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September 2020

From the Pastor's Desk

“You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come.” - John 7:8

Greetings in the Name of Christ!

I hope this newsletter finds you well. We are certainly living in precarious days. As we prepare for the fall regathering, I have a sense of frustration. I want things back to the way they were or to have this pandemic under control, so that we can resume either our old ways or a new method. It reminds me of the days when I was pregnant with my children.

Three of my boys were born much later than the due date doctors gave me. My first and second boys were born 16 and 15 days, respectively, later than the given expected date. My third son a mere 7 days. I remember the phone calls from friends and family through the waiting period for the boys arrival. Repeatedly having to say, “No. Nothing yet.” I just wanted to get on with it. However, I am also reminded that before my new life with children would begin, there would be the pain and toil of giving birth.

I want to move into the days of the virus being under control, however, there is a time of waiting, then the pain and toil which will lead to a new way of living with the virus among us. While we want to be on the other side, we must live with

patience, endurance, grief, sorrow and hope until we reach the other side. We cannot have new ways, new life, without the pain. It is the Christian story. The crucifixion was horrible, yet without it, there would not have been a resurrection.

So, we wait, but not without hope as we press forward toward the time. We do not surrender. We have made plans to worship together as safely as can be. We will have two worship spaces in the church available so that we can spread out: the sanctuary and the Isham Room. We will wear masks inside and we will not be singing. Facebook Live and viewings on the website, cable television, and Facebook will continue to be available to watch from the comfort and safety of your homes. Children's Sunday School will resume on September 13th. They will worship, as will the rest of the congregation, outside until the end of the month. More guidelines and procedures follow in the newsletter.

While we wait, we continue to do missions. Our Harvest Gifts mission continues to bring food to local pantries. They are now collecting nonperishable items as there is such an ongoing need for food by so many. Items can be dropped off during office hours. We have taken on a challenge to assist Bruce Libby and his company in rebuilding the staircase for Christina's House in Springfield. (see Christinashouse.org) The cost is \$6,000.00, with \$1,100.00 already received. Details of these and more follow in the newsletter.

These are difficult times. If you need to speak with me, please let me know. I am here as we go through this together.

In Christ's Light and Love,

Pastor Pat

From the Deacons' Bench

It has been a challenging year for everyone. The reality of a disease that has put our congregation at an elevated risk. While we have been extremely fortunate to have not lost one of our own to the disease, we have not been immune to the fact that it has caused significant disruptions to our way of lives. Some of the changes were mandated by the government and others by our own cautions. It has not been an easy or comfortable six or seven months. Your deacons have not been immune to the challenges.

Working with the Pastor we have attempted to make it possible for the congregation to continue to worship. We had to learn how to use electronics. The Pastor had to adjust to leading worship looking out at an empty church with only a camera looking back at her - but hoping there were some real people watching and listening. We spent many hours discussing how and when we could go “live” with worship? How could we provide communion and still stay within the government regulations? How many people can we have inside the church when we do move inside? These are the realities we have had to find a way to deal with.

While we are not at Hollywood levels of competence, we have been able to allow our congregants, and any others who may want to join us, to worship through the use of the internet and cable TV. Our services are live streamed and recorded. The recordings are distributed to the cable companies in Monson/Palmer, Wilbraham/Hampden and East Longmeadow. We are live streamed on Facebook. We went “live” outside on the lawn as soon as we were allowed. Going outside allowed us to offer communion, but even that had to be done differently.

In addition, efforts have been made to communicate with our shut-ins through phone contact and, when possible, personal visits. Transportation to medical visits have been continued when needed. Thursday prayer group has continued via Zoom

and over smartphones. The Harvest Gifts Mission has continued and is now at its peak.

This pandemic will bring about permanent changes to our way of life. Some businesses will not survive. Some will change their form. With the work done by your deacons and your Pastor we should come out on the far side of this journey as the church you have all known and loved. We have learned some new ways to reach out to our congregants but in the end we are still the FCC.

Dave Anable, Deacon

Servers for the Months

Deacons

September

Linda Hornig

October

Hayden Tibbets



Anniversaries

Keith & Stephanie Lemelin-Bliss	09/03
David & Rita Spencer	09/08
Jodi & David Brodeur	09/08
Ronald & Sandra Richter	09/11
Pat & Wayne Miller Fernandes	09/12
Kevin & Elaine DeGray	09/12
Randall & Kimberley Mercure	09/12
Russell & Marilyn Streeter	09/12
Bruce & Janet Libby	09/18
Chris & Cheryl Fonda	09/20



Sunday School Birthdays

Dominick Tessier 09/21

September Birthdays

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

Otto Kern Jr	09/06
Darcey Walulak	09/09
Amy Varney	09/15
Evelyn Schoolcraft	09/15
Patricia Safford	09/16
Beth Algie	09/17
Carrie Wescott	09/18
Kenneth Baillieul	09/18
Leah Howell	09/19
Phyllis Hultstrom	09/20
Jennifer Howell	09/21
Mark Casey	09/24
Rudy Wilk	09/24
Evelyn Meacham	09/26
Elsie Bradway	09/27
Rollyn Hatch	09/30



