



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



April 2021

Thurs. Apr. 1 - Holy Thursday

Exodus 12:1-4 [5-10] 11-14

Psalms 116:1-2, 12-19

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Fri., Apr. 2 - Good Friday

Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Psalm 22

Hebrews 10:16-25 or

Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

John 18:1-19:42

Sat., Apr. 3 - Holy Saturday

Job 14:1-14 or Lamentations

3:1-9, 19-24, Psalm 31:1-4, 15-

16, 1 Peter 4:1-8, Matthew

27:57-66 or John 19:38-42

Sun., Apr. 4 - Easter

Acts 10:34-43 or Isaiah 25:6-9

Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 or Acts

10:34-43, John 20:1-18 or

Mark 16:1-8

Worship Watch

Sun., Apr. 11

Second Sunday of Easter

Acts 4:32-35, Psalm 133,

1 John 1:1-2:2

John 20:19-31

Sun., Apr. 18

Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 3:12-19

Psalm 4

1 John 3:1-7

Luke 24:36b-48

Sun., Apr. 25

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 4:5-12

Psalm 23

1 John 3:16-24

*Wishing you
a Blessed
and Happy Easter*



Gathering Piecemeal for Our 'Peace Meal'



Dear Friends,

This Covid pandemic has shattered much of our lives into pieces.

Our families are separated. Some of us have lost loved ones. Friends remain off at a distance. Schools are closed. Every profession is operating while missing some of its vital components. Life's ceremonies and rituals are fragmented, partial, and sometimes prevented altogether. Yet we are invited to not loose heart. Have faith good friends. God's absolute Love binds all the broken parts together in the end. That is the vision and truth of the resurrection.

This year of 2021 needs help to be put back together. Its pieces are lying all about like litter on the road. To help with this reassembling, we are inviting everyone in our congregation to a "Peace Meal". This is the Agape Meal scheduled for Thursday April 1st at 7:00 PM. This is the date and time of what normally would be our Maundy Thursday worship service with readings, prayers, and somber music.

This year we are invited to come together through Zoom and share in a meal – a Holy Meal – with a broad menu and an opportunity to share. We will also hear the readings of scripture and experience the inspiration of beautiful music.

Please take time to learn about this event and we all hope you take us up on the invitation. God certainly hopes as much. We need healing and holy renewal, and we can find that when we join Jesus as he offers us the blessing of the bread and wine. In gratitude we are called to be present to him by being present to one another.

So, Peace it is to all of you brothers and sisters. Behold what the Lord can do even in times of trial and sufferings.

Yours in the Spirit that never dies,

Rev. Tom

Zoom Information will be disseminated by email ONLY. Please contact the church office if you don't receive the Zoom link.



Maundy Thursday Agape Meal

Welcome to a *Maundy Thursday Agape Meal* A Virtual “Peace Meal” of Love and Togetherness



This Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday) evening April 1st at 7:00 PM we are all invited to an online Agape Meal to be eaten in our homes with others in our congregation joined together via Zoom. We will gather together to remember the night that Jesus was betrayed. This is also the night he gave to us the sacrament of the “Lord’s Supper”.

For our time we will come together in an informal way. We will be invited to share our reflections about the past year, lift up any blessings we have felt about our faith family, and then listen as we hear read some of the scripture passages that relate to the events of this evening over 2000 years ago.

When Jesus shared Passover with his disciples, it was in the home tradition and setting of the Passover meal. The sharing of bread, wine, and hearty dishes. In this home setting Jesus gave us his “new commandment” to love one another. All happened in a home - in a room where Jesus drew his friends together as host, teacher, friend, and master who was there to serve them all. This is not a formal Passover meal in the Jewish tradition, but it does contain the sense of that unique way to break bread together.

Maundy Thursday may be considered, at its heart, a homely affair. During this extraordinary time that requires us to practice social distancing in order to help protect everyone from the rapid spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, we are being taken back to our households as our base-point. In this we actually have a blessing as our technologies for joining others in fellowship can connect us even when we are alone in our households. We can join with each other on this holy night, as we pray, sing, and hear the Word of God while we eat and share together, each in our own homes yet joined in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

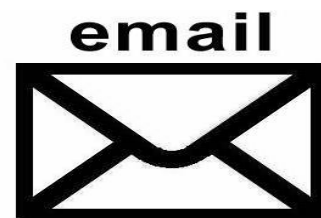
To prepare your home for the service, please do the following –

