



Steeple Notes

The First Congregational Church of Rowley, U.C.C.
175 Main Street • P.O. Box 364 • Rowley, MA 01969
(978) 948-3993 • www.firstchurchrowley.org

Kathy Olmsted, Secretary first.church@verizon.net
Rev. Tom Bentley, Pastor bentleyconsulting@comcast.net



January 2020

Worship Watch for January

Worship at 10:00 AM every Sunday

Sunday, Jan. 5th 2nd Sunday after Christmas

Scriptures: Jeremiah 31: 7-14
Psalm 147: 12-20
Ephesians 1: 3-14
John 1: (1-9)10-18

Rev. Lee's Last Sunday / Rev. Tom's 1st Sunday

Epiphany, January 6th

Scriptures: Isaiah 60: 1-16
Psalm 72: 1-7, 10-14
Ephesians 3: 1-12
Matthew 2: 1-12

Sunday, Jan. 12th Baptism of Christ

Scriptures: Isaiah 42: 1-9
Psalm 29
Acts 10: 34-43
Matthew 3: 13-17

Sunday, Jan. 19th 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

Scriptures: Isaiah 49: 1-7
Psalm 140: 1-11
I Corinthians 1: 1-9
John 1: 29-42

Sunday, Jan. 26th 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Scriptures: Isaiah 9: 1-4
Psalm 27: 1, 4-9
1 Corinthians 1: 10-18
Matthew 4: 12-23

**DEADLINE for articles for February
issue of STEEPLE NOTES is
Wednesday, January 15th**

*HAPPY NEW
YEAR!*

Office Closed
Wednesday,
January 1st

Upcoming Events

Jan. 5th – Rev. Lee's Last Sunday
Rev. Tom's First Sunday



epiphany January 6th



**Saturday, January 11th
8:00 – 9:30 am
Pancake Breakfast**



Monday,
January 20th –
office closed

Sunday, Feb. 2nd





Musings from Rev. Lee

As we have gone through this Advent Season, I have done so with a sense of joy and thankfulness and curiosity. My ministry with you is drawing to a close but I'm grateful that you have the wonderful news that the new year will begin with a new pastor and this "in-between" Interim period is drawing to a successful conclusion. The wondering and waiting has ended and now the time for curiosity deepens. What will you do with Rev. Tom Bentley here to lead you?

I will ask as well: How is God speaking to you in YOUR hearts and calling to you as you offer your gifts, your time and talents in responses to the Gospel message of love and service to others? The clue is to remember the answer lies in Jesus' response to "Which is the Greatest Commandment?: "To love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, your mind and your strength, and to love one another as I have loved you." The gifts are many and rich as you offer your personal responses to this congregation as best you can in loving ways. Please note that I didn't say 'perfect' ways, for I walk together requires us to learn the ways of compassion; compassion that we develop as we acknowledge our own imperfections and offer forgiveness in so many ways.

We are in the midst of the Advent Season and the Christmas Carols are flowing through my heart and mind daily. The carols are playing constantly on the radio and I delight when I hear what has been my favorite hymn for years: "In the Bleak Midwinter" because of the closing line: "What can I give him? Give my heart." It makes me pause as I consider the names on my list for whom I will be buying presents for Christmas morning: "What do I give that represents my heart to those in my family?" I think most of us have learned that it's not the presents under the tree that make Christmas a day of joy --- but the experiences we have with our loved ones that deepen our ability to love.

Please know that as I go forward, my walk with you as your Interim pastor has deepened my ability to love in countless ways. I thank you for placing your trust in me, for that is how we have been able to do the work and listen further for God's voice to guide us in our daily ministry together. I pray that you will continue to listen well and stay open for the leading of the Spirit and rejoice as you watch the new life spring forth in your walk with Rev. Tom.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and may 2020 be a year of wonder and thankfulness as you stay tuned to witness God's love in your midst. Psalm 23 guides us well as we go through each day and the hills and valleys of life and remember the words: "The Lord is my Shepherd."

Peace and blessings to you all,
Rev. Lee

On Sunday, November 10th the church members unanimously voted to call the Rev. Thomas Bentley as our new Settled Pastor. Rev. Tom will officially begin his ministry with us here at the First Congregational Church of Rowley, UCC. The following is the information we shared on the day that Rev. Tom first visited with us. There will be more information on Rev. Tom's schedule and availability in the weeks to come.

