



The Epistle

September / October
2021

From the Pastor's Pen

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul lends some sage advice to Churches for persevering as Christian communities in the face of great challenges. Paul counsels them to put on the Whole Armor of God for the protection they need to continue their ministry in hostile environments. It is advice that takes on new meaning for us as we confront the challenges posed to society in general, and the Church in particular, under the prolonged shadow of the COVID pandemic. The armor we employ does not consist of shields, helmets, and breastplates, but masks, sanitizers, and safe spaces. However differently we picture the Armor of God in our situation, the constant that remains is the will that lies behind our wearing it. And that is our respect, kindness, and love for one another.

With the recent appearance of the Delta variant resulting in resurgent numbers of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths due to COVID, questions have been raised about what if any impact this might have on our planned Indoor Regathering, which is scheduled for September 12. At its most recent meeting, the COVID Response Team took these questions under consideration. The short answer is that we will stick with our planned Regathering date. However, these precautions will be in place:

- Social distancing between those not of the same household and the wearing of masks will be required for indoor, in-person worship and all indoor gatherings. Masks will be available for anyone who forgets to bring their own. If you are unable to safely wear a mask for health reasons this will not apply to you. However, since not wearing a mask could leave you vulnerable to contagion, you might consider worshipping from home instead of in person. The taped services will continue to be shown on the FCCW Facebook page on Sunday afternoons for home viewing.
- Church School teachers and students will mask, with the exception of any who are Pre-K age or under.
- Access to the sanctuary will only be available through the office-side door across from the lawn and up the stairs to the sanctuary entrance near the pulpit. Weather permitting, windows in the sanctuary will be open for better ventilation.
- There will not be any gathering downstairs following worship until further notice.

Depending on how circumstances unfold, these measures may be added to, removed, or adapted as deemed necessary. A member of the Safe Church Committee is staying in communication with the Westminster Board of Health for the most up-to-date information and guidance.

Grace and Peace.

Pastor Ray



JOYS AND CONCERNS

For our members, family and friends hospitalized, ill and in need of prayers, may God bless and watch over you:

Sally Calhoun	Nell Naideth
Donna Zehring	Eddie Hannula
Dolores Tamulen	Tariq Malik
Shirley Saari	Eleanor Brogan
Bobbie DiBattista	David Wilson
Jason Murphy	Jan Gordon
Kathy Miller	Warren Legsdin
Brian Coombs	Derek Barry
Sally, Anne Ring's mother	
Emily Long, friend of Anne Ring	

Members of our Armed Services, especially those serving in Afghanistan. When sharing joys and concerns in worship please remember that the services are recorded and be respectful of others' privacy by refraining from giving too much detail. More information can always be shared privately with Pastor Ray outside of worship.



Blessing of the Animals

The Blessing of the Animals service will take place on the lawn beside the church on Sunday, October 3, at 1:00. All God's creatures are welcome.



Our prayers for comfort and healing go out to Jerry and Donna Molet on the passing of Jerry's mother Lucy.



Sunday, September 12
11:00 AM remotely on zoom

Thank You

My Dear Friends ,

I am truly touched by how many of you thought of me when catastrophe struck Haiti. Many offered to help but had no idea how.

I am including in this thank you, the web site of the foundation that is running the Forward in Health clinic in FonFred, this clinic is just outside of les Cayes. They serve a large population surrounding what was the epicenter of the earthquake. Your donation will help many who right now are sick, injured, and have lost everything.

Thank you,

Doris Forte

<http://fundly.com/gcfearthquake-relief-fund>

Update on Mums



We would like to celebrate the beauty of Fall with our annual display of chrysanthemum plants given in memory or in honor of loved ones. The mums will be placed in front of our church decorating the front steps.

The Westminster Pharmacy is looking for a provider for mums which they don't have as of this writing. When we know a price for the mums we will send out a mailchimp as well as including it in the bulletin.





The First Congregational Church Basket Raffle is back!

The Westminster Cracker Festival is on Saturday, October 16, 2021, our church will be there! We have had successful raffles in the past so we look forward to participating in this community event again. Donna Molet will be the basket coordinator for this year.

