



# The Epistle

## *From the Pastor's Pen*

As we approach our third Lent since the onset of the pandemic, we will once again face the challenge of adapting our traditional pre-Easter observances in order to mitigate the risks that persist with large gatherings. While that may feel like a burden and an intrusion upon this sacred season, Lent and quarantine actually have more common than one might realize. We all know that Lent lasts forty days (not including Sundays). What is less well known is that during the late 14th century, when bubonic plague decimated about half of the European population, the word “quarantine” was the term applied to the 40-day period a ship was kept in isolation at port until it was relatively assured that there were no infectious cases of the disease on board. “Forty days” in Italian is “quaranta giorni,” from which we get the word English word quarantine. Quarantine and Lent also have in common the fact that both interrupt our normal pattern of living with an abstinence from certain comforts that we take for granted. The obvious difference is that the sacrifices due to COVID (including sacrifices demanded of our Lenten worship services) are dictated by necessity, whereas the practice of a Lenten fast is done voluntarily. But there are ways that we can intentionally lean into the social limitations necessitated by the pandemic through creative twists to the traditional practice of a Lenten fast. Instead of fasting from certain foods, we could fast from social media during Lent. Instead of expressing ourselves through posts on Facebook or Twitter, why not pursue self-expression through keeping a journal, writing poetry, painting or music? We can fast from being possessed by our possessions through decluttering our homes of stuff we don’t need and donating it to others. Or, we might fast from TV long enough each day to create space for reading something that can nourish our spirits. Rather than be dejected by another Lent in quarantine, think of imaginative ways to use this as an opportunity to go deeper into the true meaning of Lent.

I would love to hear whatever plans you come up with. Share your ideas with me at [medeirosnumber30@gmail.com](mailto:medeirosnumber30@gmail.com) so I can share them when the next Epistle comes out at the beginning of Lent in March!

Grace and Peace,

*Pastor Ray*



### JOYS AND CONCERNS

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	Derek Barry
Brian & June Coombs	James Gallant
Lizete Dasilva	Sara Castle
Charlie Snell	Mary Dunn
Bob Andersen	Dot

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

Members of our Armed Services,. 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.



Condolences to the family of Robert Honkonen, who passed away on January 21.

Condolences to the family of Kathy Hawkins, who passed away January 28.

Are you having trouble making ends meet due to unemployment or reduced income during this pandemic? The Phoebe Fund is a resource that may be used at the Pastor's discretion to address emergencies. Disbursements cannot be made in the form of cash to an individual but can be remitted directly to vendors to provide relief for the purchase of groceries, payment of utilities, rent, etc. The identity of those assisted through the Phoebe Fund are kept in confidence. If you need emergency financial help with bills, contact Pastor Ray at 508-821-0133 or [medeirosnumber30@gmail.com](mailto:medeirosnumber30@gmail.com).



Thank you for the donations of copy paper and stamps. This has helped the church office save on cost. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Lisa Roberts  
Office Administrator

**Westminster Community Food Pantry**  
**P.O. Box 477**  
**138 Main Street**  
**Westminster, MA 01473**

December 2021

Dear First Congregational Church/Mission Fund,

We very much appreciate your generous donation of \$155.00 to the Westminster Food Pantry.

The people we serve are, as always, very appreciative of your efforts on their behalf. It is only through the kindness of people like you that we are able to continue assisting the many needful and deserving families in Westminster.

During these most unusual of times, many families still find themselves struggling to put food on their tables. They rely on the food Pantry from time to time to help out. We are committed to being there for them as a back-up plan when they are in need. Therefore, we are particularly grateful for monetary and product donations. Thank you for your kindness and generosity.

We wish you a happy and healthy New Year,

Very Sincerely,  
On behalf of the volunteers at the Westminster Community Food Pantry



I am so grateful to the women in the Tuesday morning yoga class for their very generous monetary donation to the church general fund for this fiscal year. We have been practicing together for almost ten years now, and despite the closure of the church facility, we continued to practice, at first outdoors and then virtually. I am always enriched by spending time with these wonderful women and look forward to our returning to our church space.

Thank you, Mary Waight

A big thank you goes out to the Girl Scout troop 64651. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held last past summer in the Community Room, which used to be our Thrift Shop.