Reverend Thomas L. Bentley

For decades Rev. Tom has served in different roles as community leader, pastor, and advocate for individuals and families living in poverty. He has directed homeless shelters, built affordable housing, and served nine other UCC congregations as pastor. In 2004 he came to Gloucester to accept the role of part-time pastor at Trinity Church. There this congregation's link between mission and faith strengthened, and in 2011 Tom organized the Grace Center as its founding Director. This program now provides two meals per day and a battery of services weekdays to over 70 guests. About half are homeless and all are in crisis. The Center has 100 volunteers many of whom are from local faith groups. Tom stepped down in 2018 when the Center merged with Lifebridge in Salem.

Tom believes the good news of God's love is best expressed through acts of compassion and care especially for the most vulnerable of our neighbors. To sustain this activity, Tom prefers to engage in contemplative spiritual practices and meditation inspired by the teachings of the early Christian Desert Fathers. He believes the local church is God's unique means through which human survival will come to pass.

Tom has a home in Gloucester with his wife Jeanne. They temporarily live in Danvers as they renovate this house. Jeanne is a committed Roman Catholic and has taught Middle School Social Studies for 32 years. She now teaches at St. Raphael's School in Medford. They have two daughters and a son, all of whom are married and live in different parts of the country.

Tom's special interests are oil painting, wilderness hiking, gourmet cooking, cycling, writing, photography, video production, and music. His proudest accomplishment in Gloucester was when he was chosen to play the jug in the Grace Center's Jug Band!

Education

B.A: Psychology & Counseling, UMASS Amherst

Master of Divinity: Andover Newton Theological School

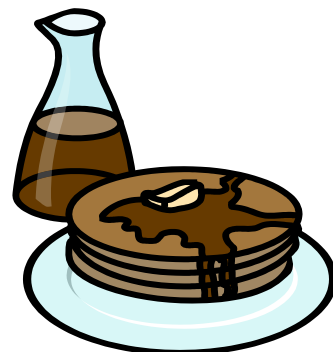
Doctoral Studies: Northeastern University - Law & Social Policy (C.A.G.S equivalent)

Professional Experience in Church and Faith - Based Leadership:

All-You-Can-Eat Pancake Breakfast!
Saturday, January 11, 2020
8:00 am – 9:30 am

**Pancakes • Toppings • Bacon •
Heart-Healthy Turkey Sausage •
Coffee • Juice • More!**

\$9 Adults • \$6 Children & Seniors



First Congregational Church of Rowley • 175 Main Street (Rt. 1A), Rowley, MA 978-948-3993



Children of all ages enjoyed the return of cookie decorating at the Church Fair. Thank-you to Doug the Baker at Olde Town Bakery for donating the cookies. The Children's Shopping Room was also a huge success thanks to Dyann and Audrianna.

The children voted to 'purchase' a flock of chickens, a flock of birds, a pig and a goat with the money they collected for Heifer Project. Thanks to all who donated.

Thank you also for the food for the Rowley Food Pantry from the Thanksgiving Food Drive. As always, the Christmas Pageant was fun for all with lots of new faces, young and old! It has been an exciting year. We look forward to all that 2020 will bring.



The youth have been busy behind the scenes this past year!

In October we packed and delivered 75 bagged lunches and drawstring bags with toiletries to the homeless and held a reverse trick or treat during worship where we handed out tricks and treats to the congregation.

November brought the cooking of 400+ meatballs, sauce and mountains of spaghetti! We helped throughout the fair and just when I started panicking that there would not be enough of us to run the supper my past members and college youth showed up to help us provide a wonderful spaghetti supper!

We shopped at Walmart in December and through Project JOY were able to provide Christmas for 4 local families! I was lucky enough to deliver these gift to the moms and with each hug and joyfully tear I was reminded how lucky and blessed I am to have all that I do and I strongly encourage you all to take a moment, a breath and be thankful for your JOYS!

We held a Yankee swap after pageant practice on Dec 8 and participated in the pageant on the 15th.

We will be offering a family outing in January so please watch for a sign up at coffee hour.

Much love

Lisa

THE Thrift Shop

YES, WE STILL NEED VOLUNTEERS!



Remember that our hours have changed slightly. We now close at 6 PM on Thursday nights.

We still take donations (during our business hours) of new and gently used clothing; household items, linens and such. After checking them over, we display what we can and send what we can't sell on to other non-profit groups.

shop hours: Tuesday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Thursday 3:00 – 6:00 pm NOTE CHANGE and Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 pm

FCCR Missions Committee

We had a very successful raffle and were able to take care of some of our Missions endeavors including the clothing for the schools and MB gift certificates for the schools. Lazarus House is VERY appreciative of the hats and mittens and scarves. They have three different housings, besides the people in the streets that they provide for. We hope to have someone from Lazarus come to a Missions Minute to explain their programs to the congregation.

