



The Newsletter
First Congregational Church
March 2018



Dear Friends,

Our journey through the season of Lent has begun. Traditionally, Lent is a time for reflection and meditation, a time to grow in our spiritual lives and our relationship with God. Our journey through Lent brings us to the cross, the central symbol of the Christian faith. Lent is a good time to think about what the cross represents: what the cross says about who God is for us, and about how God works in our lives and in the world. For me, the cross is best understood a symbol of healing: a symbol of God's healing of a wounded world.

That may seem like a strange statement because the cross evokes sorrow and pain. The cross brings to mind the darkest day of all: the day that Jesus died. But as followers of Jesus, we also affirm that the cross is a means of healing. We believe that when we suffer, God is, in some mysterious way, present through it all. Presbyterian pastor Frederick Buechner writes that the cross is "the place where the healing power of God himself can flow...into a sick and broken world."*

All of us suffer losses in our lives. Sometimes, when we're suffering, friends, with the best intentions, try to find some divine purpose in our pain. Maybe you've been told, at the time of a terrible loss, "God never gives us more than we can handle." Is that helpful to hear? I don't think so. I don't think I could say to parents whose children were killed in a school shooting, or to refugees trying to make a home in the mud of a refugee camp, that God never gives us more than we can handle. Things do happen in our lives that are more than we can handle. I wouldn't say those things are gifts from God.

At times of loss, we might feel as if God has abandoned us. Jesus knew that feeling of abandonment. On the cross, he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" (Matthew 28:46). For Jesus, it was a moment of deep despair. Jesus knew the anguish of feeling abandoned by God. It was like something you and I might feel at our darkest moments.

For Jesus, it was a moment of deep despair. But that moment of despair, as painful as it was, was central to his purpose among us. In Jesus, God's own Self endured the suffering of the cross. In the anguish of the cross, God endured the worst the world can do. By going through that suffering, God has filled it with God's presence.

Because of the cross, never again will women and men feel alone in their suffering. Never again will we be able to say that God doesn't understand; that to understand God "had to be there," because God *has been* there.

Because of the cross, we know we are not alone. We know that God hallows our suffering because God suffers with us. Because God has been through the worst the world can throw at us, we know that nothing can separate us from God's love. Nothing we can do will make God stop loving us, with a wondrous love that will heal a wounded world.

Yours in Christ,

*Buechner, *Listening to Your Life*, p. 99

Church School News

March—Transition Time—Part Winter—Part Spring



With March upon us, we begin our annual Heifer International mission. Students, teachers and Church School

Committee focus their energy raising funds for this mission. Some of you have already contributed by buying “Dress down “ tickets. Throughout the month of March the students will be studying ways to help others in need. The funds raised will go directly to Heifer International. With the joint effort of the Church School and World Service, our contributions in past years have been considerable and we hope to continue this mission.

Heifer International's mission is to work with communities to end world hunger and poverty and to care for the Earth. Heifer International empowers families to turn hunger and poverty into hope and prosperity – but their approach is more than just giving them a handout. Heifer links communities and helps bring sustainable agriculture and commerce to areas with a long history of poverty. The animals provide partners with both food and reliable income, as agricultural products such as milk, eggs and honey can be traded or sold at market. For more information on Heifer International please see the Church School bulletin board in the main hallway.

Gail Ives

Here is our schedule of what is happening this month to support our beloved charity:

March 11th— Last Sunday to purchase **Dress Down Tickets**.

March 18th– Pancake Brunch to benefit **Heifer**.

March 18th- **HEIFER BAKE SALE** after church and this is also **DRESS DOWN SUNDAY** where you can feel free to “dress down” for worship



ALL PROCEEDS RAISED DURING THESE EVENTS WILL GO DIRECTLY TO HEIFER INTERNATIONAL!

Should you need to leave the sanctuary during the service, the library near the front entry is available for your use. You will be able to hear the service and there is an infant changing table in that room. There is also a changing table in the handicapped bathroom near the dining room.

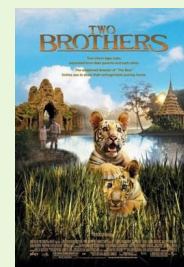


Due to a lack of Participation First Church will not be hosting VBS this summer. Church School will provide a list of alternate programs as they become available.