- Prepare a simple meal to share in your home that is fitting with your own dietary requirements and Lenten fast.
- We are reflecting what a household meal in early Palestine might offer. For this evening Jesus is our special guest and we give him the place of honor at the table. For our Agape Meal simple foods are preferred. Salads, soups, meatless proteins, cooked lamb, cheeses, olive oil for dipping, dried and fresh fruits and nuts, simple grains or pastas, honey, dried and smoked fish. Whatever you think is the food they may have shared in the Upper Room that night. **(Please include bread and wine (or grape juice) as we will be having a time for communion.)**
- Set your space for your meal, with a laptop, tablet, cell phone, or internet-connected screen in the room where it can be near and visible to everyone during the meal and you can speak into your device or microphone.
- Make sure your device is connected to the internet. We will be using Zoom and it would be best to download this app necessary for our shared online worship gathering. The Zoom Link will be sent out to everyone prior to the event and it will be on our website.
- Set your table with your meal, and bring a Bible or other readings if you wish. You may light a couple of candles if that is safe.
- Be prepared to clear your table completely at the conclusion of the service.
- At the designated time for your gathering congregation, link up to your shared online service for the beginning of this Maundy Thursday and Agape Meal liturgy. Then take your places at your table to partake in the meal and to participate as you are able in the hearing of the Word, the sharing of your reflections, the remembering of Jesus Christ's own sharing of himself in the first Holy Eucharist, and readying ourselves to follow Jesus to the Cross. Finally, to make the event more personal folks will be invited by Rev. Tom, from time to time, to read some of the scripture passages which appear on the screen.
- A PowerPoint display of graphics, readings, and musical moments will guide us along through the evening

Announcements

Email Address Correction(s) - Over the past couple of weeks there have been some email mix-ups when sending emails to Angie and/or the Office. In order to ensure that your messages are received, please message the church office at: first.church@verizon.net.

DO NOT send emails to: a*****z@gmail.com or f***secretary@verizon.net. To reach Reverend Tom, email: bentleyconsulting123@gmail.com.



PALM SUNDAY PROCESSION - Palms will be handed out on Palm Sunday along with your bulletins. (If you're reading this on Sunday, at the Drive In Service, make sure you get one.)

There will have a Drive-By Procession around the Rowley Common after our church service. We plan on leaving the church parking lot at 10:40am. We hope you will join us.



Annual Reports - The Annual Meeting is April 25th. Annual Reports are due on or before April 1st. **Thanks.**

Easter Sunrise Service - The Easter Sunrise Service will be held on April 4 @620am at Perley's Marina at the Landing at the Landing.

Additional information about the Easter Sunrise Service will be sent out through email this week, posted on Facebook and on our website.



Listing/Directory – Until further notice, we will not be disseminating the list of Officers, Boards, Committees publicly. Should you need someone's contact information, please call the office.



Missions Committee

We hope that you have Let Love Flow and have shown your support for people with water insecurity throughout the world by participating in the UCC Great Hour of Sharing. If not, there is still time. You can send a donation into the church with Great Hour of Sharing in the memo.

The expected date of the Scavenger Hunt is May 2nd. It will be dependent on good weather.

There will be more information coming soon.



A wonderful crew of women joined together for a walk on the Dow Brook trail. It was very pretty, gave a few challenges crossing the streams, and was good conversation.

Join us in April on the 18th for our next walk!



Happy Easter to everyone.

Let's hope that spring truly brings new life to our surroundings and our souls! Danby and Holly



Compassionate Care Network



Blessing of the Shawls - As a part of the worship service on Sunday 3/21, Rev. Tom and Nancy recognized the work of the Compassionate Care Network to coordinate the knitting and crocheting of "Prayer Shawls" and "Prayer Squares." Rev. Tom said a

blessing over the shawls and prayer squares and they will now be distributed to those in need.

Those who knitted and crocheted include: Kay Dalzell, Penny Hurley, Karen Schmuck and Judy Robillard.

If you know someone who would benefit from receiving a prayer shawl or prayer square, please notify the church office. If you are interested in being a part of the knitting/crocheting team, we welcome your talent!



We continue to reach out to members of our congregation by phone call, email messages or hand-written notes in an effort to stay connected during a time when getting together remains challenging. If you would like to receive a call from a member of the Compassionate Care Network, please reach out to Angie in the church office.