We are looking forward to having another round table on January 31st with the participation of people from the Amesbury church. This would be a supper and chat time. We hope to have a lot of participation by old and young.

Climate change and what each of us can do must be a priority in our daily living and also in the institutions we are part of. Our church can make small changes that do make a difference. We are looking into Black Earth Compost for waste. Instead of single use creamers we ask all to purchase pints or quarts of cream. It does last a few weeks in the refrigerator. When we do church lunches or dinners or coffee hour please use our glasses, cups and saucers and plates and utensils. No need for plastics, we have a dish sanitizer. Also, Market Basket has great sandwich bags that are a roomy size and are made of paper and keep things very fresh. Instead of plastic bags for to go events, let's use these easily compostable bags. Please avoid bottled water as best you can, the plastics are not good for you and the waste is really challenging for our oceans and landfills.

Please advocate for refugees around the world. The stories of children in camps in Lebanon, Turkey, and Bangladesh are truly heart wrenching, along with the poor children and families in detention in this country. We need to push for solutions to the refugee crisis world-wide, push government to respond to disasters, climate and war and cartels, with long-term aid, and we need to speak out strongly about the barbarism of the current wars. Think about the fact that it has become okay to bomb hospitals and schools in conflict areas. This has been a no-no for decades. What has changed? We must find our humanity. We must care for each other and for this earth. This requirement is woven throughout our religious teachings.

The Missions Committee.

...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...



The Missions Committee has committed to supporting local outreach to Pinegrove School and Triton Middle/High School. The school nurse requested underwear, leggings, and sweatpants in sizes ranging from children's small to adult medium. To date we have received \$60 to purchase items and 6 pairs of leggings. Thank you! Donations are still being gratefully accepted. Purple drop box is near the kitchen.



BIRTHDAYS

Robin Kay	1/2
Charles Hazen, Jr.	1/2
Bill Faircloth	1/6
Nicola Pyburn	1/11
Stone Butler	1/17
Amanda Johnas	1/17
Doug Chadbourne	1/21
Amanda Clemenzi	1/24
Sophia Jensen	1/26
Luke Confalone	1/28
Zachary Ward	1/30

*Have we missed a birthday or anniversary?
Do we have your name correct?
Please contact the church office to help us keep
our list up to date. Thank you!*



Welcome

We wish to welcome our newest members to
our church family
***Lisa Jesionowski
and Richard Jesionowski***

LAY READERS – January

January 5 th	Jen Loring
January 12 th	Penny Hurley
January 19 th	Les Warren
January 26 th	David Flodman

FELLOWSHIP HOUR
(following worship)

Weekly Hosts:

January: C. E. Board

February Hosts: Missions & Memorials



Storm Cancellations

In the event of a
Saturday night or
Sunday morning
snowstorm or blizzard
this winter, you can
check the following TV
& Radio stations, as well as their websites, for
worship service or event cancellation
notifications.



WBZ-TV 4 / WBZ News Radio 1030 (AM dial)
/ website: boston.cbslocal.com/tag/school-closings/

WCVB-TV 5 / website: www.wcvb.com

PLEASE do not adjust the thermostats
in the church – most of them are pre-
programed based on our schedule of
use.

If you MUST adjust the temperature for
any reason NEVER hit 'hold' as the heat
will not revert back and we send \$\$\$\$
out the windows!

THANK YOU!

*Our Diaconate has now welcomed
another member. It's Cameron
Cummings, who will serve as a Jr.
Deacon. Cam, joins Katie Blouin
who is a Jr. Deaconess. We're
proud of all of our young people
and offer them our support.*



JANUARY 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 NEW YEAR'S DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	2 3-6 pm Thrift Shop 7:30 pm ALANON	3 10 am COA Exercise 7 pm Boy Scouts	4 9 am-1 pm Thrift Shop 7 pm AA
5 10 am Worship & Communion 4 pm Youth Group	6 <i>EPIPHANY</i> 10 am COA Exercise	7 9 am-1pm Thrift Shop 7:30 pm Music rehearsal	8 10 am COA Exercise 10 am GTKU	9 9 am NE Area Peer Support Team 3-6 pm Thrift Shop 7:30 pm ALANON	10 10 am COA Exercise 7 pm Scouts	11 8 am PANCAKE BREAKFAST 9 am-1pm Thrift Shop 7 pm AA
12 10 am Worship 1 pm - Service Allan Gaspar	13 10 am COA Exercise	14 9 am-1pm Thrift Shop 7:30 pm Music rehearsal	15 10 am COA Exercise 10 am GTKU 7pm Diaconate	16. 3-6 pm Thrift Shop 7:30 pm ALANON	17 10 am COA Exercise 6 pm Scrappers	18 8 am YG SKI TRIP 9 am-1pm Thrift Shop 7 pm AA
19 10 am Worship NO Sunday school	20 10 am COA Exercise MLK, JR. DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED 7 pm Finance/Trustees	21 9 am-1pm Thrift Shop 7:30 pm Music rehearsal	22 10 am COA Exercise 10 am GTKU	23 3-6 pm Thrift Shop 7:30 pm ALANON	24 10 am COA Exercise 7 pm Scouts	25 9 am -1 pm Thrift Shop 7 pm AA
26 10 am Worship 4pm Youth Group	27 10 am COA Exercise 7 pm CE Board mtg	28 9 am-1pm Thrift Shop 7:30 pm Music rehearsal	29 10 am COA Exercise 10 am GTKU	30 3-6 pm Thrift Shop 7:30 pm ALANON	31 10 am COA Exercise 7 pm Scouts	