Let's all think "outside of the basket" and find unique containers for our themed basket raffle. Any interesting basket, bowl, platter, holiday container, pot, etc. can be dropped off at church or filled by you! We are happy to supply you with a list of themes or ideas for containers. At this time, start collecting items following a theme. *We will help you create the basket in the fall if you would like assistance.*



**Next Westminster Cracker Festival:
Saturday, October 16, 2021**

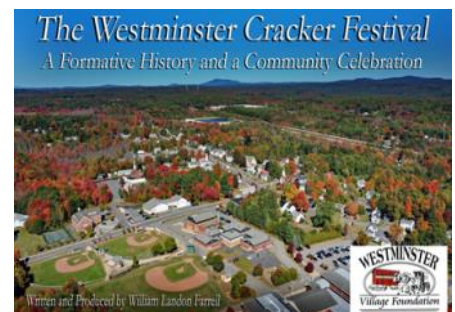
**Free admission for all
10 am to 5 pm, rain or shine**

**Cracker Character Competition
Chowder & Chili Cook-Off
5K Race
Live Music and more!**

**Sponsors Vendors Volunteers
A full day of festivities for all**

Become A Volunteer

Email: info@crackerfestival.com. We can use day of event volunteers, committee members, and your artistic skills to help create our upcoming events.



Generous Giving Ministry



First Congregational Church Generous Giving Campaign Kickoff!

The Generous Giving Ministry is thrilled to announce we'll be kicking off our campaign in September 19th in church. We hope you'll join us to hear from members of our church as to why and how they choose to give. We'll be hearing from folks from across generations, and as you may recall from last month's Epistle article, why they choose to give. Are there generational differences? Come find out! In the meantime, think about your own why, as you prayerfully consider what your own generous giving may look like this upcoming year.

- *Who influenced your approach to generosity?*
- *How has your giving changed over time?*
- *What role does giving play in your financial life as a whole?*
- *How or how do you decide how much to give to the church and/or other causes that are important to you?*
- *What values guide your giving?*
- *How do you prefer to give?*

If you feel moved to share your own generational perspective on giving on Sept 19, Sept 26 or Oct 3rd, please reach out to Jessica at Jessica.l.caouette@gmail.com

Thank you for all who continue to steadfastly give to our church and have abundant hope for what's on the horizon.

The Generous Giving Ministry
Jessica Caouette, Greg Smith, Ted Guilford

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Hi Families!

Welcome back to our church school 2021/2022 year! I am so excited to see all of your faces in the building again! It was a long journey, but we made it! I am really excited about our theme for this year. This year's theme is based upon 2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." This will be a year of transformations and new beginnings. Our stories will be based upon changes and personal and spiritual growth found in the Bible and how it relates to our lives. You can expect lots of nature and creatures in our newly themed "Metamorphic Manor" (formerly known as the "Shark Tank".)

Please join us on Sunday September 12th after the service for Registration Sunday. Our first official rotation of classes will be the following Sunday on September 19th.

While our rotation of classes will look familiar to the last time we met in person together, there are a few things that will look different. This year EVERYone both big and small will be required to wear a face mask. All teaching staff and every student over the age of two will be required to wear a mask regardless of vaccination status. There has been a hardworking behind the scenes team carefully following the State's recommendations throughout all the twists and turns of the pandemic and this is how we feel we can best keep everyone safe. We are mirroring the local town's back to school guidelines for the public schools.

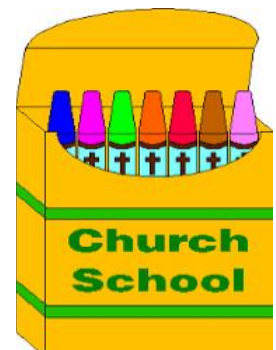
While the flow of Church school will remain the same the drop off/pick up procedure will also look different. We are asking that all children be dropped off at the BACK entrance to the church school (where the Appleseed Preschool ramp and parking lot is). There will be teaching staff there from 9:15-9:35. You will be asked to sign in and from there the children will be brought directly to their classroom rotations. We will not be meeting in the sanctuary or the lower halls first. We have decided as a team that this is the best way to help social distance the children. While in their classrooms they will be separated by 3 feet which is recommended by the state. Our new drop off/ pick up procedure will help cut back on the congestion in the hallways outside of the classrooms to help stay within the guidelines for social distancing as our hallways have limited space.

