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From the Pastor's Desk

At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted^s by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him. Mark 1: 12-13

Greetings of Grace and Peace!

I miss you! It is difficult to believe that it has been a year since COVID- 19 virus began attacking people. In some sense it seems like it has been with us “*forever*,” and in another sense, it seems impossible that it has “*only been here a year*.” Time. It is a paradox.

Last year, we were quarantined just as Lent began. So, we traveled the journey alone. This year, too, we will travel our journey of Lent just as Jesus did, alone in the wilderness. In our separation, we have become more aware that we are made for community and connections. Being separated makes us feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. Some signs of stress are:

- Feelings of fear, anger, sadness, worry, numbness, or frustration
- Changes in appetite, energy, desires, and interests
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping or having nightmares
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Worsening of mental health conditions

- Increased use of tobacco, alcohol, and other substances (cdc.gov)

To deal with the stress:

Try to get out and walk daily. Nature brings us right into God's Presence. As we quiet ourselves, we can often hear words of wisdom and assurance.

Listen to some music and dance! Movement helps to free negative feelings from clinging within our bodies: blocking the gift of the Holy Spirit from freely flowing within; cleanings, comforting, encouraging, and inspiring.

I found an incredible new website from a musician who has created a song for almost every Biblical Psalm. We will be using this resource in our worship periodically, but the songs are worth listening and singing to on your own. You might add this as part of your devotional time. Website is: PsalmsImmersion.com . Songs are written by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan.

Eat Healthy and be sure to get enough sleep.

As we journey through Lent know that there are angels around, just like those who came to minister to Jesus. Call someone, a friend, pastor, or family member and stay connected. If you are in a crisis, reach out and get help. Call 911 or [National Suicide Prevention](http://NationalSuicidePrevention.org) 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for English. (for full list of resources see [cdc.gov/coping with stress](http://cdc.gov/coping-with-stress)). Know that you are Beloved by God and others. Reaching out and seeking help is a sign of maturity and caring for yourself. Everyone needs assistance at times. Jesus allowed the angels to minister to him and if we are in need, we can allow others to support us. Mental Health is nothing to be shamed about: it is as important as physical and spiritual health.

Vaccines are becoming more readily available. If you need assistance getting an appointment to with a ride, please call the office and we will strive to assist. I am looking forward to seeing you in the flesh on Palm Sunday or soon after. Know that you are in my hearts and prayers until then....

In Christ's Love and Light, *Pastor Pat*

From the Deacons' Bench

"When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands."

Deuteronomy 24:19

Moses offered these instructions to the Israelites during the final days of their traveling while standing on the east bank of the Jordan River looking west into the Promised Land. These words are just as meaningful today. A recent editorial in the Springfield Newspaper states that "millions of Americans are facing food insecurity for the first time". It goes on to say that 1 in 6 people (50 million) will be facing food hunger this year.

I'm old enough to remember the food rationing and family Victory Gardens during World War II when much of the nation's food supply was shipped overseas to support the war effort. It seems the need today is just as dire. Year 2021 will be the third consecutive year that the Church has participated in regional efforts to help address these food concerns through our Harvest Gifts Ministry. So the call goes out: Will you step forward and pledge your support for a new kind of Victory Garden? Will you plant 2 extra tomato plants this year?.....or double the onion crop from last year?.....maybe plant a hill of winter squash.....or cantaloupe?.....perhaps an extra row of beets?.....build a bean plant topiary?

Think about it now while the snow is still on the ground and there is time to plan, to organize and to commit to the Lord's work as Moses revealed.

Peace.....Dave Spencer, Deacon.



Deacon Server for the Month

March

Linda Hornig

March Birthdays

Birthday Greetings to the following members of our church who celebrate birthdays in March.



