderful lunch and maybe some surprises but there is always room for improvement – talk to us – volunteer – it's great fun and you work with really wonderful people.

Start thinking about what you can contribute to the fair, drag out your favorite recipe for the Bake Table, do you make candy? do you craft? knit? crochet? paint? whittle? Do you make animals out of balloons? Do you do Face Painting? Don't hide your talents! Everyone has a talent, don't be shy – share it with us! Talk to us!

Anyone interested in running the Door Prize Table vacated by the loss of Heidi and Jim Somers? It would involve the purchase door of prizes to be given away on the hour and half hour – I think ten!

So the Olde Tyme Country Fair is alive and well and fast approaching but we need you, please consider volunteering or sharing an idea – it only works if we all participate. Remember, this fair generates in the neighborhood of \$10,000 a year so it really is worth the effort. Start thinking about how you can participate.

WE NEED YOU!!!!

Your 2019 OTCF Committee

Susan and Charlie Hazen (978 948 2603) and Kay Dalzell (978 948 2674)



ATTENTION BASKET MAKERS!!!

This year for our silent auction we are asking committee members, family and friends to donate a basket. Please bring the completed basket to the church on November 10th, please list the items and the value.

Here are some ideas:

Gift Cards to Amazon, Groupon, CVS, Market Basket, TJ MAXX, Gas Cards, Lowes, Home Depot, Restaurants, iTunes

Tool Time: Easy to carry tools that fit in a basket.

Baby Basket: Formula, toys, diapers, books

Wine and Cheese basket or chocolates

Framed unique photo, (sunset, castle, waterfall etc.)

Bake a cake basket: cake mix, frosting, sprinkles, spatula, bowl, plates.

Candle Basket: candles, holder and lighter

Arts and Crafts: crayons, paper, etc.

Anything Star Wars

Holiday Wreath, artificial

Anything relating to Boston Sports Teams

Any Homemade wooden item

Craft Beers, local

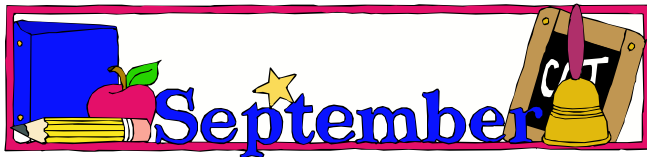
Tickets to Plays, skiing, movies

Any idea you have

Questions: text or call Lisa Nestor.508-397-4798

Thank You!!





BIRTHDAYS

Kayla Noel Roberts	10/1
Molly Barry	10/2
Hayden Tracy	10/2
Sandy Mulkern	10/8
Mary Hitaj	10/10
Karen Schmuck	10/11
Joshua Roberts	10/14
Brian MacRae	10/19
Audriann Angeloni	10/20
Francis Kilgour	10/20
David Harding	10/22
Bill Prime	10/22
Craig Stevens	10/22
Max Silverstein	10/23
Anne Hagopian	10/25
Connor Barry	10/25
Jakob Jensen	10/27
Hannah Gross	10/28
Nancy Schmidt	10/29

ANNIVERSARIES

Mike & Joanne Blouin	10/7
Scott & Sue Gebow	10/13
Robert & Kimberly Tebbetts	10/18



FELLOWSHIP HOUR

Weekly Hosts: (following worship)

October: Missions / Memorials

November: Finance / Trustees

FELLOWSHIP THRIFT SHOP



As the seasons change so does our offerings in the Thrift Shop. We keep current with holidays and the Farmers' Almanac so stop by and check out what we have for you. Sales every day!!!!

Donations should be brought to the shop ONLY during our regular shop hours. Thank you.

SHOP HOURS:

Tuesday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Thursday 3:00 – 7:00 pm

Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.



This program will meet on Saturday, October 19th here in our Parish Hall.

Please call the church office 978-948-3993 or Denise Gilman at the Rowley Senior Center 978-948-7637 to sign up or for a list of the materials needed.

LAY READERS – October

October 6	Nancy Schmidt
October 13	Penny Hurley
October 20	'youth'
October 27	Marge Thurston

OCTOBER 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 9am -1pm Thrift Shop	2 10 am COA Exercise 10 am GTKU	3 3-7 pm Thrift Shop	4 10 am COA Exercise	5 9 am-1pm Thrift Shop
		2 pm Police Chief <i>Walk thru</i>	6 pm Kerygma class	7:30 Search Comm 7:30 pm ALANON	7 pm Boy Scouts	7 pm AA
6 10 am Worship w/ Communion	7 10 am COA Exercise	8 9 am-1pm Thrift Shop	9 10 am COA Exercise 10 am GTKU	10 9 am NE Area Peer Support Team	11 10 am COA Exercise	12 8 am PANCAKE BREAKFAST 9 am-1pm Thrift Shop
4 pm YG Corn Maze		5 pm Ex. Comm. 7 pm Scout Ldrs 7:30 pm Music rehearsal		3-7 pm Thrift Shop 7 pm Missions Comm. 7:30 pm ALANON	7 pm Scouts	7 pm AA
13 10 am Worship	14 10 am COA Exercise	15 9 am-1pm Thrift Shop	16 10 am COA Exercise 10 am GTKU	17.	18 10 am COA Exercise	19 9 am-1pm Thrift Shop
	OFFICE CLOSED	6:30 pm Music Comm. 7:30 pm Music rehearsal	6 pm KERYGMA 7 pm Diaconate	3-7 pm Thrift Shop 7:30 Search Comm 7:30 pm ALANON	6 pm Scrappers 7 pm Scouts	10 am Dress-a-Girl 7 pm AA
20 <i>Laity Sunday</i> 10 am Worship	21 10 am COA Exercise	22 9am-1pm Thrift Shop	23 10 am COA Exercise 10 am GTKU	24	25 10 am COA Exercise	26 9 am-1pm Thrift Shop
4 pm Youth Group <i>Reverse Trick or Treat</i>		7:30 pm Music rehearsal		3- 7pm Thrift Shop 7 pm Missions Comm. 7:30 pm ALANON	7 pm Scouts	7 pm AA
27 10 am Worship	28 10 am COA Exercise	29 9am-1pm Thrift Shop	30 10 am COA Exercise 10 am GTKU	31 <i>Reformation Day</i>		
	7 pm CE Comm.	7:30 pm Music rehearsal	6 pm KERYGMA			

Use of church building

A reminder to our church family and friends. If you plan to be in the church building for any reason and are not already part of a planned activity; please be sure that the church office knows of your use BEFORE you arrive! All use of the church MUST be approved by the church office.

Current list of Officers, Boards, Committees and Staff has appeared in previous newsletter.