Family Movie Night

Join us on Friday, **March 23rd** for our family movie night. The movie this month is **“Two Brothers”**.

Doors open at 6:15, movie starts at 6:30.



March Confirmation Schedule

March 5 The Church and Why We're Protestant.

March 12 Meet with mentors during class time.

March 19 The Holy Spirit I

March 26 no class; **attend Maundy Thursday service March 29, 7:30PM**

Church School's annual **Heifer Bake Sale**. **Sunday, March 18th**. Stop by and purchase a tasty treat prepared by the kids and parents of our church school. All money goes towards the Heifer Project.



PANCAKE BRUNCH IS COMING

On **March 18th** our annual **PANCAKE BRUNCH** will be served after church for the entire congregation.

Good will offering to benefit Heifer!



Don't forget to purchase your **Dress Down** ticket for **Sunday, March 18th**. All money goes towards the Heifer Project International. Tickets are \$5.00 each.



Highlights from the Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting was held on Feb. 4, 2018. The officers of the church are: + Minister: Pastor Elva Pawle, Moderator: Mayme Lajoie, Clerk: Michelle Downs, Treasurer: Cindy LaPlante. The slate of nominees was voted in with a few changes.

The congregation also voted on the sale of the Old Town Hall. The following motion passed:

Steve Pierce motioned "that the Congregation approve the sale of the Old Town Hall at a purchase price of \$330,000.00 to Work Opportunity Center, Inc. of Agawam; provided, however that a committee consisting of Rick Gaylord, Bob Brownlee and Steve Pierce be appointed and authorized to oversee the terms and conditions of a purchase and sale agreement to provide for the actual sale of the property, which terms shall include a reasonable use restriction on such property, and that Attorney Ray Zenkert be retained to represent the Church in the transaction; and, provided further, that the committee report to the Moderator and the church Committee on such terms and conditions, with the Church Committee, in its discretion, able to call for a Special Congregational meeting if there is a significant variance in such terms and conditions."

During the discussion concerns about parking were addressed and it was noted that a place for the AA Meetings will have to be found. Steve Pierce commented that it was a sound financial decision. Bob Brownlee stated that it will save the church in upkeep and insurance costs. Amendments to the Stickel were made and passed as follows:

Steve Pierce motioned "that the Congregation approve an amendment to the authorization to disburse from the Stickel Charitable Invested Fund, adopted at a Special Congregational Meeting held on December 4, 2016, such amendment adding "and 2018" to such authorization so that disbursement for the items listed can be in 2018;

FURTHER MOVED that the Congregation approve a further authorization to disburse from the Stickel Charitable Invested Fund for calendar year 2018 an amount up to but not greater than \$600 for a "smart TV with mount" for use in the area outside the sanctuary and near the office to show announcements, photos and other activities of the Church; the Congregation recognizes that such item qualifies to be paid by such Fund since it is non-recurring and advances the mission of the Church in a significant way beyond the ordinary means of the annual budget".

*Our thanks to **Gail Ives** for providing the Minutes..*



On the right Noah Perkins and Mike Winer announcing the beginning of our service. On the left Bob Brownlee received a gift from Jim Yesu and the Church Youth Group.



The **Junior choir** will combine with the Senior Choir for the anthem on Palm Sunday, March 25. Please join us for the service. It will be an exciting day!

Submitted by Janet St. Jean



Easter is on **April 1st** this year, the **first Sunday of the month**. The deacons have decided to allow the celebration of Easter stand on its own.

Since the sacrament of communion is usually observed on the first Sunday of the month, **we will postpone communion to April 8th.**

Sincerely,
The Deacons



On **Sunday, March 11th at 11:30 AM**, there will be an **Inquirer's Gathering** in the church parlor. This will be an informal meeting . Those attending will have a chance to get to know some of our members, learn more about our church, our ministries and membership. We can also respond to questions you may have about our church. For further information, please call the church office.