Bonnie Watson	03/02
Robert Green	03/02
Elizabeth Taylor	03/02
Joseph Tessier	03/06
Carol Darnley	03/08
Kellie Hummel	03/11
Beverly Brant	03/11
Geoffrey Sterling	03/15
Virginia Richter	03/17
Dennis Chaffee Jr	03/15
Jesse Lee	03/17
Mary Drozdowski	03/20
Pamela Rogers	03/20
Anne Collins Jr	03/22
Elizabeth Warner Godin	03/23
Emily Warner	03/23
Lauren Hummel	03/23
Ronald Richter	03/24
Sandra Richter	03/24
Jarrold Smith	03/26
Erik McKeone	03/27
Jolette Germain	03/28
Glenn Olesuk	03/28
Patricia Ritz	03/30
Dale Varney	03/31
Barbara Panek	03/31



Wedding Anniversaries

David & Susan Quill	03/05
Carol & George Quinlivan	03/18
James & Laurie Bliss	03/21

Blessings & Congratulations

To Cody Godin and Elizabeth Warner who were married on February 14th here at the church. Their ceremony can be viewed on our Facebook page. Best Wishes for a blessed life together.



Welcome Newly Baptized

Owen John Godin, son of Cody & Elizabeth Godin, was baptized on February 14th. We welcome him into the family of Christ.

The Gift of Life

Congratulations to Karen & Michael Kielb on the birth of their grandson, Hunter Joseph Vierthaler on November 18th, 2020.

Congregational Corner

At this time of year, new life around is arriving. Nature's alarm clock is ringing. Plants are starting to bloom. Animals are starting to awaken from their winter slumber. The sun is promising longer, brighter, days. Easter will soon be near. We have been praying throughout Lent, making sacrifices, fasting, and saying the "Jesus Prayer". Lord Jesus son of God, have mercy on me a sinner. We not can begin shedding our winter coats and packing away our hats, gloves and boots, preparing for our Risen Savior.

Alleluia Alleluia

By Marilyn Connor

Spring Ahead

Please note that Daylight Savings begins on Sunday, March 14th. Please remember to set your clocks ahead one hour!





Prayer Corner



Evie Meacham
Ingrid & Beth (Schwabe)
Bob Schoolcraft
Audrey Burger
John (Jack) Bennett
Janet Brehaut
Beverly Pease
Winnie
Don Facey
Fran Brown
Frank & Phyllis Watson
Bob Green
Judy
Joyce Books

Bonnie Watson
Otto Kern
Carol Darnley
Gwen Wills
Lelum
Jackie Prior
Dennis Connor
Jeffrey Howe
Edith
Earl Schofield
Christopher
Josh G. & Family
Ann Kibbe

For shut-ins and those who are isolated
For first responders & healthcare workers
For those in rehab centers & nursing homes
For the homeless
For our country
For all world leaders

Worship Music

Thank you to all who have provided our worship with Live music. If you can sing and would like to share your gift, please contact Pastor Pat.



Dreaming, Planning, and Moving Forward towards a Future Filled with Hope

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29: 11-13

Did you ever wonder about the outcome of the series of Unity Dinners we shared in 2019? In early 2020, as Pastor Pat and church leaders began exploring the congregants' input, we were required to shift our focus with the onset of COVID. However, prayer, discernment, and visioning have continued. During this time of hibernation, Pastor Pat and church leaders have been planning a future filled with hope. The insights you shared over our Unity Dinners revealed:

- 1.) a desire to experience deeper congregational connections,
- 2.) a desire for more opportunities to participate in outreach to the community.

"Connecting in the Spirit" is the title and focus of a vision of future ministry rooted in those two expressed desires from the dinners. To help support us as we move forward into living out this vision we applied for, and were awarded, two grants:

*One grant of \$3,000 is from the *United Methodist Foundation of NE Grants Ministry*, designed "to help fund vital, strategic, and creative ministries, with a goal of bringing existing ministries to a new level; start a new ministry; encourage community involvement; and expand resources."

*The second grant of \$4,200 is a *"Together for Tomorrow"* Congregational Development Grant from the New England United Methodist Conference, the purpose of which is "to revitalize existing churches" intending "to help congregations start new ministries as they seek to reach more people, more young people, and more diverse groups."

We thank God for these unanticipated blessings of being awarded a combined grant total of \$7,200.00 to deepen our connection through the Spirit with God, one another, and the community.

Another common theme which arose during our dinners was a lament for "*how church used to be*": more people, more families, more resources. This quote from the Congregational Development website may help us to shift our perspective of where we are, and where we can go, in our congregational "life-cycle": "*Local congregations were not created to last forever and they move through regular cycles of growth, leveling off, decline, and revitalization.*" We may feel longing for our past, but can we turn and walk forward together into the vital, abundant future we can build with God's leading?

