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From the Pastor's Desk

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh.....But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5: 16-17a, 22-23

Greetings in the Name of Christ!

This pandemic that we find ourselves amid is beginning to wear on each of us. It has caused us to adjust the ways we are living in several ways. While we might understand the need to be social distant, it is getting old. We like control, to be in charge, freedom to do as we want and as we will. We cannot change our situation: the pandemic is real, and it is here to stay. What we do have control over is how we choose to deal with the situation. We can grumble that we are isolated, or we can choose to use the time to take up a project that we have wanted to do but previously claimed we have not had the time. We can use the time to reflect on how we have fought to do our own will each day, even as we pray the Lord's Prayer asking that *Thy* (God's) will be done. We can become still (or quiet as we work in our gardens) and listen to God, angels, or the saints that have gone on before us and hear what we might do to heal this world and the people who live on it.

In Galatians 5, Paul writes, "*The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.*" (v.6b)

How can we become more loving to the earth? What can we do to care for ourselves, our family members, our neighbors, and the strangers who live in the world? How can we be more loving? More tolerant? Less judgmental? More patient? Kind? Understanding? Generous? Compassionate? Our world is out of control just as Paul writes in Galatians. We are no longer living in harmony with God, but, as Paul describes, living in the flesh, with impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. (v. 19b-21a)

I share with you a myth from Native American tradition. An old Cherokee is teaching his grandson about life. “A fight is going on inside me,” he said to the boy. “It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil – he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.”

He continued, “The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too.”

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf will win?”

The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one you feed.”

We, as Disciples of Christ, need to draw closer to Christ and live as he lived: not in apathy and indifference, but in action: living in loving kindness each day on the earth to all who live here with us as we pray to God for the healing of our world. May we challenge ourselves to live in the fruits of the Spirit until they grow in us and are evident even in the most difficult and trying times. Let love be our way which leads to healing and wholeness for ourselves and the world.

In Christ’s Light and Love,

Pastor Pat

From the Deacons' Bench

I'm thinking of my friends at FCC, and imagining the warm sunshine returning, daffodils and tulips blooming, lots of action in vegetable gardens, and hoping that soon you will have the opportunity to see one another face to face a little more. Maybe even share a hug or a handshake!

Here in Melbourne, Australia I used my unexpected time at home to landscape my back yard, which had been trashed by building works just before I moved to the USA. Although we are in autumn, the weather here is milder so it's a great time to plant seedlings and small herbs which should bloom and grow happily next spring. I'm excited to see how it turns out - it's hard to imagine how tall and bushy the plants will be, and what the overall effect will be. It's a bit like life - I can't imagine how good what is coming will be, or how wonderfully it will unfold.

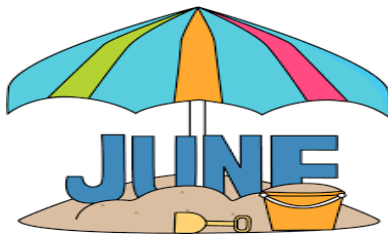
Like the garden, I can make a plan for life - next week or next year - and start plants/ ideas/ projects off and tend to them. I can weed and water, or try to do the tasks I decided, but I don't actually know what the result will be, because that is up to things beyond my control, and God. I have an illusion of control - but it's only an illusion. And it can feel like a blow when the illusion is broken.

This recent weird time has reminded me of that. I thought I was going for 3 weeks, and then returning to Hampden. And instead I am in Melbourne, Australia for an unknown time until it's safe to travel again. I expect you too have had things that are not going to plan!

All I can really try to control is what I think. Sometimes I think about the disruption, worry, and uncertainty. Better when I think about words like this from Psalm 139: *"If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast."*

And even though all is not as I planned, I take comfort that even here, I am being guided, looked after, held. And so are we all.