In addition to individual outreach,
Weekly Inspirational

Messages authored by either Patti Cummings, Penny Hurley or Mike Blouin were sent. If you would like to contribute by writing a message of inspiration, please submit your writing to Angie. All submissions are reviewed prior to being published.

CCN Members: Reverend Tom Bentley, Kay Dalzell, Jerry Schmidt, Lori Flodman, Penny Hurley, Patti Cummings, Nancy Schmidt and Angie Estevez, Church Administrator.



The First Congregational Church of Rowley
The Compassionate Care Network

May God's Grace be upon this shawl
Warming, comforting, enfolding, and
embracing.

May this mantle be a safe haven,
A sacred place of security and well-being
Sustaining and embracing.

In good times as well as difficult ones
May you be cradled in HOPE

Kept in JOY
Graced with PEACE
And wrapped in LOVE

This shawl was knitted with love by



Christian Education

The CE Committee recently met and discussed plans for the Spring and explored possible activities to carry them through the end of May. This includes a personalized Easter Egg Hunt for one of our Sunday School participants.

Even though Zoom participation has decreased, we will continue to provide Sunday School for children in the Lawrence/Methuen area, which includes three children who live at the Lazarus House's Family Shelter in Lawrence.

The CE Committee also discussed possible plans for the 2021-22 school year.

Patti Cummings is going to order a specialized banner made, which will include the pictures of all the High School graduates and the names of their respective High Schools. If you're a high school senior and you haven't already – please send Angie a copy of your "Senior Picture" along with the name of your high school.

James Kay is helping the team plan a couple of outdoor activities that the youth can partake of safely. Possibilities include outings at Bradley Palmer State Park, Maudslay State Park and Foot Brothers Kayak and Canoe Rentals.

Reverend Tom brought the group information about the upcoming "Blessing Garden" and extended an invitation for all CE participants and their families. More information to follow.





Annual Plant Sale

May 15th, 2021

Rain Date May 22nd, 2021

9am until 1 pm

**At First Congregational Church
of Rowley**

Plants supplied by Country Gardens of Rowley



First Congregational Church, U.C.C.

Rowley, Massachusetts

March 15, 2021

To: The Members and Friends, First Congregational Church, U.C.C., Rowley
Rowley, Massachusetts

The 381st Annual Meeting of the church will be held on Sunday, April 25, 2021 beginning no earlier than 10:30 a.m. immediately after the 10:00 a.m. drive-in worship service.

Items on the agenda for the business meeting are:

1. To hear and act on annual reports of the various officers, boards, and committees from the previous year.
2. To hear and act upon the report of the Nominating Committee (elections).
3. To hear and act upon any other business which may properly come before the church membership.

Respectfully submitted,

David E. Irving

David E. Irving, Clerk



April

Anniversaries

Birthdays

Jerry	Schmidt	4/5
Merle	Phipps	4/7
Scott Parker	Loring	4/10
Sara	Stafford	4/11
Elizabeth	(Somers)	
Ruth	Reep	4/15
Julie	Grover	4/16
Nicholas	Morris	4/16
Les	Warren	4/16
Ann	Myers	4/18
Scott	Gebow	4/19
Katie	Blouin	4/20
Bradley	Reep	4/21
Don	Russo	4/21
Allison	(Russo) Sayre	4/21
Ethan	Davey	4/22
Sabba & Sara	Whitmore	4/23
Annalise	Jensen	4/27
Beverley	Phillips	4/28
Sean	Pyburn	4/28
Amanda	Rotberg	4/29
Dorothy	Spurling	4/29
Christopher	Barry	4/30

Ray & Nancy	Hill	4/7
Bob & Shirley	MacRae	4/8
Burton & Lynne	Gray	4/9
Randy & Janice	Goss	4/12
Roger & Karlene	Merry	4/13
Barbara & Thomas	Friend	4/13
Larry & Melissa	Gaspar	4/15
David & Gidget	Roberts	4/17
Bill & Ellie	Manning	4/24
John & Marie	Grover	4/29