In September (barring COVID restrictions) the path to "*Connecting in the Spirit*" will begin to unroll before us. Between now and then, please join us in more prayer, as discernment and planning will be ongoing, and more information will be shared with you. We pray for opportunities to gather with you in person for open discussion, as well. We have been entrusted with grants to help us carry out our vision for hope, but it will require us to invest ourselves in deepening our connection in the Spirit that we might connect with one another and the community. May it be so! Amen.

Sunday Services Available on TV

Sunday services are available on the Wilbraham/ Hampden Public Access Channel 191 at 7:00pm Saturday evenings. In Monson they are available on channel 15 at 10am and 7pm on Sundays. On the East Longmeadow Community Access Television 191 they are shown at 10 am on Sundays. Please note that if you do have a smart phone and would like to connect with us on the internet, please find us on Facebook as Hampden Federated Church so that you can watch our streaming videos.



Summer Camp 2021: Too Early to Call

New England Conference Camping and Retreat Ministries shares the following message about summer 2021:

As the coronavirus pandemic continues, and new strands of the virus are emerging, there continue to be challenges in vaccine distribution, limits on PPE supplies, and concerns about funding. We are facing a very difficult road as we consider how we might achieve our mission despite so much uncertainty and among so many emerging challenges.

At this time, we are monitoring guidelines and requirements from the American Camping Association, which credentials three of our sites, as well as local and state guidelines; current guidelines make it very difficult to operate residence camping at all. This guidance changes continually, and we are not yet ready to determine when or if we can open our sites for summer camping. We expect to make a tentative decision in March.

Please hold our executive directors, their boards, volunteers, and staff in prayer as we seek to make decisions that hold our values of safety and health for all as a top priority. Stay tuned on our camps' websites for updates early in March.

Lenten Worship Series

We are exploring the "*Gift of the Dark Woods*" as we journey through Lent this year. The series is inspired by the book of the same name written by Eric Elnes. No one enters the Dark Wood of their own volition. You awaken there, by the nudge of the Holy Spirit. There we may find unexpected gifts awaiting us. Elnes steers us toward seven gifts that are found only where we feel unsettled. These are the gifts of uncertainty, of emptiness, of being thunderstruck, of getting lost, of temptation, of disappearing, and of misfits. The sermon can be seen live on FCC Facebook page, or you can connect through "*Go to Meeting* :

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/326842397>

(Go to Meeting allows you to be in the church but to see one another as we worship together.) If you miss the Live

presentations, you can catch them at a more convenient time on our Facebook page, Web page, or on local television (check local TV schedules).



Easter Flowers

The Flower Committee will be ordering plants for Easter. The deadline for ordering plants is March 28, 2021. Orders may be sent to: Federated Community Church, PO Box 246, Hampden, MA 01036 or to

Elaine DeGray at 18 Brookside Drive, Hampden, MA 01036. Please enclose with your order form, your check made out to "Federated Community Church".

I would like to order:

Quantity	Cost
___ Lily	@ \$10.00 = \$ _____
___ Hyacinth	@ \$7.50 = \$ _____
___ Tulip	@ \$ 7.50 = \$ _____
___ Daffodil	@ \$7.50 = \$ _____

CHECK TOTAL = \$ _____

I wish to give my plant in memory/honor of (circle one)

YOUR
NAME _____
PHONE _____
ADDRESS _____

Plants may be picked up after the 10:00 am Easter Service on April 4, 2021. Plants that are not picked up after the service will be left in the sanctuary for the following weeks services.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 6:30 PM Bell Choir	4	5 10:30 AM Bible Study	6
7 10:00 AM Online Worship	8	9 7:00 PM Finance	10 6:30 PM Bell Choir	11	12 10:30 AM Bible Study	13 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast
14 10:00 AM Online Worship	15	16 6:30 PM BOD	17 6:30 PM Bell Choir	18	19 10:30 AM Bible Study	20
21 10:00 AM Online Worship	22	23	24 6:30 PM Bell Choir	25	26 10:30 AM Bible Study	27 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast
28 Palm Sunday 10:00 AM Indoor Worship	29	30	31 6:30 PM Bell Choir			