

Our Evolving Faith

I often hear church people, our community and other churches I visit, worried about the decline of the Church. "Where are the people?" they ask out loud, "and why aren't they coming to church?" "What happened?" And, "What can we do differently so that they will come back?"



This is true for many churches all over the country, not just in New England and certainly not just in Massachusetts.

While Sunday morning youth sports has been the culprit for years, these days when I meet with young parents I understand further that Sunday mornings are the only time they get quiet time at home in their pjs. And with respect, I see that this is different kind of sacred time of self-care and family renewal.

It is easy to see the decline of church membership with all its related dynamics (no youth-oriented Sunday school, or youth group gatherings) and feel like church is failing the community, or worse, "the church is dying."

In fact, I invite you, the faithful reader, to look again and with me, find reasons to have hope in something new. Faced with the reality of fewer faithful in our pews each Sunday, we are invited to scroll out, if you will – to the bigger picture and a history lesson as we examine together the constantly evolving Church.

We are in the midst of a shift in Christianity and Church that began decades ago. This is nothing new, not really.

The truth is that the Church (big "C" Church is the universal Church, all churches combined) is constantly evolving, or changing, or re-forming.

In fact, since its inception, about every 500 years, the Church goes through an upheaval. How we understand God and Jesus and worship shifts and we develop new practices. Throughout these 2000 or so years, Christianity has evolved, and with each pivot there has been growth and resurgence of sorts, not a complete demise of the faith.

So, there is reason to hope.

"Where are the people?"

And, we can be assured that through all the shifts and pivots and upsets in the Church, God remains steadfast. Divine Love remains steady-on, among us, within us and out in the wider world.

Our Evolving Faith, Cont...

It is humanity that shifts in its understanding, and with it, our practices of how we worship the One God who is with us always, no matter what.

Understanding that we are part of something that is constantly evolving opens up the mind to possibilities for what is next. With each 500 or so year shift, Christianity has come out different. The faithful found new ways of seeking God, Ultimate Love. And with each shift, there has been a rebirth of sorts manifested in worship practices, and a resurgence of folks seeking spiritual fulfillment. Since its inception, Christianity has been forming and re-forming:

- From small house worship in secret at the start, with the faithful at society's margins, persecuted and martyred for their beliefs;
- to becoming the state religion which eventually funded and built giant imposing cathedrals and basilicas that towards over cities and ruled how the faithful lived and worshiped,
- to a rejection and protest of certain imperial entitlements and practices and then for some a return to simpler worship practices of the Puritans;
- to evolving into multiple denominations divided by dissimilar understandings of what God wants for us, who God loves and what God looks like.

And, we arrive at today, with many formerly faithful disillusioned with messages coming from Church leaders and certain doctrine that is no longer life giving at closer examination.

For the next 4 weeks, March 3rd- March 25, we will examine this evolution in roughly 500-year segments, focusing on events that lead to shifts in understanding and faith practices.

This Sunday, March 3rd, we will visit the very early church which began in secret and ended up the state religion of the Empire, thanks to Constantine's conversion to Christianity in 312. But it didn't stop there! Come to church and find out what happened to the Church.

And we will go from there, with each 500 "rummage sale" of worship practices and lifestyle patterns – as the faithful found new ways of living based on new realities.

And God has been alongside them all, steady-on.

Christianity is constantly evolving; our understanding of Christ and God's love evolves, and with it the Church as a vessel for expressing our faith evolves.

God does not change, Love remains, all around us. Even now.

Come to church, and let's grow in faith together!

In Faith, Rev. Holly

**God does
not change**

Women's Guild

Please bring your own sandwich or salad lunch. Dessert will be provided! Our March program will be armchair traveling with our members in the comfort of the Guild room. Rev. Holly and Carol Lutes will create their images of Iceland. Nancy Aberman plans to highlight special places she and Richard visited while on trips to Costa Rica and the UK. No walking required on armchair travels! Just enjoy and ask questions of our presenters!

The Steering Committee: Jean, Joan, Judy & Nancy



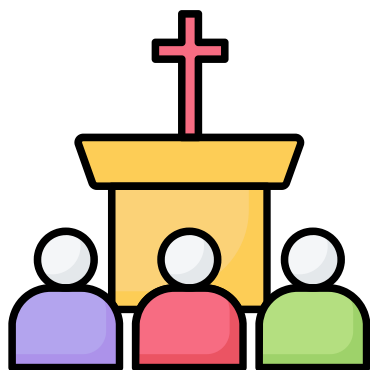
Diaconate

Diaconate will be meeting the second Sunday of the month at 12:00 or 1:00 if there is an occasional class. March 10th @ 12:00 – Guild Room, if you wish to attend you are welcome.