When church is over the children will be picked up at the same location that they are dropped off at, at the BACK entrance to the church. There your children will be brought out to you and you will sign your children out. We are gently reminding you that as of now there will be no coffee hour and we will not be dismissing children with older siblings. Parents/ guardians must come and pick up their children immediately after church ends.

Please know that while this is our plan for now, these details are subject to change as our year progresses. I will keep everyone up to date and please feel free to reach out at any time. The most up to date information can always be found on our church school facebook page.

I hope you all have a great first few weeks at school, can't wait to hear all about it!

Devon



CHRISTIAN OUTREACH



Walk. Give. Change the world.

Exciting news, the Concord area is planning for an in-person CROP Hunger Walk this fall. Mark your calendars, the date is Sunday, October 17th. The activities at the Walk will be outside (music, registration, refreshments). The details will be firmed up with more details in September at the Kickoff Meeting.

There will also be the option of a virtual walk for those who prefer it. They were successful last year with the virtual walk and had many walkers participate.

So put the date on your personal calendars and let's plan to have a wonderful walk!

Together, we can help end hunger in our community and around the world.

Christian Outreach Committee

Jessica Caouette
Kristen Catabia
Joan Longcope
Marilyn Malik
David Schlier
Nancy White
Judy Guilford

PIE BAKING!

Join your church friends in baking pies for the Women's Fellowship!



On Thursday, September 16th, we will be baking pies in the church kitchen. The pies will be sold at the Westminster Farmer's Market on Friday. Join us at 9 AM or later to peel apples, roll out crusts, and prepare them for sale! Contact Sandi Thibodeau at (978-874-0734 or sandrathib@aol.com) for more information.

And, finally, a few ingredients are still needed. To find out what is needed, contact Mary Waight at mwaight@comcast.net.

*The funds raised will be used by the Women's Fellowship
to support our church and local charities.*



Women's Fellowship: Fall 2021

- The contribution of a "Women's Spa" basket for the raffle table at the Cracker Festival. LeeAnn Gikis and Mary Waight will compile the basket. If you would like to contribute, please give LeeAnn \$5 for the purchase of supplies.
- A presentation on Sunday, October 24th at 4 p.m. from church members who participated in the pilgrimage to Israel in 2020.
- The Holly Berry Fair on November 13th
- A holiday social gathering on Friday, December 17th at 2 p.m.

Plans for the spring include Reverend Medeiros' yearly talk on a woman from the Bible, a presentation from Dr. Tariq Malik on his recent Hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca, and our annual spring dinner.



September 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 10:00 AM Worship Connection (Parlor) 7:00 PM AA (FH)	2 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry	3 Office closed	4
5 9:30 AM Outdoor Communion/ Worship Service (outdoors)	6 Labor Day Office closed	7 8:00 AM Yoga 10:00 AM Staff (RR) 7:00 PM Diaconate	8 10:00 AM Worship Connection (Parlor) 10:00 AM-Noon Appleseed Open House 5:30-7:30 PM Girl Scouts (Community Room) 7:00 PM AA	9 10:00 AM-Noon Appleseed Open House 7:00 PM Trustees 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry	10 Office closed	11
12 (Church School Registration) 9:30 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary or Online) 10:45 AM Church Council (Sanctuary)	13 Appleseed Academy opens 3:00 PM Covid Response meeting (Zoom) Office Re-opens	14 8:00 AM Yoga 10:00 AM Staff (RR) 7:00 PM Contemplative Prayer (Sanctuary)	15 10:00 AM Worship Connection (Parlor) 7:00 PM AA (FH)	16 9:00 AM-1:00 PM Women's Fellowship Apple Pie Baking 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry	17 Office closed	18
19 9:30 AM Church School (classrooms) 9:30 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary or Online) Generous Giving Kickoff	20	21 8:00 AM Yoga 10:00 AM Staff (RR) 7:00 PM Contemplative Prayer (Sanctuary)	22 10:00 AM Worship Connection (Parlor) 7:00 PM AA (FH) First day of Autumn	23 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry	24 Office closed	25
26 9:30 AM Church School (classrooms) 9:30 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary or Online)	27	28 8:00 AM Yoga 10:00 AM Staff (RR) 7:00 PM Contemplative Prayer (Sanctuary)	29 10:00 AM Worship Connection (Parlor) 7:00 PM AA (FH)	30 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry		



