



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



October 2020

Worship Watch

Sun., Oct. 4

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20
Psalm 19
Philippians 3:4b-14
Matthew 21:33-46

Sun., Oct. 11

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Exodus 32:1-14
Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23
Philippians 4:1-9
Matthew 22:1-14

Sun., Oct. 18

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost
Exodus 33:12-23
Psalm 99
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
Matthew 22:15-22

Sun., Oct. 25

Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost
Deuteronomy 34:1-12
Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17
1 Thessalonians 2:1-8
Matthew 22:34-46



Keeping Our Balance in an Unbalanced Time



*From the
Pastor*



October is here and I am still out of rhythm. In my past Octobers I would be up to speed with a program plan for the busy winter months. My congregation would be in synch to participate in worship, engage in regular ministries of compassion, and carry out the goals we targeted during the slower summer days. I would be helping new friends prepare for church membership.

Not so October 2020. The familiar is not there. Thinking on this, I see that if we want to feel despair; we can fixate on where there is chaos, uncertainty, fear, confusion, and division. Our national politics is broken. Racism is on an uptick. The Covid pandemic is growing in ferocity. Massachusetts seems next in line for a surge of the disease.

But what about hope? Interestingly, our own congregation is not scattered or diminished. It is simply different than in the past. Our attendance is strong at our new, creative Drive-In worship. Our revenues are steady. Our newly formed Compassionate Care Network is making us more connected and supportive to our most vulnerable members. There seems to be a deepening hunger for nurture and inspiration, and this is being fed by a real sharing among the folks. Such sharing is not simply programmatic – it is personal.

Yesterday I was listening to the NPR program “The Takeaway”. On it I heard Iman Omar Suliman in Dallas Texas reflect on his own congregation’s struggles. He said “In the Koran there is a verse ‘*With every hardship comes ease*’”. He notes that most folks understand this to mean after hardship comes ease, by which it is said good things happen at the end. But Iman Suliman reminds us that ‘*with*’ really means ‘at the same time’.

He says: “Pay attention – not just to the light at the end of the tunnel – but to the lights in the corners as you are moving in that direction... The blessings that you have in the moment – spend some time with that in the now sit with them.”

He invites us to acknowledge our pain and vulnerability because we “can’t find hope in delusion”. But with that “try to find the ease and the sense of purpose that we spend our entire lives trying to find. Sometimes there’s no better time to answer a question of existence as a time when that existence is being so violated as it is right now.”

The blessings we have at FCCR are bountiful. There are bright lights in all of our corners – and many of these are new lights guiding us on the way through this suffering and doubt. God is the source of these lights. Let’s count them together in HOPE.

Peace and Fond Greetings, Rev. Tom



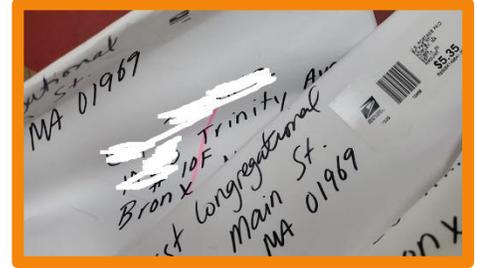
Christian Education

Our September 13th Information and Registration Session was attended by several groups of parents/children who were enrolling in Sunday School. After introductions, we reviewed our plans for Virtual Sunday School and briefly discussed the Celebrate Wonder Curriculum we are using this year.

CELEBRATE WONDER CURRICULUM:
“Honor the spiritual life of children—their natural sense of awe, wonder, imagination, and curiosity—and help shape their growing faith.”

At the time of this newsletter’s publication, we will be entering our 3rd week of Virtual Sunday School. This year our digital capabilities have allowed us to offer Sunday School to children in Lawrence and Methuen Massachusetts and we also have two enrollees who live in the Bronx, NYC.

If you know anyone who might want to enroll in our Sunday School program, please have them contact our office at once.



Diaconate and Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met last night and discussed the reopening of the church. We are excited to announce that we are looking forward to returning to the Sanctuary for services on November 1st God willing! Please be assured that the Trustees and Diaconate are working hard to ensure all UCC and CDC guidelines are and will be followed. For those who are not comfortable returning to church just yet, you will be able to watch the service on ZOOM or recorded for You Tube.

We are also investigating other media opportunities as well. Sunday School will not resume until a later time as only the Sanctuary will be open. We are in the early planning stages but will follow up with more information. The Semi Annual meeting will be held in the Sanctuary following the service. There will not be a coffee hour at this time.

Please note, masks will be made mandatory. We look forward to seeing you inside church!. Until then, please join us for our very popular Drive In Church!



Missions Committee

Missions reached out to the Triton School District to see if they have any needs and they responded right away that they did.

Holly took a a trip to Walmart and bought the undies needed and those have been delivered to the Middle School nurse.