There is an opening on the Team if anyone would like to join. We are also looking for another person to join the Pastor Relations Team which meets once a month, please let Bob Knapp know if you are interested in either one, thank you.

We welcome anyone who would like to participate in Communion, please let Toni know. There will be a sign up sheet in Fellowship Hall asking for volunteers to make a "crisis meal" for those in need. A simple oven ready meal that is dated, type of meal and directions for cooking that will be stored in the freezer. Another sign up sheet for volunteers to drive a fellow congregant to and from church.

Be on the look out for the order form for Easter Flowers in the Sunday Bulletin, you may also order through the church website. Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much!



**March 10th @
12:00 – Guild
Room,**

Mysticism Class

This spring the First Religious Society Unitarian Universalist is offering a class on Introduction to Interfaith Exploration of Mysticism . There will be 7 Monday evening sessions from 6:30-8:00 starting on March 18th. Sessions will be in person and offered on zoom.

We will be sending out more detailed information through our Constant Contact email.



Mysticism...

**An Interfaith Introductory Exploration
March 18 through June 17, 2024**

Social Justice Book Club

Aristotle and Dante discover the Secrets of the Universe
By Benjamin Alire Saenz

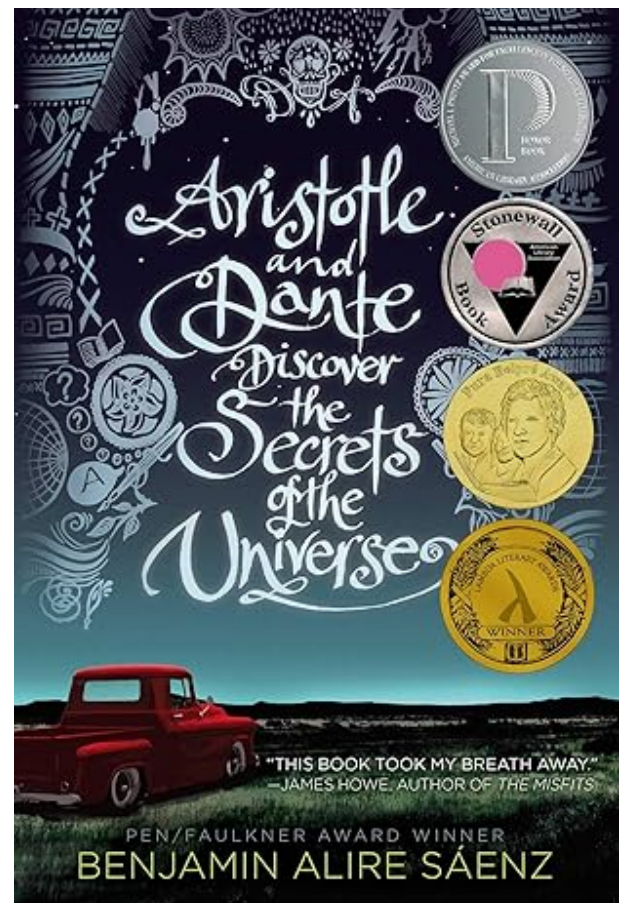
**Georgetown Public Library, March 12th
7:00 pm**

Men's Group

Men's Group will meet on the second Saturday of the month at Café Sarina 8:00 AM.

Next meet is Saturday, March 9th.

**Men's Group
Cafe Sarina
March 9th @ 8am**



March 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 10:30am Sunday Worship 4 Week Lenten Group Study After Service	4 8:30am Early Intervention	5 8:30am Early Intervention 10am - Bible Study 4:45pm - Girls's Scouts 6:30pm - Bell Practice 7:30pm - Band Practice	6 7pm Boys Scouts	7	8	9
10 10:30am Sunday Worship 4 Week Lenten Group Study After Service Wood Winds and Guitar	11 8:30am Early Intervention	12 8:30am Early Intervention 10am - Bible Study 4:45pm - Girls's Scouts 6:30pm - Bell Practice 7pm - Social Justice Book Club in Library 7:30pm - Band Practice	13 7pm Boys Scouts	14	15 Newsletter Deadline	16
17 10:30am Sunday Worship 4 Week Lenten Group Study After Service	18 8:30am Early Intervention	19 8:30am Early Intervention 10am - Bible Study 4:45pm - Girls's Scouts 6:30pm - Bell Practice 7:30pm - Band Practice	20 6:30pm Council Meeting 7pm Boys Scouts	21 6pm Christian Development	22	23
24 10:30am Sunday Worship	25 8:30am Early Intervention	26 8:30am Early Intervention 10am - Bible Study 4:45pm - Girls's Scouts 6:30pm - Bell Practice 7:30pm - Band Practice	27 7pm Boys Scouts	28 7pm Maundy Thursday Service	29	30
31 6:30am Sunrise Service at Camp Leslie 10:30 Easter Service Sunday Worship						



EASTER

Sunday Services

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

@CAMP LESLIE

6:30AM

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE

@FCC GEORGETOWN

10:30AM

Breakfast will be served at the church in between the Sunrise and Sunday morning service.

