

From the Hill



First Congregational Church of Georgetown

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

When Thomas Jefferson commissioned Lewis and Clark to find a water route that would connect the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, everyone just *knew* that such a route existed. Meriwether Lewis was a river expert planning to explore America's newly purchased territory by boat. But as the Corps of Discovery made their way upstream to the mouth of the Missouri river, they instead encountered something they had not expected: The Rocky Mountains. Their canoes would be of no use to them there and would need to be left behind. They suddenly found themselves in uncharted territory that looked different from anything they'd ever known. All their river expertise and past experience would be of no use to them if they moved off the map and into the uncertainty of what the mountains might hold for them.

At that point, Lewis and Clark could simply have taken their team back to Washington and informed Jefferson that no water route existed. But Meriwether Lewis was a man of Enlightenment values with their conviction that growth of human knowledge leads to growth of human happiness. So for him, every step he took to learn something new would be a step that changed the world. Lewis' core value led him to proceed with the journey without a map, and that of course resulted in enormous contributions to science.

Every person and organization possesses a core value. And as First Congregational Church stands in the midst of this season of transition facing some uncharted territory, we have an opportunity to pause and ask: What is our deepest value as a church? What is our 'why'? What is our core DNA that motivates us and should never change? And then how do we adapt this thing that will never change so that it becomes valuable to others, especially in serving our community at its points of greatest pain and need.

(Cont. pg. 2)

I'm grateful to those of you who joined our recent Zoom gatherings to explore some of these questions. You brought so many wonderful stories of the past and wishes for the future! Our next step will be to unpack your feedback and look for themes to help us clarify our vision as a congregation. **Please know that you are all invited to a half-day visioning retreat for that purpose. It will take place via Zoom on Saturday, September 26, from 9:00 am to noon. Zoom ID 733 801 5830. Passcode 862760.**

In addition, I will be leading a Sunday morning study of the book *Canoeing the Mountains* by Tod Bolsinger. It uses the Lewis and Clark expedition as a guide for journeying during uncertain times. The study will take place on Sunday mornings at 10:00 beginning on September 27. Stay tuned for details!

Finally, rest assured that, although we may be uncertain about what the future holds, God is not, and God will continue to walk with us as we seek God's vision for the journey forward.

Blessings,

Dallas

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 at 978-352-7489.

Our church steeple will be lit for September by Nancy & Richard Aberman in honor of their daughter Emily's wedding to Kevin DeCarValho. Congratulations!



Greetings From the Diaconate

September Greetings from your Diaconate:

As I write this the first light chill is in the air. This alerts us that autumn cannot be too far behind. We are blessed to welcome the next season as we watch the leaves changing color and share this beautiful season with the wonderment of Gods paintbrush with our very special Church Family. Those who received their marigold packet of seeds are perhaps watching them grow with their glowing orange colors.

Your deacons, Antoinette, Emily, Marie, Pam and Rachel have been working very hard for you. As always, we encourage our Church Family to share ideas, joys, fears, and sorrows with us. We are here to hear your thoughts. Please contact any one of them.

It is still difficult to know exactly when we will be back in our beautiful church to share meaningful services in person to re-charge our minds and bodies. Rest assured, when this does happen we will all be more grateful than ever.

Our wish for you is peace among this uncertainty and may blessings and kindness envelop you all.

Gladie Kneeland, Chair

Regathering

The Church Council of the First Congregational Church of Georgetown initiated reopening planning for the fall 2020 earlier this summer and has been guided by the following key principle for returning to the church in the fall 2020:

- Worship together while protecting the health and safety of the congregation, staff, and people in the surrounding communities.

It is our goal to gather together either on the church grounds (weather permitting) or within the sanctuary, beginning on September 13, 2020. The following prerequisite must be met before we will gather together.

- The number of Covid-19 cases in the town of Georgetown must experience a downward trend in the number of cases over a two week period prior to the re-opening of the Church. If any spikes in cases occur, the Church will not re-open.

In anticipation that the above prerequisite will be met, the re-opening plan outlines the steps that have been put into place to safely worship together will be available on our website (www.fccgeorgetownma.org) by September 13.

Please note that the church council strongly encourages anyone that is not feeling well, or does not feel safe worshipping together to remain at home.

Worship services will continue to be offered via ZOOM and we hope that everyone will continue to join us either in person or remotely.

If anyone should have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out via email or phone, to any member of the church council.

Christian Development

Rally Day

Christian Development would like to announce that Rally Day will occur on Sunday, September 20, 2020, at 10:30 AM. We are excited to start a new Christian calendar by gathering together either virtually or in person as a congregation.