In this crazy time we wish all families safety and health and success as they encounter their childrens' education. We will continue to support with clothing as needed, and as we can.

Please keep in mind as the winter looms before us that we will be needing new hats, mittens, scarves, and gloves for all sizes and ages.

If you can make a donation to the church with a Missions memo on it, we can go purchase for you, or if you want to drop of any of these items any time this fall up to Christmas week that would be great.

Please remember the UCC Neighbors in Need. October's theme is "All children have the right to simply be children". So many have been thrown into horrific situations as their families flee danger in their homes across the globe, so many children are hungry every day, here in the USA and across the globe. Keep them in your hearts. "I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did any of those things to some overlooked or ignored ,that was me, you did it to me" Matthew 25:40. Good words to act on.

Stay safe, stay well, be kind.

Thank you.
Missions

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States.



Youth Group

At the time of this newsletter's publication, our Youth Group will be entering its third week. We are meeting Sunday afternoons and are social distancing outdoors. When it starts to get cold, we will be meeting virtually.

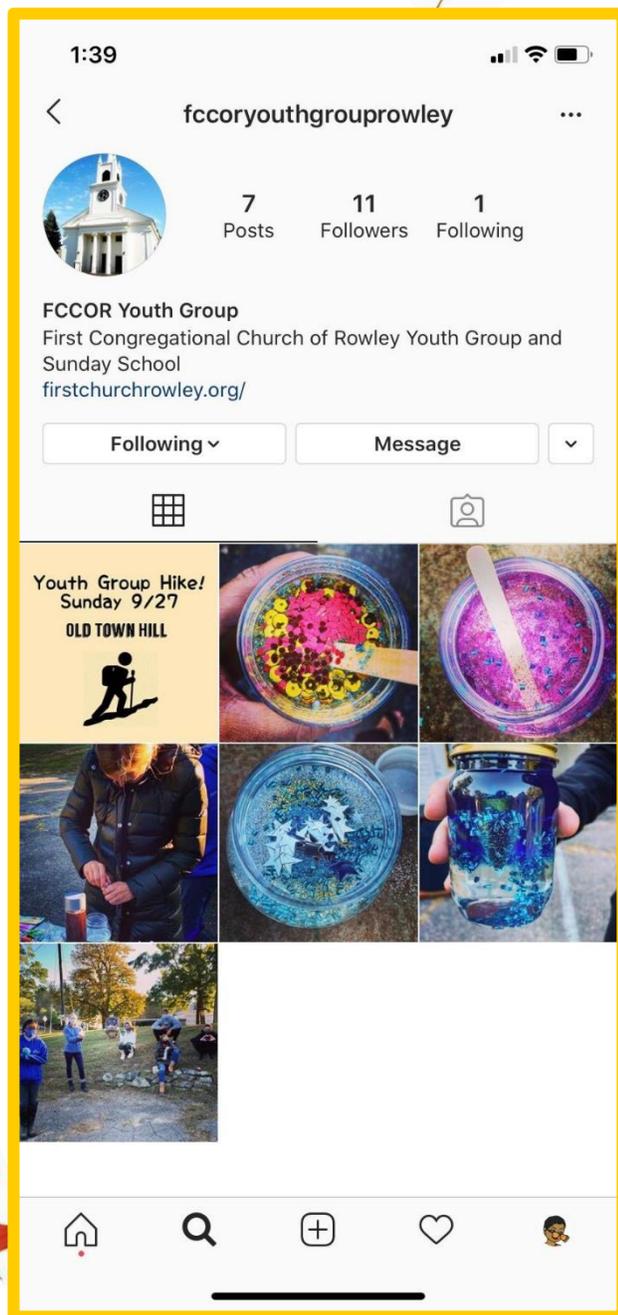
We have made some adjustments to our 'lesson plan' for the Fall as we realize how essential building trust is for our group and have been focusing on team building activities.

On Sunday for example we hiked Old Town Hill in Newbury and worked together at finding our way through various trails. This was a wonderful team building experience.

At one point, we stopped for a break and engaged in a short reflection on "gratitude". We took turns listing five things we were each thankful for. The lists were varied - from things like "I am thankful for the new shoes I recently got, I can't wait to wear them" to more profound words of appreciation such as "I am thankful for my mom".

Announcement: We are now on Instagram! If you have Instagram, please follow us : @fccoryouthgrouprowley, like our pictures and stay apprised of youth group happenings.

We hope you enjoy these pictures as well as the pictures we'll be posting in upcoming newsletters. We are engaging a generation that is very adept with multimedia communication and takes lots of pictures. We really appreciate our ability to capture special moments like the ones you see on this page.