Easter Lily and Tulip order form

Each year at Easter our sanctuary is decorated in beautiful flowers in memory of loved ones. Following Easter Service the plants are taken to shut-in, members over 80 and those in need. The cost of plants this year is \$10.00. Orders need to be placed by **Monday March 26th.**

I would like to order _____ Easter Plants at \$10.00 each

Given By : _____

In memory of _____

Please make checks payable to

“First Congregational Church”

Please return form to: First Church, 18 Broad Street, Westfield MA
01085





2018 Winter Youth Retreat



Welcome to Monadnock Bible Conference Center in Jaffrey NH. The center is warm, welcoming and has something for everyone.



Jackson Yesu made a new friend.



Pictured above are: Destiny Fanion, Ariana Rodriguez, Emma Lapointe & Carly James.

To the right we were getting ready to hit the road.





Pictures of some of our youth having fun inside playing golf and enjoying the winter crisp air.

Moriah to Sing Final Concert

Directed by Janet St. Jean, The Moriah Chamber Choir has delighted audiences for over fifteen years. This all female group of middle and senior high schools singers has evolved into an inspiring sisterhood. Next month, they will give their final performance in the place where they began, our own First Church.

This is one concert you don't want to miss. They will sing some of their favorite songs from years gone by, as well as beautiful new selections. Please join us.

Sisters in Song

Janet St. Jean, Artistic Director

Clifton J. Noble, Accompanist and Arranger

Saturday, April 7 at 4:00 PM

First Congregational Church

No admission charge (free will offering taken to cover concert expenses)

Reception to follow



Memorial Flowers



Each Sunday our Sanctuary is decorated with fresh floral arrangements on the Altar. There are many people and several groups in the Church as well as people from out of town who give flowers as a memorial, special celebration or holiday remembrance. Some have given flowers for many years around the same date or Sunday. This is such a beautiful way to think of people! After each service, the flowers are made into smaller bouquets which are given to sick, bereaved and shut-in members. If you would like to give Altar flowers for a particular Sunday, Please call Peggy (568-2833) for more information. The cost of an arrangement is \$25.00.

Call the church office about hospitalizations and prayer list updates

If you know of someone in the congregation who has been Hospitalized, has upcoming surgery or in need of our prayers, please call the church office so that Pastor Elva knows. We would rather get ten phone calls about the same person, than not hear when someone is in need of pastoral care.



Meals for Families in Crisis Situations

The Diaconate has decided to reinstate a program to provide meals to families in crisis. Initially the program will run for the period October 2017 through June 2018. As long as 20 people from the congregation are willing to provide **no more than 2 meals per year.** Sandra Chamberlain and Barbara James have developed and will oversee the program as they did a few years ago. If you would like to join this effort please contact Sandra Chamberlain or Barbara James for further information.



Scholarships Available



The Committee for the Bishop, Seher, Swartz and Taylor Continuing Education Fund is now accepting applications for the **2018-2019** school year. Please obtain an application for the church office. Completed forms may be returned to the church office. All applications must be returned by **5/31/18.**

Also, should anyone desire to make a gift or bequest to the scholarship fund, please see Cindy LaPlante, or you may pick up an information pamphlet outside the church office.



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Preview: Friday April 13^h

4:00 to 7:00 PM
50 cents entrance fee

Sale: Saturday
April 14th
9:00 to 3:00PM

No entrance fee.



March Birthdays

3/26 Samantha Benoit
3/30 Ian Dixon

Happy Birthday!

3/02 Ann Mundy
3/04 Jimmy Salzer III
3/04 Alex Bousquet
3/08 Lois Nason
3/08 Joey Crean
3/09 Ella Hamel
3/10 Steven Grimaldi
3/12 Peter Reynolds
3/12 Ray Cote
3/12 Kaitlyn Garcia
3/14 Norma Woodruff
3/15 Shirley Anderson
3/20 Carrie Salzer
3/21 Janice Fruwirth
3/22 Jim Salzer
3/22 Tim Guay
3/22 Mara Winer
3/22 Pat Jorgensen
3/26 Bonnie Miller



Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner

Saturday March 10th, 2018 5:30 PM



Menu:

Corned Beef - Cabbage - Irish Potatoes
Boiled Potatoes - Carrots – Rolls with Butter
Dessert and Beverage

Adults: \$12.50 per person
Children 10 and under are free.

First Congregational Church

18 Broad Street

Westfield, MA

413-568-2833

Please stop by the office for Tickets.



Jim Yesu and Tracy Gervais offered the picture on the left of our youth members who helped with the decorations and support.