The Girl Scouts cleaned the room, redid the floors, and painted and decorated the room. Their biggest job was resurfacing the entire floor.

Here are some pictures from the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Thank you again!



### Daylight Saving Time Starts

Sunday, March 13, 2022 at 2:00 am  
clocks are turned forward 1 hour ahead.

2019 church directories are available in the church office. Please note, some of the addresses, e-mails and phone numbers have been updated.

If you would like a copy of a directory, you can come to the church to pick one up during business hours, or e-mail Lisa at the church office @ [fcw.westminster@gmail.com](mailto:fcw.westminster@gmail.com)

Thank you!



## Christian Education News

Hello church families!

As we continue to make our way through these uncharted covid waters, I want to thank you all for bearing with us and allowing us to continue to be flexible with our programming.

We are working hard in these ever changing times to continue to provide accommodations for classes and Spiritual learning for our littlest members of the church. At this time we have decided on meeting in person. Please Continue to follow the church school Facebook page for our updates. If you would prefer, I can arrange to have take home lesson plan bags left for you and you can do those at your leisure.

Our project for February is all about love and kindness! We will be decorating valentines together at the church to send to shut ins from our congregation. We love because he first loved us, and we are sharing some of that love with the members that we don't get to see as often as we like.

As always thank you for your continued support of our program!

Devon



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](mailto: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. Even though we are not meeting at the church each Sunday, the Church is counting on you to fulfill your pledge.

JSA-



A message from the Christian Outreach Committee

Re: Giving Tree 2021

Unfortunately, the Outreach Committee was faced with another year of being unable to do things “the way we used to” and we had to pivot our annual giving tree project into a online event. Fortunately, our congregation is used to pivoting at this point and our call for gifts was still answered in abundance.

We used the power of Amazon to make this as smooth a process as possible, using a gift registry to share with the congregation just what gifts these children wanted. This year we again partnered with the Community Healthlink residential recovery homes where children are going through the re-unification process with their mothers. We had 17 children from 3 different homes – Orchard Street in Leominster, Faith House and Beryl’s House in Worcester – who ranged in age from 18 months to 17 years old. We were easily able to provide the children of all these homes with a few things off their wish list to be opened on Christmas morning. Add, due to the speed of Amazon, we were able to add a few more children to the list who moved into the program in December to ensure that they still had gifts to open with the rest of the house on Christmas day!

It was a humbling experience to be able to meet the needs of these three programs, completely virtually, with out the physical tree and friendly reminders on Sunday mornings. A congregation, like a family, answers calls for help however they are received, and this campaign proved that. All the gifts for the 17 children were wrapped and delivered to the programs on December 20<sup>th</sup> and each has its own tag complete with the name or age of the child and From: The First Congregational Church of Westminster.



The road of recovery and reunification is never an easy one for these mothers and children to travel and Covid19 has certainly added a few roadblocks on that journey including canceled visitations, mask wearing when not in their own rooms and limited access to the community and programming. I am honored to be able to hand deliver all of these presents to these programs and to know that, for at least one morning, there will be fun, joy and excitement – the way Christmas should be for every child.