October Birthdays

Sandy	Mulkern	10/8
Mary	Hitaj	10/10
Karen	Schmuck	10/11
Brian	MacRae	10/19
Audrianna	Angeloni	10/20
David	Harding	10/22
Craig	Stevens	10/22
Anne	Hagopian	10/25
Jakob	Jensen	10/27
Hannah	Goss	10/28
Nancy	Schmidt	10/29



Historical Birthdays

- Mahatma Ghandi, October 2, 1869
- Charles Heston, October 4, 1923
- Lewis Capaldi, October 7, 1996
- John Lennon, October 9, 1940
- Eleanor Roosevelt, October 11, 1884
- Johy Mayer, October 16, 1977
- Pablo Picasso, October 25, 1881
- Mahalia Jackson, October 26, 1911
- Teddy Roosevelt, October 27, 1858
- Nia Long, October 30, 1970
- Willow Smith, October 31, 2000



Anniversaries

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

Historical Dates In October

- **October 1, 1908** - Henry Ford's Model T, a "universal car" designed for the masses, went on sale for the first time.
- **October 2, 1967** - Thurgood Marshall (1908-1993) was sworn in as the first African American associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.
- **October 3, 1863** - President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation designating the last Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day.
- **October 4, 1965** - Pope Paul VI became the first Pope to visit the U.S. and the first to address the United Nations.
- **October 19, 1987** - "Black Monday" occurred on Wall Street as stocks plunged a record 508 points or 22.6 per cent, the largest one-day drop in stock market history.
- **October 23, 1983** - Terrorists drove a truck loaded with TNT into the U.S. and French headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon, exploding it and killing 241 U.S. Marines and 58 French paratroopers.



First Congregational Church, Rowley

Virtual 2020 Style

November 21-22, 2020

Due to the COVID-19 virus we are unable to have our traditional fall fair. In the spirit of the fair, you can order some of your favorite items and purchase raffle tickets for those lovely gift baskets.

Order information is still under construction, but you are invited to visit our website so that you can familiarize yourself with the content and ordering procedure. Please visit our website: www.firstchurchrowley.org and the fair's own website: www.oldtymecountryfair.com (website will be updated continuously over the next two weeks, until we finalize all the details).

Some of those favorite items will be Cabot Private Stock Cheese, Penny's Homemade Bread, Mrs. Emery's Baked Beans, Roger's Honey Stewed Apples, along with Country Gardens Kissing Balls and Winter Log Baskets. Luncheon items will be available such as Turkey Gobbler Sandwiches, Chili, Corn Chowder etc.

We will also have a virtual raffle for some of those lovely gift baskets ie. Feed the Birds, Family Games, Stonewall Kitchen, Wine and Chocolates, Health Supplies, Arts and Crafts, Kitchen Items, Movie Matinee, Music Related Items and Snacks for the Youth.

We greatly appreciate the community wide support of our church and its activities. Many volunteers have lovingly contributed their time, talents and treasure over the years to this wonderful fair. We hope to see you next year in the traditional way. May God bless you and your families and keep them safe.

For payment, you can send in a check or use Pay Pal and can pick up your items on November 21 and 22 between 11am and 2pm with touchless service at the church. The deadline for all orders and payment is Nov.14.



***First Congregational Church, U.C.C.
Rowley, Massachusetts***

October 15, 2020

To Members and Friends,
First Congregational Church, Rowley

The 2020 Semi-Annual Meeting of the church membership will be held on Sunday, November 1, 2020. The meeting will be held immediately after the Sunday worship service. The business meeting will begin no earlier than 10:30 am that same morning. CDC guidelines will be followed. Masks must be worn in church at all times.

Items on the agenda for the business meeting are:

1. To receive the annual reports from the various boards and committees for the year 2019.
2. To hear and act on recommendations from the Finance Board on the church budget for 2021.
3. To hear and act on any other business which may properly come before the church membership.

Respectfully submitted,

David E. Irving

David E. Irving, Clerk

Zoom Registration

You must register in advance for this meeting. To register [please click here.](#)
After registering, you will receive an email containing log in information.

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OFFICERS, BOARDS, COMMITTEES & STAFF

JUNE 2020 – May 2021

STAFF:

Minister	Rev. Tom Bentley	978-973-2362, bentley123@aol.com
Sexton	Roger Merry	978-265-5064, jp32pls@gmail.com
Church Administrator (above)	Angie F. Estèvez	Contact via church office (see header)
Music Director	Karl Schmuck	978-948-5026, nakamaka@verizon.net
Bookkeeper	Ashli Pyburn	
Youth Leader	Vacant	

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Nat Dummer**

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****Emeritus**

Vacant Jr. Deacon
Alexandra Flodman Jr. Deaconess

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2 Vacancies (22 & 23)

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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

MISSIONS

Danby Whitmore* (21) 978-948-3484, danbywhitmore@gmail.com
Mary Ellen Dixon(22) 978-578-6110, medixonipswich@gmail.com

Vacancy (23)

MEMORIAL

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PASTORAL RELATIONS

David Irving, Kay Dalzell, Penny Hurley, Ken Sanford
And Nancy Schmidt

***BOLD=Chairperson**