Sunday School

Classes will begin on Sunday, September 27, 2020. While classes are typically available for all children from pre-kindergarten to 8th grade, adjustments are being made due to the pandemic.

With the pandemic, our top priority is the safety of your children. As a result, classrooms will not be used for Sunday School lessons. Classes will either occur on the front lawn (weather permitting) or virtually.

As a virtual classroom is most likely to occur, Christian Development is currently evaluating starting the lessons at 10 AM each Sunday morning. More information will be shared and will be available on our website (www.fccgeorgetownma.org) by September 13, 2020.

If you'd like your child to attend, please complete the attached form or visit our website at www.fccgeorgetownma.org for more information. Sign up sheets will also be available at the church.

Teachers

We are in need of individuals who are willing to provide one hour of their time on a given Sunday to teach the children of our congregation the lessons of Jesus and Christianity. The Christian Development team will provide the instructions, tools and assistance to all our teachers. If you are interested in assisting, please complete the attached sign up form or visit our website for more information.

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.

Outreach News

With much gratitude we give you the results of our **School Supplies & Children's Clothing Drive** during the mid-July, mid-August time frame. The outcome far exceeded past years' experiences with this type of collection. **Eighteen shopping bags contained myriad items needed by children returning to school this fall, whether it be in person schooling, virtual, or hybrid.** They contained notebooks, crayons and everything in between. In addition, the donations included two bags of clothing for kids, one bag of baby clothes and one bag of adult clothes. **These bags have been evenly divided between Ruth's House in Haverhill and the Community Giving Tree in West Boxford (with the exception of the adult clothes that will help Ruth's House).**

During this pandemic we look for ways we can be of service to those who are living with difficulties beyond their control. **As we enter the fall months, we'll be asking for your help again, and as always, we are assured of your committed support.**

Your Outreach Team: Marion, Martha, Jean, Mary Ann & Joan



Kristen Arsenault

Jack Lucido

Richard Brock

Betty Rosene

Sarah Comiskey

Pam Sheehan

Mary Dougherty

Peggy Smith

Mark Fehlmann

Dwight Southwick

Lori Gillen

Julia Southwick

Sheila Kelly

Ruth Soper



Each month we meet to talk about books selected by book club members. Meetings are held in different houses or at the church. If you are interested in attending, contact the Church Office or any of the people listed below to get directions to that month's meeting. All are welcome and you do not have to RSVP to attend. Below is a list of books that will be discussed in the coming months in case you want to get the book ahead of time or you might just be looking for a good read.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85759618690>

Meeting ID: 857 5961 8690

Passcode: 527292

Date 2019	Title	Author	Hostess/Location/Phone No.
September 25	<i>The Beantown Girls</i> ©2019	Jane Healey Note: Author is speaking at the Reading Public Library on September 17, 1 p.m.	Pam Sheehan Church Sheehan: 978-352-6329
October 30	<i>We Are Market Basket: the story of the unlikely grassroots movement that saved a beloved business</i> ©2015	Daniel Korschun & Grant Welker NOTE: Many copies available through the library system	Joanne Kelly & Carol Lutes Church Carol: 978-352-7208
December 4 (combined Nov/Dec)	<i>Gift from the Sea</i> ©1955	Anne Morrow Lindbergh	Karen Young 11 Monroe Street Karen: 978-352-2697
2020			
January 29	<i>The Stars are Fire</i> ©2017	Anita Shreve	Sylvia Johnston & Ruth Soper Church Sylvia: 978-352-7597 Ruth: 978-352-2500
February 26	<i>Cooking for Picasso</i> ©2016	Camille Aubray	Dee Wyatt Café Sarina 269 Central St., Georgetown Dee: 617-957-6090
March 25	<i>Where the Crawdads Sing</i> ©2018	Delia Owens	Joan Chatterton 9 Bartlett Drive, Georgetown Joan: 978-352-8033
April 29	<i>Ask Again, Yes</i> ©2019	Mary Beth Keane	Peggy Smith & Marie Birdsall Church Peggy: 978-352-8741 Marie:
May 27	<i>The Only Woman in the Room</i> ©2019	Marie Benedict	Alecia Balduf 3 Bayberry Lane Alecia: 978-835-9094
June 24	<i>Summer of '69</i> ©2019	Elin Hilderbrand	Nancy Aberman 199 W. Main St Nancy: 978-352-2793

Looking Back

Looking back.

130 years ago. The sanctuary.