With the sincerest of Thanks, stay safe and God bless



2022

VSunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 8:00 AM Yoga (Zoom) 10:00 AM Staff (Parlor) 7:00 PM Diaconate (Zoom)	2 10:00 AM Worship Connection (Zoom) 7:00 PM AA (FH)	3 7:00 PM Trustees (FH) 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry	4  Office closed	5
6 9:30 AM Church School (classrooms) 9:30 AM Worship / Communion Service (Sanctuary or Facebook page)	7	8 8:00 AM Yoga (Zoom) 10:00 AM Staff (Parlor) 5:45-7:30 Cub Scouts (CH) 7:00 PM Contemplative Prayer (Zoom) 5:45-7:30 PM Cub Scouts (CH)	9 10:00 AM Worship Connection (Zoom) 7:00 PM AA (FH)	10 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry	11  Office closed	12
13 9:30 AM Church School (Classrooms) 9:30 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary or Facebook page) 11:00 AM Church Council (Zoom)	14 5:45-7:30 Cub Scouts (FH)  <i>Valentine's Day</i>	15 8:00 AM Yoga (Zoom) 10:00 AM Staff (Parlor) 7:00 PM Contemplative Prayer (Zoom)	16 10:00 AM Worship Connection (Zoom) 7:00 PM AA (FH)	17 6:00-7:00 PM Cub Scouts (CH) 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry	18  Office closed	19
20 8:00 AM CE (Zoom) 9:30 AM Church School (Classrooms) 9:30 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary or Facebook page) 10:45 AM Christian Outreach (Parlor)	21  Office Closed  <i>President's Day</i>	22 8:00 AM Yoga (Zoom) 10:00 AM Staff (Parlor) 7:00 PM Contemplative Prayer (Zoom)  <b>MARCH EPISTLE DUE</b>	23 10:00 AM Worship Connection (Zoom) 7:00 PM AA (FH)	24 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry	25  Office closed	26
27 9:15 AM Hymn Sing (Sanctuary) 9:30 AM Church School - Classrooms 9:30 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary or Facebook page) 10:45 AM Welcoming Committee	28 5:45-7:30 Cub Scouts (FH)					



2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 8:00 AM Yoga (Zoom) 10:00 AM Staff (Parlor) 7:00 PM Diaconate (Zoom)	2 7:00 PM AA (FH) 7:00 PM Ash Wednesday Service .. TBD  <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	3 7:00 PM Trustees (FH) 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry	4  Office closed	5
6 9:30 AM Church School (classrooms) 9:30 AM Worship / Communion Service (Sanctuary or Facebook page)  <i>First Sunday in Lent</i>	7	8 8:00 AM Yoga (Zoom) 10:00 AM Staff (Parlor) 5:45-7:30 Cub Scouts (CH) 7:00 PM Contemplative Prayer (Zoom) 5:45-7:30 PM Cub Scouts	9 10:00 AM Worship Connection (Zoom) 7:00 PM AA (FH)	10 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry	11  Office closed	12
13 9:30 AM Church School (Classrooms) 9:30 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary or Facebook page) <i>Second Sunday in Lent</i> <i>Daylight Saving Time begins</i>	14 5:45-7:30 Cub Scouts (FH)	15 8:00 AM Yoga (Zoom) 10:00 AM Staff (Parlor) 5:45-7:30 Cub Scouts (CH) 7:00 PM Contemplative Prayer (Zoom)	16 10:00 AM Worship Connection (Zoom) 7:00 PM AA (FH)	17 6:00-7:00 PM Cub Scouts (CH) 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry  	18  Office closed	19  Virtual Super Saturday
20 9:30 AM Church School (Classrooms) 9:30 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary or Facebook page) 10:45 AM Christian Outreach (Parlor)	21	22 8:00 AM Yoga (Zoom) 10:00 AM Staff (Parlor) 7:00 PM Contemplative Prayer (Zoom)	23 10:00 AM Worship Connection (Zoom) 7:00 PM AA (FH)	24 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry  <b>EPISTLE DUE</b>	25  Office closed	26
27 9:15 AM Hymn Sing (Sanctuary) 9:30 AM Church School - Classrooms 9:30 AM Worship Service (Sanctuary or Facebook page)	28 5:45-7:30 Cub Scouts (FH)	29 8:00 AM Yoga (Zoom) 10:00 AM Staff (Parlor) 7:00 PM Contemplative Prayer (Zoom)	30 10:00 AM Worship Connection (Zoom) 7:00 PM AA (FH)	31 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry		

"I've used so much of what I learned on Camp Family at other jobs."

- RAYNE LYNCH, CF '19

"For me, it's the friends. They're the closest friends I've ever had."

- EMERY LEWIS, CF '19



Leadership training for 16- & 17-year-olds

## CAMP FAMILY 2022 at Silver Lake

Leadership skills • Work experience • References • Community service hours  
Faith exploration • Community • Lifelong friends

"It gives you job experience for the future, whether it's your future part-time job or your next job at camp."

- ALYSSA PARSONS, CF '18

### APPLY NOW!

[www.silverlakect.org/summeremployment](http://www.silverlakect.org/summeremployment)

Work at camp. Make lifelong friends, develop 21st century skills, make a difference in a camper's life. Questions? Email [JennKC@silverlakect.org](mailto:JennKC@silverlakect.org).