Blessings, Carmel



Servers for the Month

Deacons

June	Linda Hornig
July	Karen Anable
August	Dave Anable

Ushers/Greeters

Liturgist

6/7	Karen Anable	Linda Hornig
6/14	Rita Spencer	Dave Spencer
6/21	Dave Anable	Karen Anable
6/28	Dave Spencer	Hayden Tibbetts

Anniversaries

Richard & Sharon DeSanti	06/02
Joanne & David Gernux	06/07
George & Gail Romano	06/12
David & Jane Wyman	06/12
William & Ellen Gatchell	06/14
James & Beverly Brant	06/21
Donald & Joyce Ogonowski	06/27

Congratulations



Sunday School Birthdays

Miyani Tessier	06/10
Samuel Castellano	06/11
August Fernandes	06/18



June Birthdays

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

Pat Miller Fernandes	06/02
Karen Anable	06/05
Ross Gardner	06/08
Kimberley Mercure	06/08
Jacqueline Brusa	06/10
Betty Sutcliffe	06/14
Jennifer Fisher	06/15
Jacqueline Prior	06/18
Jean Carroll	06/19
Roberta Grant	06/19
Alison Castellano	06/19
Alicia Richter	06/20
Janet Modlish	06/20
Paul Cilley	06/23
Alexandra Smith	06/23
Michael DeSanti	06/24
Jacob Trevallion	06/25
Elena Green	06/27
Nancy Nelson	06/27
Elizabeth Cilley	06/29
Matthew Sterling	06/29



Prayer Corner



Evie Meacham

Joyce Libby

Bob & Evelyn Schoolcraft

Christopher

Julia Winetrout

Gail Banning

Judy Ingle

Otto Kern

Audrey Burger

Stella

John (Jack) Bennett

Carol Darnley

Janet Brehaut

Gwen Wills

Beverly Pease

Lelum

Winnie

Jackie Prior

Karen Kielb

Dennis Connor

Richard Grant

Kathie

Protection for first responders, including Lori Beth, Joshua, Matt, Meghan, Brendan, caregivers (Sherry & Rebecca), and all community workers, and governing officials trying to deal with all of this.

New Worship Series Beginning June 7th

The Old Testament shows us that pandemics are not new. Beginning in June, we will explore during worship who was in charge during Biblical times of pandemics, how folks were impacted, what God might be saying to us during our current situation, and more. Join us as we seek meaning and understanding from our Biblical ancestors, gaining strength for our days as we live with the coronavirus.

Outdoor Worship

Beginning June 7th, we will worship outdoors in the shade of the big maple tree in the back yard near the fenced in area. This spot will provide shade for us, at least during the month

of June. We will adjust as we move forward. This is a new endeavor for us as a body, so please be patient. We welcome your feedback: positive and constructive criticism. The Deacons and Pastor Pat have prayerfully thought this through, trying to anticipate what concerns folks might have and finding ways to address being the body together, yet safe. Here are our thoughts:

If you have a fever or do not feel well: Please Stay Home! A copy of the service will be available on Facebook, our church website, and local cable television. You may continue to watch in the comfort of your home.

If rain is forecast, we will cancel worship. You can worship on Facebook LIVE. Hopefully all will go well in capturing the LIVE worship. Please be understanding as this is all new to us.

Please bring your own lawn chair if possible for outdoor worship. Chairs will be available, but bringing your own chair will reduce the transfer of germs from one to another and cut down on the preparation of set up, sanitizing, and disassembling.

For those not comfortable on uneven ground, the fenced in area provides more stable walking. Please feel free to use this area with your own chair or sitting at one of the picnic tables.

Please feel free to drive your car to a surrounding parking space and stay in your car during the service. We want you to be comfortable.

Please social distance maintaining six (6) feet between one family group and the next.

The service will be amplified, so all should be able to hear, even at a distance.

Since we are outside, face masks will not be mandatory, however, we encourage you to wear one as we begin and end worship, since distances of less than six (6) feet might occur. There will not be any formal coffee hour before or after worship. Feel free to bring your own cup of coffee, cool drink, water bottle, or your own snack.