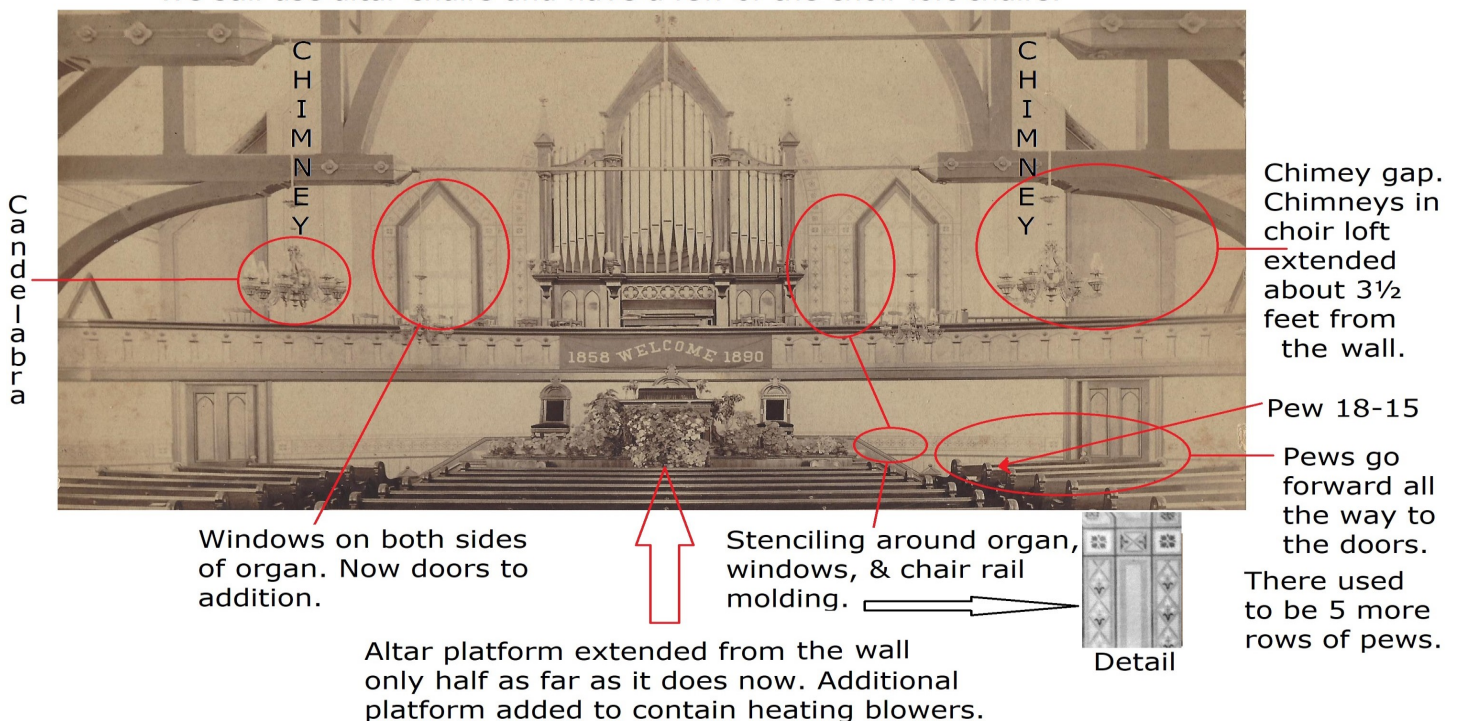
No electricity. No heat except for wood stove chimneys through the choir loft.

Stenciling around windows, organ and chair rail. Smaller altar platform. More pews.

Sometime check out what is now the center pew (for wheelchair seating). You will see the numbers 15 on the right side and 18 on the left. It was originally the 2nd pew from the front on the right side facing the altar. That is why its sides are so angled.



We still use altar chairs and have a few of the choir loft chairs.







Announcing The Launch Of Our New Website

After months of hard work and dedication, we are delighted to officially announce the launch of our new website on September 13!

Please visit us at

www.fccgeorgetownma.org

Pastor's email: pastor@fccgeorgetownma.org

Office email: churchoffice@fccgeprgetownma.org





September 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6 10:30 am Sunday via ZOOM	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 10:30 am Sunday TBD	14	15	16	17 6:30 pm Council	18	19
20 Rally Sunday 10:30 am Worship TBD	21	22	23	24 Christian Development 6pm	25 Book Club via ZOOM	26 Visioning Retreat via ZOOM 9-12 Zoom ID 733 801 5830 Passcode 862760
27 10 am Book Study 10:30 am Worship TBD	28	29	30			

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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.