

## How many Marys are there in Scripture? And who are they?

For the month of May we are going to be studying the Marys of the Bible. The name Mary seems to be all over the place in the New Testament, and yet we know very little about her. Or it is them? There is surely more than one though Mary of Nazareth, the mother of Jesus, does seem to be the one most of us think of. In fact, according to scholars, there are between 6 and 9 Marys found in the New Testament depending on the interpretation of the story, and comparing various scripture passages. In fact, the name "Mary" is found 54 times in the New Testament. It seems that the name Mary was a very popular name of that day. Just as the name Mary is still popular, likely naming baby daughter after a relative, grandmother or aunt or one a few generations back. According to the Social Security Administration, the name Mary is the seventh most common name in the U.S. with 2.1 million individuals bearing this name in 2023.

How many of these Marys were named Mary after a character in scripture? I wonder!

And, when Mom and Dad were naming their new baby "Mary," which one in the Bible were they referring to? Hmm. Likely, they were thinking of Jesus's mother, with her courage and wisdom and strength to endure all that she did by raising this boy, Jesus, who would be the Messiah and the start of something new (Christianity). You can find reference to Mary in all 4 gospels, and elsewhere. But which character might be referenced exactly?

It takes some digging into scholarly works to figure out who the writer is referencing with each story.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is not the same Mary who poured expensive oil on Jesus's feet. Mary who ran from the tomb is not the same Mary who was told she would bear the son of God. How do we know? Partly because there are other writers of ancient texts that share stories of events back then. These writers were not included in the Bible and yet their writings are largely equally authentic, as in, science has shown that they were written in and around the same time as the words that got into our Bible. And these other accounts are informative in that they shed light on some of what's missing from one source we call the New Testament.

Wondering about and studying various characters we find in the scriptures is one way to better comprehend the meaning in the text. And by doing this we can see more clearly a deeper meaning for our lives as we seek to stay connected to God. We were blessed at birth with curiosity and wonderment about our world. We were named "beloved" by God at birth and invited into a relationship with our Creator.

So, during the month of May we'll take a look at a few of the "Marys" in our New Testament and learn what we can about these women and what they might have to say about God's love and ways to serve and lead with love.

I hope you will join us in worship.  
And if your name is Mary, who were you named after?

In faith,

Rev. Holly

## Tuesday Zoom Bible Studies

Are there words or phrases in Scripture that befuddle you? These stories and timeless lessons are best explored in community. These ancient stories of faith traditions have so much to teach us, still today!

Every Tuesday at 10:00 AM, we explore together how we might join in the everlasting call to love and justice for all. What does the Bible have to do with your life? Come and find out. Tuesday mornings on ZOOM.

Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome at First Congregational Church of Georgetown.



**Zoom Bible Study  
Tuesdays at 10 AM**

## Walk with Team Forever Young

Join Team Forever Young as we continue to raise awareness and funding for Lung cancer research in loving memory of the late Karen L. Young Jan. 14, 1951 - March 27, 2021.

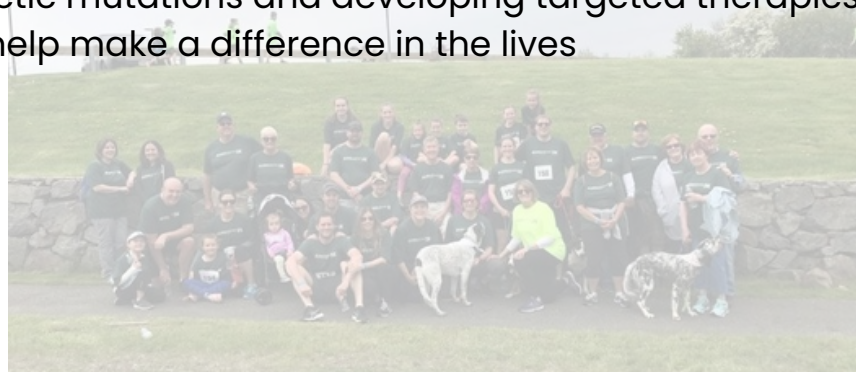
FCC is hoping to add to join this team to walk or support this walk on May 19th, at 10 am.

**Anyone interested in walking or supporting the walkers on this 1.5 mile walk, or making a donation can see Rachel Angerhofer after church on Sunday, May 5th.**

This family-friendly event gives 100% of race proceeds and donations to Mass General Cancer Center for Thoracic Cancer Research under the direction of Dr. Justin Gainor. MGH is deeply committed to rapidly bringing advances to their patients and is making remarkable progress in identifying genetic mutations and developing targeted therapies for lung cancer. Your participation will help make a difference in the lives

### For more information:

visit the church website at the address below:



## Women's Guild

The Guild is sponsoring a Guest Social on Tuesday afternoon, May 7, beginning at 1:00 o'clock with dessert and beverages. Our guest entertainers are the Just Peace Players, a group of four actors who are performing their own play concerning earth-saving friends and some of the animals with whom we share the planet. We welcome you to join us for this event and ask that you make a reservation with Joan Chatterton (978) 352-8033 or email: [jdchat1027@gmail.com](mailto:jdchat1027@gmail.com), for the purposes of setting up and providing the dessert. There is no charge. However, there will be a free-will donation basket on one of the tables should you choose to give a gift for the benefit of the Just Peace Players' work.

