

FROM the HILL



First Congregational Church of Georgetown

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Summer 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I invite you to read the following poem written during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. As we enter yet another new month of restrictions on public life, I find the author's perspective to be both challenging and deeply encouraging. What if we thought of this time, not as a time of confinement, but as a time of rest and of prayer and of learning new ways to reach out to others? If we were to use this time intentionally and well, might we be even better prepared when the time comes to reach out again with our hands?

Pandemic

*What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath—
the most sacred of times?
Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.
Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.
Center down.*

*And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.*

*Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now.)*

*Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)
Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.*

*Promise this world your love—
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.*

-Lynn Ungar 3/11/20

You can listen to a choral arrangement of this recording here: <https://www.martinsedek.com/reach>. It was composed by Martin Sedek. It's performed virtually by CONCORA, under the direction of Chris Shepard.

The loss of gathering in one place for worship is temporary. What new ways of connecting have you uncovered during this season? Maybe it's reconnection with your

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own soul and memories and dreams? Maybe it's a deeper connection with God now that you have fewer distractions and more time to just BE with God, in prayer or devotional time or study. What new ways have you found to enjoy the company of those in your own household? Or maybe you've learned new ways to be patient, with yourself or with others in your home or with God's seeming slowness in answering some of your prayers?

Remember, the building may be closed, but the Church is very much open. Our summer worship schedule has begun. I hope you'll read the details in this newsletter, and take every opportunity to connect as often as you can on Wednesdays and Sundays. See you there!

Blessings,

Dallas

Puzzle!

After looking up each Bible passage, find and circle the location in the word search. (If a verse lists more than one place, figure out which one is hidden.) Answers can be found horizontally, vertically and diagonally.

Genesis 2:15	S I D O N G N I L E S O
Genesis 11:9	J J O R D A N R I V E R
Genesis 35:1	E S G A A R C A N A A M
Exodus 13:18	E S G A A R C A N A A M
Ruth 1:1	R A E T B D C D B E O O
1 Kings 18:19	R A E T B D C D B E O O
1 Chronicles 11:4	U M T H B E T H E L F U
Isaiah 23:1	S A H E T N E A T N G N
Isaiah 23:2	S A H E T N E A T N G N
Isaiah 23:3	A R S N Y O M N H I A T
Jonah 1:2	A R S N Y O M N H I A T
Matthew 3:6	L I E S R F M T L N L C
Matthew 4:18	L I E S R F M T L N L C
Matthew 26:36	E A M D E E A I E E I A
Luke 24:13	E A M D E E A I E E I A
John 2:1	M F A R S D U O H V L R
Acts 8:5	M F A R S D U O H V L R
Acts 11:22	G H N O A E S C E E E M
Acts 17:16	G H N O A E S C E E E M
Romans 1:15	I J E M B N A H M H E E
	I J E M B N A H M H E E
	T O W E R O F B A B E L

Greetings From the Diaconate

Warm Greetings from your Diaconate:

Antoinette, Emily, Marie, Pam and Rachel,

“It is in the spirit of togetherness that we will rise.”~ Ralph Lauren

Before any other news I want to say I hope you are all well and dealing with these deeply challenging moments as best you can. No one has been untouched and recalling each day (or when feeling sad or down) that your Church Family is one of God’s most precious blessings.

Thank you to all members of the diaconate for their creativity during these times as they try to bring hope, smiles, and care to each of you. As such, I am pleased to announce the traditional summer Wednesday services will begin on July 1st at 7:00 and the last Wednesday service will be on September 9th at 7:00 by ZOOM.

Dallas will lead us in these evenings as well as continuing to hold Sunday services at 10:30 by ZOOM and her daily devotions by ZOOM.

The theme for the month of July: Water, sand, beach....think of blowing bubbles with a jar of “bubble wash”, perhaps squirting a squirt gun, savoring a yummy piece of salt water taffy...and recalling fun-filled summer days with giggles and laughter.

The theme for August will be “Camp”...camp often signifies bonding with others, having happy experiences, and sharing our lives with those who are special to us. (Isn’t that what we hope our church family will continue to discover?) summertime memories of camping with family, or attending a structured camp...always for those who attended Camp Leslie the traditional rivalry

of Tahattawan vs. Naumkeag...or just enjoying a cool tall glass of lemonade or a yummy s’more at home.

Marie has graciously volunteered to put together a booklet to send to everyone...If you would like to send water/camp remembrances/thoughts/photos,etc. She will compile them for us..won’t that be a treat to read and see each others summer camp or beach memories! Thanks, Marie, I will be ‘dusting off’ the old photo boxes of ‘remember when’. You can send them to her email address: mbirds2516@aol.com or mail to her home address at 283 Ipswich Road, Boxford, MA 01921.

Again, although we are social distancing, and meeting thru ZOOM who says we can’t laugh, giggle and enjoy our summers together.

I will close by repeating thank you to all who have stepped up to keep our Church Family safe. We really must admit we have discovered JOY in many different ways. A driveway visit, a drive by birthday, a handwritten “I care and am thinking of you” card, small gifts of friendship and above all the strength we have found we have in loving each other and our God.

As always, “God’s love is so large it can cover the world, but so small it can curl up in the corner of your heart.”