No child care will be provided. This calls on the body of Christ to be hospitable to make room for all of God's children to worship, regardless. Please be kind and patient as we all learn how to worship together in this new way.

We will share in communion once each month; however the Sunday we observe the sacrament will vary depending on vacations. Communion will be distributed by one deacon. He/she will wear gloves. They will hand out the elements. The communion will be self-contained: each unit is prepackaged with a wafer on the top and cup of juice. Simply peeling back the lids will reveal each element.

We will have music, including some singing. It is important that the six (6) feet social distancing be maintained.

We will do our best to meet the needs of the body to have an inspiring, uplifting, yet prophetic worship while keeping everyone safe.

June worship will begin at 10:00 AM.

July and August will begin at 9:30 AM.

It will be nice to see each other.

Curb Hunger Drive - Thank You

Thank you to the FCC congregation and to the wider community for such a generous response to our “Curb Hunger” Food Drive. We were able to fill the entire back of a long pick-up truck and the back of a small SUV. The food was divided between Indian Orchard Survival Center and the Gray House, both located in Springfield. The Survival Center serves close to one hundred families with little support from any agencies. Gray House serves one hundred sixty – one hundred seventy families weekly, with families from thirty- three different countries. Both agencies were delighted with the generous amount we were able to share. The monetary donations will be sent to the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. If you have not been able to donate yet, we are still accepting monetary gifts, which will be forwarded to the state food bank.



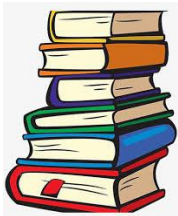
Dear Reverend Pat and Friends,

I wanted to thank you for your most generous gift to The Gray House. Especially during this pandemic, your gift makes an immense difference in the lives of those we serve. Since beginning our no-contact curbside food distribution on 3/19, we've served 2,014 households with 6,597 members. We're contacting our adult education students to ensure they have the support they need. We've advocated for our Kids' Club parents and helped them get the necessary resources for their children and we're having regular Zoom meetings with the children to keep them engaged. Recently, they went on a "field trip" to the Georgia Aquarium together! Our ability to respond to crises like this depends on your support! Attached please find a letter acknowledging your gift and for your tax records.

Be well,

Teresa Liberti

Executive Director, *The Gray House, Inc.*



Book Exchange

Many members of the congregation are avid readers. With the library closed, it is difficult to get new books to read. Pastor Pat has many books and is willing to share.

There is also a book rack in the downstairs floor of the church. If you are seeking a book, stop by during office hours or give Pastor Pat a call to arrange a time. If you have books to lend, please let the office know. If there is a need to exchange books, both lender and readers, we will try to find a safe way to exchange and meet the needs of one another. If you have another need, please let us know what it is so we might be able to assist.

Christian Education

Spring is finally here! Color is popping up all around us. It is certainly good to see with all the uncertainty in today's world. But there is good news out there, it just may be hard to find. Take time to look for those heartwarming headlines. Take a moment with your children and look through the paper or a magazine for an article that would make God happy, show God's love, or even make God sad and discuss it with your children. Ask - what makes you happy? What makes you sad? And reassure them that things will begin to get back to normal before long and that God is with them every step of the way. Don't forget to pray and remind them to thank God.

Until we meet again...Stay safe and well,

Laurie & Kristi



Peace with Justice Sunday

(June 7th)

Children's Activity

MAKE PEACE FLAGS Give each child a piece of fabric with either fabric markers or paint.

Invite the children, first, to sketch their design on paper, thinking about situations where they feel peace is needed. Offer various peace-related phrases and encourage children to use one of these or to come up with their own statement to write on their flag:

- Blessed are the peacemakers. Matthew 5:9
- The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23
- Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. Psalm 34:14

Hang the flags in the front yard, porch or house as a reminder to live in peace.

Worship Outdoors with Us on Sundays!

10:00 AM in June

9:30 AM in July/August