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.

Church Office:
978-948-3993

FIRST CONGREGATION CHURCH OF ROWLEY, U.C.C.
OFFICERS, BOARDS, COMMITTEES & STAFF
JUNE 2019 – May 2020

Church Email:
first.church@verizon.net

STAFF:

Minister..... Rev. Tom Bentley.....call the office
Sexton..... Roger Merry.....978-265-5064 ©
Administrative Assistant.....Kathy Olmsted.....call the office
Bookkeeper..... Ashley Pyburn
Youth Leader Lisa Stevens..... 978-373-9192
Music Director Karl Schmuck 978-948-5062

OFFICERS:

Moderator..... Kay Dalzell (20)..... 978-948-2674
Treasurer..... Mike Blouin (20).....
Financial Secretary..... Eric Gundrum (20)..... 978-432-1082
Assistant Finance / Treasurer..... Sara Stafford (20)..... 617-212-9296 ©
Clerk.....David Irving (20).....978-948-7020
Historian.....Donna Irving(20).....978-948-7020

Diaconate

* Mike Blouin (20).....
* Kay Dalzell, Emeritus (20)..... 978-948-2674
Patti Cummings (21)..... 978-948-8176
Ken Sandford...(21).....978-948-2847
Dennis Ward (22)..... 978-432-1021
Penny Hurley (22)..... 978-948-1242
Nicola Pyburn (23)..... 978-948-2598
Les Warren (23).....978-352-7551
David Irving, **Emeritus**.....978-948-7020
Donna Irving, **Emeritus**..... 978-948-7020
Nat Dummer, **Emeritus**

Jr. Deaconess: Katie Blouin
Jr. Deacon: Cameron Cummings

Finance / Trustees Board

*(Trustee)Sean Pyburn (20)..... 978-609-0835©
Stuart Dalzell (20)..... 978-948-2674
David Flodman (21)978-948-7902
Lisa Nestor.....508-397-4798©
*(Finance)Gary Confalone (22)978-948-8405
Glen Pyburn (22)..... 978-948-2598

Board of Christian Education

Amy Hanson (20)..... 978-366-0501
Paula Traicoff (20)..... 978-927-5336
* Lori Flodman (21)..... 978-948-7902
* Patti Cummings (21)..... 978-948-8176
James Kay (22)..... 978-948-2517
-vacancy (22)

Delegate – Northeast Association

Judy Robillard (20).....978-948-2007
Doug Phillips (20)..... 978-462-4249

Delegates – MA Conf. UCC

Nancy & Jerry Schmidt (20)..... 978-388-1417

Executive Committee

Officers: Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Board Reps:
Finance/Trustees, Diaconate, CE
Staff: Interim Minister and Admin. Assistant

Missions

Helen Dobbins (20)..... 978-948-3484
* Danby Whitmore (21).....978-317-3601
Mary-Ellen Dixon (22)978-578-6110

Memorial

Marge Thurston (20)..... 978-948-7040
-vacancy- (21)

Music

* Karen Schmuck (20)..... 978-948-5062
Marge Thurston (20)..... 978-948-7040
Liz Butler (22) 978-948-7627

Member-at-large

Don Thurston (20)..... 978-948-7040

Flower Committee

*Joyce Ernstrom (20).....978-948-2254
- vacancy (21)
Robin Kay (22)..... 978-948-2517

Fellowship Thrift Shop (no term limits)

* Jerry Schmidt.....978-388-1417
James Kay..... 978-948-2517
Marge Thurston.....978-948-7040
Robin Kay..... 978-948-2517
Merle Phipps..... 978-948-7443
Sharon Emery..... 978-948-2244

Pastoral Relations

David Irving, Kay Dalzell, Penny Hurley,
Ken Sanford, & Jen Loring