OCTOBER 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Office closed	2
3 9:30 AM Church School (classrooms) 9:30 AM Communion/ Worship Service (Sanctuary or online) 1:00 PM Blessing of the Animals	4	5 8:00 AM Yoga 10:00 AM Staff (RR) 7:00 PM Diaconate	6 10:00 AM Worship Connection (Parlor) 5:30-7:30 PM Girl Scouts (Community Room) 7:00 PM AA	7 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry	8 Office closed	9
10 9:30 AM Church School (classrooms) 9:30 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary or online) 10:45 AM Church Council (Sanctuary)	11	12 8:00 AM Yoga 10:00 AM Staff (RR) 7:00 PM Contemplative Prayer (Sanctuary)	13 10:00 AM Worship Connection (Parlor) 7:00 PM AA (FH)	14 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry	15 Office closed	16 10 am - 5 pm Westminster Cracker Festival
17 9:30 AM Church School (classrooms) 9:30 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary or online) 10:45 AM PPRC CROP WALK, CONCORD MA	18	19 8:00 AM Yoga 10:00 AM Staff (RR) 7:00 PM Contemplative Prayer (Sanctuary)	20 10:00 AM Worship Connection (Parlor) 7:00 PM AA (FH)	21 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry	22 Office closed	23
24 9:30 AM Church School (classrooms) 9:30 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary or online) 4:00-6:00 PM Women's Fellowship Israel Program	25	26 8:00 AM Yoga 10:00 AM Staff (RR) 7:00 PM Contemplative Prayer (Sanctuary)	27 10:00 AM Worship Connection (Parlor) 7:00 PM AA (FH)	28 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry	29	30
31 Halloween 9:30 AM Church School (classrooms) 9:30 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary or online)						

Greetings from Linda Lynehan

During the pandemic the Women's Fellowship has not met or checked our mail! So we recently read a warm Christmas note from Linda Lynehan, wife of our former minister, Chuck Lynehan. She hopes that church friends will keep in touch, either by letter, email or phone call. Here is the contact information for Linda:

58 Carter Street
Newburyport, MA 01950-2221

nanahan6@comcast.net

978-465-6516

For those of you who are not already doing it, please consider the following.

On-Line Giving using Bill Pay

I hope that I find everyone well.

During this time of turmoil some may find it difficult to remember that we are counting on the pledge that you made last fall in support of our church.

Many people in our congregation have already discovered that On-Line Giving using Bill Pay is an easy way to donate to the church. A big Thank-You to them.

I am suggesting that anyone in the congregation who is willing to try something new and make their lives easier, check with their bank and figure out how to make their pledge to the Church using the bank's Bill Pay feature. Most banks allow automatic payments on a schedule of weekly, monthly or even quarterly.

If there is anyone who would like to try this way to complete your pledge but needs help in figuring out how to do it, please let me know and I will be happy to help you do it. John Aalto, Church Treasurer johnaalto@verizon.net or 978-874-0220.

So, **Bottom Line** If you are having trouble remembering to send in you weekly, monthly or quarterly pledges, please consider Bill Pay from your bank account. The Church is counting on you to fulfill your pledge.



**The First Congregational Church
of Westminster
United Church of Christ
138 Main Street • PO Box 477
Westminster, MA 01473**

The Epistle

September 2021

Phone: 978-874-5790

Email: fcw.westminster@gmail.com

Visit our Website at www.westcong.org



September 22, 2021



These healthy chips make a yummy back-to-school snack.

What you need:

- 4 apples, cored and cut into 1/8" rings
- Large bowl
- Spoon
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- Baking sheets (sprayed)

What you do:

1. Place apple slices in the bowl. Add cinnamon and sugar. Stir so apples are coated evenly with the mixture.
2. Place apple slices on the sprayed baking sheets in a single layer.
3. Bake at 200 degrees for two to three hours, until chips are dry but still slightly soft.