Gladie Kneeland, Chair
508-523-5990 or gladie8@aol.com

From the Member-at-Large

The Church Council is very interested in your ideas as to how we can grow spiritually as a church. How can we expand what we do well so that it reaches beyond our own walls? Please share your thoughts with me or any of the Council Members. Other thoughts and concerns may be shared at any time.
Our Member-at-Large to the Council is Janice Murphy.

Happy belated birthday to Martha Lucius (June 23) and Antoinette Jones (June 30).



Richard Aberman	Kelly Gillen
Rachel Angerhofer	Nick Moore
Erik Bratland	Paul Nelson
Jillian Bridges	Kinslee Norton-Graffum
Katie Bridges	Victoria Orender
Jenai Dougherty	David Smith
Mildred Gangloff	Ruth Stewart
Jeff Gillen	



Pat Barlow	Lauren Kalfin
Jack Cliffe	Ryan Litch
Christine Comiskey	Jennifer Lutes
Tim Dougherty	Janice Murphy
Nicholas Herda	Mary Ann Nelson
Sylvia Johnston	Sam Orender



Light The Church Fund

Contributions for lighting the church can be made in memory of loved ones or in honor of someone special. If you would like to make a contribution or need more information please contact Bob Knapp 978- 352-7489.

From the Outreach Team

We are once again sponsoring a drive to collect school supplies for distribution through the Community Giving Tree, located at Second Congregational Church in West Boxford, and Ruth's House of Haverhill. These two organizations provide school children of the Merrimack Valley with the necessary tools they need to get a good start with the new school year.

In addition we're adding gently used children's clothing to our collection this year, and we ask that you reach out to your neighbors and family members for clothing badly needed by many families impacted by pandemic layoffs. They just do not have money to invest in clothing for their kids. But the kids have grown, and need "new-to-them" outfits for the fall and winter. We emphasize "fall and winter." ***In other words, we are not accepting out-of-season-clothing, and are focusing only on season appropriate items.***

You don't have to leave your house to deliver the school supplies and clothing! Volunteers are ready and willing to pick up the items from your home on specified dates listed below.

We are asking for **pens, pencils, note books, markers, crayons, erasers, glue sticks, pencil/crayon holders**, etc. - all the things that are needed for starting the school year.

Bag your items, including children's clothing, and *make a call to Mary Ann Nelson at 978-352-2765 to let her know you have a pickup ready.* If you don't reach her, she will return your call. The plan will be to pick up your items on the Thursday after you call, unless you request a different Thursday. We ask that you set the bags outside your door for the purpose of social distancing.

Let's open our hearts to these children who need our help more than ever in these difficult and trying times.

Please call ... and a huge "Thank You!"

Collection Days:

Thursdays in July (July 9, 16, 23 & 30) and the first Thursday in August (August 6).

A LETTER OF GRATITUDE

We wish to share a portion of a letter the Guild women received from Our Neighbors' Table, following a contribution we recently sent.

*Their Executive Director, Lyndsey Haight writes, "Thank you for your generous donation to Our Neighbors' Table during this pandemic. **Because of community support, like yours, we have been able to respond to the many new people (a 500% increase) who have turned to us seeking help, and provide for them, fresh wholesome food with kindness and dignity.** Thank you for being part of this movement, where neighbors take care of one another..... Although our Market might physically look different right now, ONT's sense of community is still very much present. Volunteers and guests exchange warm smiles through the windshield, over the rims of their masks, and friendly conversation rings through the phones. **Your support helps to increase food access for our neighbors and reduces the shame and stigma in seeking help."***

We are blown away by the words, "a 500% increase"! The need for food is unprecedented. Our Neighbors' Table is truly an organization with which we are proud to partner, and so we close by listing their information as we've been doing in the past few months since being away from our Church Home. (Box 592, Amesbury, MA 01913/www.ourneighborstable.org).

Sincerely,
Marion, Mary Ann, Jean, Martha & Joan

Thank you from Jean Perley

Dear Church friends,

I enjoy hearing your voice is on the zoom services on Sunday and hope we can meet in person before long.

Thank you to all who came to sing happy birthday to me on May 31. It was wonderful to see you. Thank you, too, for the cards and calls. I'm grateful for such a warm and caring church family.

Jean R. Perley

Looking Back

Looking back, not a lot happens during the Summer months but some items of note:

10 years ago:

Interior repair and renovation of sanctuary begins with removal of pews and setting up of scaffolding.

2nd year of Wednesday evening worship services.

20 years ago:

Church steeple struck by lightning causing some minor electrical damage.

Fellowship hall ceiling scraped and painted.

Union services with 2nd Congregational of West Boxford (5 weeks there and 5 weeks here)

30 years ago:

Union services with West Boxford

40 years ago:

Vacation Church School.

Union services with West Boxford.

50 years ago:

Vacation Church School.

Supply Ministers cover for vacationing Rev. Philip Southwick.

60 years ago:

"Lobster boil" in August.

Church closed for July to allow vacation for Rev. William Flemming.



School supplies collection days: Thursdays in July (July 9, 16, 23 & 30) and the first Thursday in August (August 6).

Christian Development Meeting August 27th 5:30PM.

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Our Church Mission Statement:

*“To nurture those in our own faith community
 and to act on our faith by reaching out to others.”*

We are an Open and Affirming church of the United Church of Christ.