INVITATION FROM THE WOMEN'S GUILD

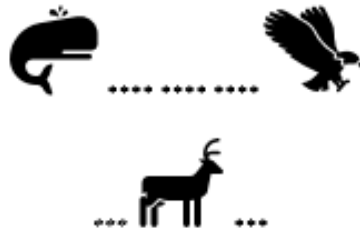
YOU ARE INVITED TO A DESSERT GUEST SOCIAL

TUESDAY, MAY 7 at 1:00 o'clock

Featuring members of

THE JUST PEACE DRAMA PLAYERS

*JOIN US AS WE ENJOY DESSERT, TEA AND COFFEE, and conversation on our regular meeting day of the first Tuesday of the month. Following dessert, the Just Peace Players will be introduced. They will bring us their original story about earth-saving friends, including imaginary tales of birds and animals.*



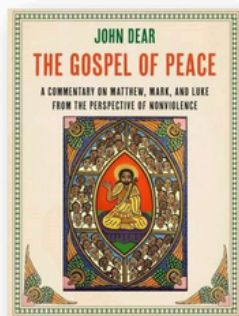
*We look forward to welcoming them and hearing their message. There is no charge. A basket will be available should you wish to donate a gift for the work of the Just Peace Players. For purposes of setup and dessert preparation, please R.S.V.P. by Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup>. (Joan Chatterton 978-352-8033 or email: [jdchat1027@gmail.com](mailto:jdchat1027@gmail.com).)*

**The Coffee Hour Penny Bowl**, sponsored by the Guild, has garnered more than \$70 in donations during the last two months and the proceeds will be purchasing supplies for the **Community Giving Tree's drive for diapers and baby products** that will benefit underserved children in the Merrimack Valley.

Once we hit \$100 in donations, the diapers will be purchased and taken to the Giving Tree in West Boxford. Many thanks for your pennies, dimes, quarters and dollar bills. They add up quickly and the diapers purchased will be gratefully accepted by families struggling to put food on their tables. Baby essentials, such as diapers are not covered by subsidies and must be budgeted separately.

## An Evening with JOHN DEAR

on his new book:  
"THE GOSPEL OF PEACE"



Peacemaker, author, and Nobel Peace Prize Nominee, Father John Dear, will be with us to talk about and sign copies of his new book, his life's work: *The Gospel of Peace: A Commentary on Matthew, Mark, and Luke from the Perspective of Nonviolence*. It is the first ever commentary on the Synoptic Gospels from the perspective of active nonviolence in the tradition of Gandhi and Dr. King. In this original work, Fr. John walks us through every line of the three synoptic Gospels pointing out Jesus' practice and teachings on nonviolence, peace, and universal love and invites us to follow him. Join us!

May 9, 2024 at 7:00 PM  
Central Congregational Church (UCC)  
14 Titcomb Street Newburyport MA

[info@centralnewburyport.org](mailto:info@centralnewburyport.org) 978-465-0533

For further information, visit [www.johndear.org](http://www.johndear.org) and [www.beatitudescenter.org](http://www.beatitudescenter.org) where he is the executive director and offers online programs.

## CALLING ALL GRADUATES!



Are you or a family member graduating from school? This graduation can be from kindergarten, high school, vocational school, college, and/or graduate school! Please let us know so we at FCCG can celebrate the achievement during worship on **Graduation Sunday, June 9th**. While we love the graduates to participate, attendance is not necessary for the church community to recognize such an exciting accomplishment. Send us a message or give us a call at the church office with the graduate's name, where they are graduating from, and any pertinent details you wish to share.

Thank you!

In May, our Steeple is lit in memory of Brian Richard Stead to celebrate the beautiful light he was to all who knew and loved him.

Lit by the Stead Family



## 5th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE

### 5TH Annual Meeting to Focus on Growing the Church

The 5th Annual Meeting of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ will be held June 21 and 22 at UMass, Amherst, and will focus on growing the church.

The keynote speaker for the event will be the Rev. Dr. Courtney Stange-Tregear, the Chief Relationship Officer at the Cornerstone Fund of the UCC, who plans to talk about "God Math," and to share inspiring stories of churches that have grown their ministries - and more greatly impacted their communities - by working smarter, not harder.