All are welcome!

Maundy Thursday @7pm

First Congregational Church of Georgetown

7 Andover Street, Georgetown, MA

www.fccgeorgetownma.org



ROOTS OF PEACE

Two Truths in One Heart; Two Peoples in One Land



Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger
Director of International Relations



Noor A'wad
Spokesperson & Leadership Team

Roots/Sborashim/Judur is a Local Palestinian Israeli

جدور
שורשים
ROOTS

Initiative for Understanding, Nonviolence & Transformation

SATURDAY
MARCH 9TH

7:30pm - 9:30pm

**Congregational
Church of Topsfield
Meetinghouse**

9 West Common Street, Topsfield, MA

Hear the Roots story of building a grassroots model for coexistence and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians through intense listening and local collaboration. Q and A to follow.

Additionally, the Sunday March 10th 9:30am service in the Meetinghouse will feature a recap of the presentation along with more Q and A.

A full video recording will be available after the event at: www.topsfieldchurch.org

For more information about Roots visit www.friendsofroots.net. Sign up for the Roots monthly update by scanning the QR code:





OPERATION TROOP SUPPORT

HELP US  HELP THEM

Care Package Event

Open to the Public

Sponsored By

American Legion Rene J. Gagnon Post 211
and the New Heart Bible Chapel

**Come Help Us Pack Boxes
Shipping To Our Deployed Troops**



**April 20th, 2024
10 AM**

New Heart Bible Chapel (old VFW)
435 Andover Street, Route 133
Georgetown, MA 01833



**Donations of needed items for care
packages can be brought at this time.
Monetary contributions are always
welcome for postage.**

Over the past 21 years, Operation Troop Support has sent over a million packages to our military men and women serving our country through an overseas deployment. Due to the unsettled events across the globe, and the economic challenges here at home, we are asking for help in meeting the constantly increasing demand for items to allow us to continue our mission. If you are able to provide any assistance in this regard, our American soldiers will be extremely grateful.

The following items are needed (small sizes are preferred):

Supplies:

Pens, Black Markers, Business Envelopes, Copy Paper, Gallon and Quart Ziplok Bags.

Food Items:

non-perishable single serving items, such as Mac & Cheese, Ramon Noodles, soups
small 6-packs of applesauce, mandarin oranges, etc.
small cans of tuna salad, chicken salad, etc.
chips, cookies, crackers, pretzels

Toiletries:

Shampoo, conditioner, body wash, shaving cream (no aerosol containers)
Tooth Brushes, Tooth Paste, shaving razors, mouth wash,
Tissues, cotton swabs, band aids dental floss, gauze pads

Miscellaneous:

Paperback Books, Playing cards, puzzle books,
Greeting cards to send home, small notebooks
Postage stamps

In addition to the above, our postage expense is quite high, so monetary donations are always appreciated.

Items may be collected and dropped off at 16 Trinity Street, Danvers, MA. Please call the undersigned with any questions. Thank you for caring for our soldiers.

Dick Moody, LCol USAF (Ret)
Founder and Director
Operation Troop Support
978-836-2395

FROM THE HILL



First Congregational Church of Georgetown's monthly newsletter

March 2024

Church Info

Ministers	The Congregation
Pastor.....	Reverend Holly S. Brauner
Director of Music.....	Robert Knapp
Organist.....	Emily Knapp
Sexton.....	Kimberlee Knapp
Office Administrator	Angie
Moderator.....
Clerk.....	Toni Cassidy
Finance.....	Kristen Arsenault
Diaconate.....	Toni Cassidy
Property.....	JoAnne Kelly and Tom Johnson
Christian Development.....	Marie Birdsall-Chaffee
Missions.....	Rachel Angerhofer
Collector.....	Robert Knapp
Member-at-Large.....	Susan Stead

Church Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Rev. Holly's Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

and by appointment (781) 632-8964

Pastor Email: pastor@fccgeorgetownma.org

Office Phone: (978) 352-8443

Office Email: churchoffice@fccgeorgetownma.org

Website: www.fccgeorgetownma.org



First Congregational Church of Georgetown
PO Box 200
7 Andover Street
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www.georgetowncongregational.org
978-352-8443

Our Mission:

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