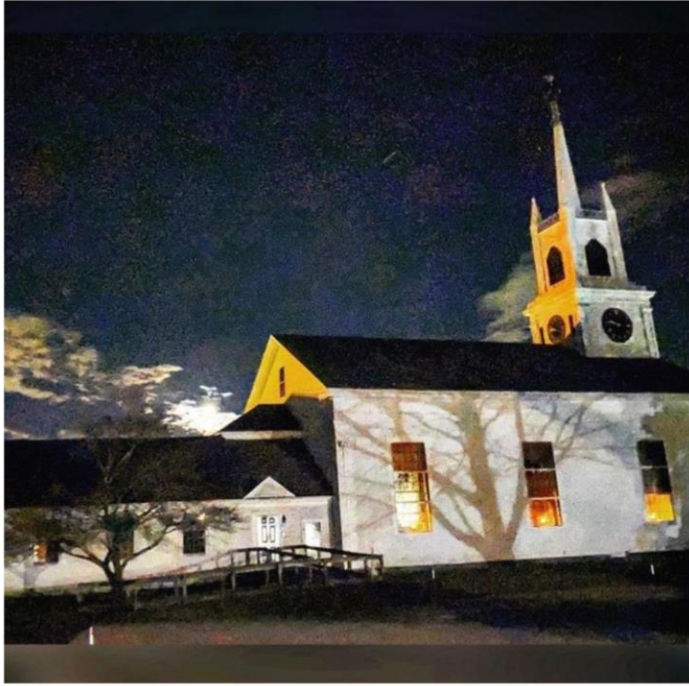
Pictures Taken by Penny Hurley

"Once we know that the entire physical world around us, all of creation, is both the hiding place and the revelation place for God, this world becomes home, safe, enchanted, offering grace to any who look deeply."

Fr. Richard Rohr
Photos by Penny Hurley



Pictures Taken by Angie

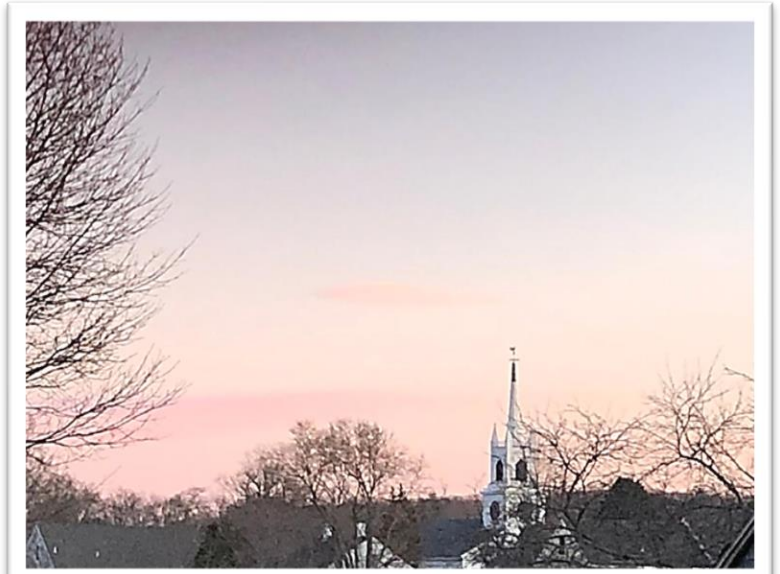


This is probably one of my favorite winter pictures. I got new outdoor roller skates for Valentine's Day but I couldn't use them because it snowed – but I wore them anyways.



The last of my winter pictures. This was my last opportunity to share them! Spring is here!

Pictures Taken by Judy Robillard



Lay Reader List & Diaconate Schedule Through March 2021

LAY READER LIST January – March 2021

March

28 Sue Hazen Palm Sunday

April

4 Nancy Schmidt Easter Sunday

11 Nicola Pyburn

18 Doug Phillips

25 Sue Hazen Annual Meeting

May

2 Penny Hurley

9 Nancy Schmidt Mother's Day

16 Patti Cummings Children's Day??

23 Don Thurston Pentecost Sunday

30 Karl Schmuck Trinity Sunday

June

6 Dave Irving Installation Sunday

13 Sharon Emery Traditional Fireman's Sunday

20 Doug Phillips Father's Day

27 Sara Stafford

July

4 Dave Irving Independence Day

Diaconate Schedule April - May 2021

**Jr. Deacons Alexandra and Claudia
when available**

April

4 - Patti and Ken (Communion)

11 - Penny and Les

18 - Nancy and Jerry

April 25 - Nicola and Dennis

May

2 - Penny and Les (| Communion)

9 - Patti and Ken

16 - Nancy and Dennis

23 - Nicola and Jerry

30 - Penny and Ken