"God Math is about the abundance of God's grace manifest in real and practical ways," she said. "We are not necessarily called to work harder and harder to build the Church; we can work smarter, and with faith and God Math, see our ministries grow and stretch beyond our wildest imaginations."

Rev. Dr. Stange-Tregear formerly served the Pacific Northwest Conference as the Minister for Church Vitality and then as the Acting Conference Minister. While in conference leadership she worked to center relationship and storytelling for increased vitality, while drawing on her community organizing background to support and sustain dynamic, collaborative, and intersectional churches.

"What if your church already had all the tools it needs to grow in vitality and faithfulness?" she asks. She will also lead participants in an opportunity to engage in the Grow Your Church board game, which is based on the UCC's Manual on Church's Marks of Vital and Faithful Churches, a document that draws on vitality research. The game is aimed at helping participants develop actionable ideas to cultivate vitality in their local church settings.



## Cont..5th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE



Also at the meeting, Dr. Erica Dollhopf, the Director of the Center for Analytics, Research & Development, and Data for the UCC, will make a presentation exploring findings from recent research on congregational vitality in the UCC and beyond.

Dr. Dollhopf has authored numerous publications on congregations, congregational vitality, and faith-based nonprofits and is the president of the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, the research chair for the Faith Communities Today interfaith survey, the secretary of the Religious Research Association, and serves on the Operations Committee of the U.S. Religion Census.

The Scriptural basis for the meeting is Matthew 16:13-20, which tells of Jesus naming Peter as a rock, saying "this is the rock on which I will put together my church, a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out."

Several Friday evening activities are being planned as part of the meeting, with plenary and worship held on Saturday. The Rev. Darrell Goodwin, Executive Conference Minister, will be the preacher. Registration will open in April; details will be posted at [www.sneucc.org/2024AM](http://www.sneucc.org/2024AM) as they become available.

### MEN'S GROUP

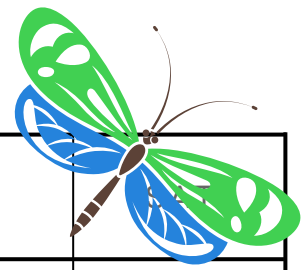
Men's Group will meet on the second Saturday of the month at Café Sarina 8:00 AM.

The next meeting is Saturday, May 12th.

**SATURDAY, MAY 12th @ 8am**  
**CAFE SARINA**



# MAY



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	
	<p><b>Note:</b>  <b>Red:</b>                      Church Service  <b>Black:</b>                      Church Group  <b>Purple:</b>                      Team Meeting  <b>Blue:</b>                      Outside Group</p>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> 10:30am Worship 6pm - GTW 	<b>6</b> 6pm - GTW	<b>7</b> 10am Bible Study 6:30pm Bell Choir 7:30pm Band	<b>8</b> 7pm Missions 7pm Boy Scouts	<b>9</b> 6pm - GTW 6:30pm- Band 7pm Knitting	<b>10</b> 3-6pm	<b>11</b> 8am Men's Breakfast Café Sarina
<b>12</b> 10:30am Worship 6pm - GTW	<b>13</b> 6pm - GTW	<b>14</b> 10am Bible Study 6pm Finance 6:30pm Bell Choir 7:30pm Band	<b>15</b> 6:30pm Council 7pm Boy Scouts Newsletter Deadline 	<b>16</b> 6pm - GTW 6:30pm- Band	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 5pm Movie Night 
<b>19</b> 10:30am Worship 6pm - GTW	<b>20</b> 6pm - GTW	<b>21</b> 10am Bible Study 6:30pm Bell Choir 7:30pm Band	<b>22</b> 7pm Boy Scouts	<b>23</b> 6pm - GTW 7pm Knitting	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 10:30am Worship 6pm - GTW	<b>27</b> <b>MEMORIAL DAY</b> 6pm - GTW	<b>28</b> 10am Bible Study 6:30pm Bell Choir 7:30pm Band	<b>29</b> 7pm Boy Scouts	<b>30</b> 6pm - GTW 6pm Christian Dev. 6:30pm- Band	<b>31</b>	



# **SAVE THE DATE**



**Strawberry Social & Band Concert  
Thursday, June 20th  
6-8 PM**

**“Enjoy the First Day of Summer on our Church Lawn”**

**“Due to increases in prices for strawberries and supplies  
monetary donations will be greatly appreciated.**

**Checks can be payable to  
First Congregational Church  
and note it is for the Strawberry Social  
or contact Emily or Janice”**

**Raffle Items Needed**

**More information will be in the May & June newsletters**

**In case of rain the social will be in Fellowship Hall.**

**Any questions contact Emily Knapp or Janice Murphy**



# FROM THE HILL



First Congregational Church of Georgetown's monthly newsletter

May 2024

## Church Info