Prayer Corner



Evie Meacham

Bob & Evelyn Schoolcraft

Richard Grant

Kathie

Audrey Burger

John (Jack) Bennett

Janet Brehaut

Beverly Pease

Winnie

Karen Kielb

Don Facey

Jake

Joyce Libby

Christopher

Gail Banning

Otto Kern

Stella

Carol Darnley

Gwen Wills

Lelum

Jackie Prior

Dennis Connor

Jeffrey Howe

Praising God

Lord, you are the light of my life, the way and the truth.
Without you I don't know where I'd be. There is no place
I'd rather be but with you guiding me. Thank you Lord,
you gave us victory when you died on the tree. I praise you
always. So worship Him, make a joyful noise, lift your
hands and voice. I realize you are all that matters, so to you
I cry Abba Father.

By Marilyn Connor

Even in midst of challenges – husband Dennis (broken neck, collarbone, & brain injury) and son shot by act of random violence and every day challenges in the pandemic, she is still able to praise God. Amen. Continued blessings.



A Note to FCC from Christina's House

"Whoever has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor." (Proverbs 22:9)

7/13/2020

Thank you so much for your generous donation to Christina's House. It is so exciting to watch as God changes the hearts of these families. Your donation will assist us in creating new paths for those we serve.

May God Richly bless all of you.

Linda Mumblo,
Founder, Christina's House



Sunday School Rally Day-September 13

We are very excited to welcome you and your children back to Sunday School and are looking forward to seeing you and the children, as we have missed you all very much!

We will gather outside beginning Rally Day, September 13, through October 4. (In case of rain, there will be no Sunday School during this period.) We will resume indoor Sunday School on October 11.

In order to provide safe gathering spaces, we have developed the following procedures for outdoor Sunday school:

- Outdoor Sunday School will be held in the parsonage back yard.
- *On Sept. 13, Sunday School registration will begin at 9:30; each Sunday after that, drop off will be between 9:45-10:00 am.*
- **Please have your child/children use the restroom before coming to Sunday School.**
- An adult must drop off and pick up.
- Children and adults will need to wear masks at all times
- At drop-off and pick-up children will be requested to sanitize their hands.
- No child/children will be released from Sunday School without a parent/guardian.
- Children will be picked up immediately after service.

*Please have the children **bring their own Bibles** to Sunday School. (Children in third grade and above should have received a Bible.)

*No other personal items from home (e.g. **cellphones**, toys, food)

- Children will be grouped at tables by family, and tables will be separated by at least 6 feet.
- Each child will have their own activity tool center (Crayons, scissors, markers, etc.) No sharing will be allowed.
- Social distancing will be practiced if the children are out of their seats.
- The tables, chairs, and supplies will be cleaned before and after each use.

While these new procedures will be an adjustment for all of us, we feel blessed to be able to gather again as a church family, young and old.

Your Christian Education Ministry Team: Laurie Schoolcraft, Kristi Tessier, Elaine DeGray, Mary Howell, Linda Hornig, Janet Libby

Resuming Indoor Worship

After extensive discussion among the Board of Deacons, Board of Directors, and C.E. Ministry Team, including a thorough review of state, local, and denominational guidelines and mandates for reopening, we anticipate resuming indoor worship in the Sanctuary on October 4th (unless prohibited by new Covid data and restrictions). In order to protect all parties, the following health and safety procedures will be in place:



Face masks or cloth face coverings are required; exceptions include children under the age of 2 and those unable to wear a mask or face covering due to a medical condition.

To facilitate one-way traffic:

Please follow the posted signs and diagrams for safe traffic flow.

Entrances used:

- Come in the back (stairlift) door, down office corridor and up office stairs to Sanctuary
(anyone using the **chair lift** may come down the upstairs corridor to Sanctuary)
- Come in front (office door) and go up office stairs to Sanctuary.

Seating:

1. Ushers will direct worshippers to fill pews from the back of the Sanctuary to the front.
2. **Chair lift** users may sit in the front of the Sanctuary
3. Pews will be marked for safe social distancing.

Exit:

- All worshippers will exit by the green front doors of the church, through the Narthex
(Exception: **chair lift** users will exit first, through the front Sanctuary door)
- Ushers will direct other worshippers to exit row by row, starting from the back pews.

Parents with children going to Sunday School:

1. Please enter through the back door, down the office corridor, drop off child(ren) to Libby Hall and go up office stairs to the Sanctuary.
2. Exit back Sanctuary doors, go down interior stairs to pick up children, then come back up same stairs and exit through front church doors.

Sanitizing:

Greeters will either prop open the entrance/exit doors for worshippers, or open them for worshippers, depending on the weather.

Greeters will dispense hand sanitizer at both entrances and the exit doors.



Handrails, doors, pews, all equipment used by the Sunday school, and the bathrooms will be sanitized before and after worship,

All Bibles, hymnals, paper, and pencils will be removed from the Sanctuary and stored for future use.