 Silver Lake Camp & Retreat Center is the year-round Outdoor Ministry of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ.



### An invitation to Silence in Prayer

February 8, 15 & 22 via zoom  
7:00- 8:00 PM

### Hymn Sings!

Do you have a favorite hymn that we haven't sung in church lately, or that you just can't get enough of? On the last Sunday of each month, arrive early (9:15) to worship for a Hymn Sing!

Requests will be taken and the first verse of each will be sung.



Change a life this summer  
SILVER LAKE CAMP & RETREAT CENTER

# SUMMER

# CAMP

## 2022

Now hiring

COUNSELORS ▪ LIFEGUARDS ▪ ROPES FACILITATORS  
PROGRAM STAFF ▪ KITCHEN STAFF  
MAINTENANCE STAFF

PAID AND VOLUNTEER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

16 AND OLDER

[WWW.SILVERLAKECT.ORG/EMPLOYMENT](http://WWW.SILVERLAKECT.ORG/EMPLOYMENT)

[JENNKC@SILVERLAKECT.ORG](mailto:JENNKC@SILVERLAKECT.ORG)

### Sermons to Go

Did you know that even if you aren't able to attend worship you can still receive a copy of the Sunday sermon delivered directly to your email address? Many people have found Sermons to Go to be a useful service for times when they can't be in church but don't want to miss the message, or even to later revisit a message they heard preached.

To be added to the mailing list just send your email address to [medeirosnumber30@gmail.com](mailto:medeirosnumber30@gmail.com) with your request to receive Sermons to Go. Sermons are also published on the church website. Just go to [www.westcong.org](http://www.westcong.org), roll over the tab for Pastor's Page and click on Sermons to Go.

Full worship services are also recorded on CD and available on request.

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

The Epistle  
February 2022  
Phone: 978-874-5790  
Email: fccw.westminster@gmail.com



**February 22, 2022**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Winter Word Search

F G S B W M T X H Q L T S A J D T N L M D U L F  
S A G A K R X H B L C T J L V I V H Q V I Y G D  
S M C F L V P T O I C D C H H D O P L O W V N K  
N W W B Y T P L O T A S N U V M C Q V B Z I I T  
O Q C M O G N I T A K S U G F N L T D M J M I D  
W C U W M F V P S A A X T D R A Z Z I L B B K R  
M J L F Z I R F X W V Z U C P P T E O B A F S A  
A A I E V J T E S N W E B P Y I L K Q K R U S M  
N C A S B V H T E T L X I U N W R E I S D G E E  
Q K K X C L K T E Z F X N X F R O N Q G N E I K  
E F R G D R A S Z N I I G R L T G N J N P L R A  
O R C N U X A S E Q S N R G I A O D S I B B R L  
J O O X N E H P J M J L G D D P U N Z H S D U F  
Y S L R Z M H F E V N B I G E Z O U I S O F L W  
P T D F T G V F U R W Z F G F R A C S I Z F F O  
B M L E F Q C J I E N Y X W Y P K J H F Y F U N  
H O S N O W B A L L H O C K E Y B G N I D I L S  
Y Z K M E F X G A B U M M Y O U L K B A D B D H  
G S L L E B H G I E L S S W T V I O Q X U V Q E  
S L T E K C A J C S N O W B O A R D I N G L F L  
H K O L P S N W L E R T V G D W U G S O R Q V C  
R X G V I B T W F T Y T W E L I B O M W O N S I  
M Q O R E O S P S Q O Q O R E Z W O L E B A E C  
D F I B T S N D R W M S N X N N Q Z H L Z T P I



JACK FROST	SLEIGHBELLS	TUBING	SNOWBOARDING	BAKING
FREEZING	MITTENS	SNOWFLAKE	SCRAPER	SALT
BELOW ZERO	COLD	BLIZZARD	FISHING	SLIDING
SNOWBALL	HOCKEY	SKATING	SKIING	PLOW
ICICLE	DRIFTS	SNOWMOBILE	FLURRIES	GLOVES
JACKET	SCARF	BOOTS	SNOWMAN	SNOW