Pictured are some of the **First Congregational "Souper Bowl Team"** who helped gather 145 lbs. of canned goods for the Westfield Food Pantry.

Fabulous Picture!!

Forms & Church Directories

The rack on the wall outside the copy room is where you will find a "Church Use Request Form", forms for "Request for Custodial Assistance", "Request for Use of Church Property, Adding Information to our Website and Request for Reimbursement". Also a First Church Phone Directory can be found here.



WORLD SERVICE

AMERICAN RED CROSS SERVICE TO THE ARMED FORCES



When we think of the Red Cross most of us think of Blood Services or Disaster Services. Did you know that our church's donation to the American Red Cross also supports another very important division of the Red Cross? Service to the Armed Forces (SAF) provides services to more than 110,000 military families who reach out to the Red Cross for global emergency assistance each year. That's approximately 300 families a day who need to contact their loved ones serving in the Armed Forces around the world. There are three national call centers working 24 hours a day, seven days a week and one of them is located in the Springfield Chapter. All services are free. In addition to emergency assistance, SAF also provides services to military families and military and veterans hospitals. A large active group of SAF volunteers is also involved in all aspects of the SAF division and provide services such as comfort dogs, reconnection workshops, Holiday Mail for Heroes, and mind-body workshops. You can read more about SAF at [redcross.org/service to the armed forces](http://redcross.org/service-to-the-armed-forces).



Please Notify the Church Office When...

- You or a family member would like a visit.
- You have a change of address.
- Your Phone number has changed.
- Your email address has changed

To All the Committees

When the Chair has been selected for each Committee please send your name to the office so it can be documented. Please send to:
office@churchonthegreen.org or call Peggy @ 568.2833.



Thank you.

To Our First Church Family:

Thank you for your cards, telephone calls, concerns, and prayers during Beverly's recent mishap.

*Thank you and We love you all,
Beverly and Cliff Gamble.*



Holy Week Events:

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

18 Broad St., Westfield, MA 01085

413-568-2833 • www.churchonthegreen.org

PALM SUNDAY - March 25th

10:00AM Service of Worship

GOOD FRIDAY - March 30th

EASTER SUNDAY- April 1st

6:30AM Sunrise Service at the Children's Pavilion in Stanley Park

10:00AM All are welcome to a joyful celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.



*Women's Fellowship March Meeting
March 8th, 2018 at 1:00 pm
Our Speaker: Dan Paquette
Director of the Westfield Athenaeum*



**RECIPE OF THE MONTH SUBMITTED BY
LESLEY LORENZEN**

CHICKEN MARSALA

Serves 6

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2lb. Chicken Breasts
- Salt & pepper
- 2 tbsp. flour
- 2 tbsp. butter or margarine
- 1 tbsp. olive oil or cooking oil
- 1 clove garlic, crushed (opt.)
- 1/2 c. marsala or sherry
- Sliced mushrooms sautéed in margarine (opt.)



Directions:

1. Sprinkle each piece of meat with salt and pepper and lightly dust with flour.
2. Melt margarine or butter and oil in large frying pan.
3. When hot, add garlic and chicken working garlic around meat (if garlic starts to burn, remove quickly).
4. When meat is well browned, add all but 2 tbsp. of wine and keeping flame high, let meat cook 1 minute longer.
5. Add remaining wine to pan, scraping bottom and sides.
6. Add sliced mushrooms, simmer a bit and pour over meat.



Together We Believe

**First Congregational Church
of Westfield
18 Broad Street
Westfield MA 01085**

www.churchonthegreen.org

Women's Get Together will meet on **Thursday, March 22nd** to work on our projects. You can bring anything you like to do in your leisure time. Or, Learn something new, work on something for next fall's fair. Or, just come down to socialize. Bring a something to share for lunch. It's just great to get together.



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CHURCH**

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No entrance fee.**



**Annual Corned Beef &
Cabbage Dinner Saturday,
March 10th, 5:30 PM.**

Tickets Adults \$12.50 Children under 10 are free Menu: Corned Beef - Cabbage - Irish Potatoes-Boiled Potatoes - Carrots - Rolls with Butter Dessert and Beverage. For Tickets or information Please call the Church Office.