Fellowship: We continue to suspend Fellowship gathering after worship during this time.

***We look forward to gathering with you for
World Communion Sunday, October 4***

Returning to Indoor Sunday School



Your Christian Education Ministry Team has developed the following procedures to make sure safe gathering is our top priority.

At this time we are suspending Nursery care (infants- age 4) as we are unable to meet all nursery guidelines for safety. Sunday School will include children age 5 and up.

- Until further notice we will be meeting in **Libby Hall; drop off will be between 9:45 and 10:00 am.**
- Children will need to **wear a mask** at all times.
- **Please have your child/children use the restroom before entering the classroom.**
- Please have the children **bring their own Bibles** to Sunday School. (Children in third grade and above should have received a Bible.)
- No other personal items from home (e.g. **cellphones**, toys, food)
- Upon entering and exiting the classroom, you/children will be requested to sanitize your hands.
- Only one adult is requested to drop off and pick up from the classroom.
- No child/children will be released from the classroom without a parent/guardian.
- Children will be picked up immediately after service.

While we know these changes may be difficult at first, our utmost goal is reducing the risk of exposure for your children and family. As your family's Christian Education Ministry Team we promise that:

4. The classroom will be cleaned before and after each use.
 5. Children will be grouped at tables by family, and tables will be separated by at least 6 feet.
 6. Each child will have their own activity tool center (Crayons, scissors, markers, etc.) No sharing will be allowed.
 7. Social distancing will be practiced if the children are out of their seats.
- No other adults will be allowed in the classroom to prevent any possibility of exposure.

Resources Online for Our Souls - from Upper Room Ministry

We are experiencing the convergence of at least three storms—pandemic, economic downturn, and social upheaval over the bitter fruit of persistent racism. Where is God in the midst of this “perfect storm”? How do we hear and respond to God’s presence and call in the midst of such anxiety and anger?

First, resources for our congregation from *Upper Room Ministry* online:

Morning Prayer with The Upper Room via Facebook Live, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 11 a.m. (CT). These guided prayer experiences are archived so you may join us at your convenience if you miss it live.

Resources for Spiritual Wellness in Anxious Times. For navigating the pandemic, this makes available to you a robust list of timely practices—for individuals and families as well as your faith leaders. Included are digital devotionals, videos, eCourses, podcasts, etc., all of which can be accessed and distributed free of charge to everyone in your congregation

Clothing Donations Needed

FCC is collecting business attire clothing to go to the Women’s Leadership Program of Asnuntuck Community College in Enfield CT., through the non-profit Carol Rivest Memorial Foundation, coordinated by Sheila Rivest. The foundation supports survivors of domestic abuse with going to back to work .The clothing collected is for women to wear for job interviews.



Christina's House

Last Spring, Shannon Mumblo from CHRISTINA'S HOUSE came to our Sunday service during Lent and talked about the mission of CHRISTINA'S HOUSE in Springfield. Christina's House is a Christ centered ministry developed to meet the needs of women and their children who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the Springfield area. Their mission is to educate, embrace and encourage the women and children they serve. Their vision is to help the women and children in their home transition from homelessness or near homelessness to permanent and stable living environments. Their prayer is to provide generational change, one family at a time.

Since then, CHRISTINA'S HOUSE has added a second home for their programs and live-in residents.

Shannon called me a month ago to upgrade the main staircase from the first to the third floor in this new home. The railing was too low, unsecured and needed repairs for the Building Inspector to okay the house for their use. So, six large newel support posts are being added, the current curved railing is going to be raised and all new balusters are being installed. The budget for the work is \$6,000. Our suppliers have contributed \$1,100 in materials and I am starting a fundraiser with a goal of \$4,900 to cover the rest of the cost of the staircase upgrade.

CHRISTINA'S HOUSE is a very worthwhile organization with proven results to help women and their families get back on their feet.

Please consider donating to this local organization. Thank you in advance for your support. Please make checks payable to the Federated Community Church. In the Memo line please write CHRISTINA'S HOUSE, and send to:

Federated Community Church
P.O. Box 246
Hampden, MA. 01036.

Thank you,
Bruce and Janet Libby



Upcoming Events Calendar:

- 9/1 Tuesday, 7:00 PM Finance Meeting
- 9/6 Sunday, 10:00 AM Online Worship
- 9/7 Monday, Labor Day- Office Closed
- 9/8 Tuesday, 7:00 PM BOD Meeting
- 9/13 Sunday, 10:00 AM Regathering for 2020 -21
Church Year - Worship outside, weather
permitting
- 9/20 Sunday, 10:00 AM Outdoor Worship
- 9/27 Sunday, 10:00 AM Outdoor Worship

Worship will continue outside through the end of September, weather permitting. You can always join us on Facebook for worship LIVE or at your convenience later or on our website. A weekly bulletin is available to download on our website.

Sunday, September 13th

10:00 AM

Rally Day – Regathering for the 2020- 21 Church Year

Join us for Worship Outdoors

(weather permitting)

