



# *The Epistle*

## November 2023

### *From the Pastor's Pen*

All congregations experience ebbs and flows in those actively attending and participating in church programming and worship. No church enters into a community as a large church, nor do they complete their ministry as such. This shifts in size will be accompanied with anxiety and leadership stress. As well, negative perceptions of the congregation's abilities to turn things around will increase when these shifts are not openly recognized by seeking adaptations: to the church structure, of the foci of the lay leadership, within the staffing structure and the tasks they hold, and to the expectations held around contributions to making church happen. In 2007, Paul Nixon wrote that churches must make a series of choices in order to embrace life. These choices revolve around fun over drudgery; being bold and trying out new things over adhering to what has been; exploring the frontiers of ministry and mission over securing "the fortress." Nixon also wrote that churches need to choose to act now, if they are really going to choose life. Acting later requires a far more significant effort to return a congregation to a place of thriving. Thriving is not the number of members in a congregation. Thriving is not the number of people attracted to 10am worship. Thriving IS lives touched and changed through the missional outreach of a church. Thriving IS the stated experience of those who partner with you in ministry. Thriving IS the collective depth of experience of those who participate in church programming. Churches can thrive no matter their size.

The majority of congregations in the US qualify as small churches, congregations of fewer than 100 active participants. The percentage of small churches is dramatically increasing in our now pandemic ally aware society, but even back in 1982, Schaller asserted that the small church was the "normative institutional expression of the worship congregation among the Protestant denominations on the North American continent.

The nature, structure, and energy of small churches are often very different from other size churches. They don't have much in common with megachurches or even mid-size churches with multiple paid pastors and program areas. They may consist of only a few core families. Which means, they can struggle with financial and facility sustainability.

Small churches also have gifts and advantages which are often missed by the churches themselves as they consistently remember the glory days when the church was bigger (which is true of all churches), rather than focusing on making ministry and mission possible no matter the realities faced by the congregation. When we get outside of the shame and comparison traps which see small churches as "less than," We can open our eyes to their gifts.

Rev. Dr. Anna Hall wrote in an article "Help! our Church is Too Small," just last month, that "unfortunately, too many small churches miss out on the advantages" of being a small church "because they are trying too hard to live as if they were larger. Small churches:

- \* May be stuck remembering past eras with more congregants, or simply buying into the cultural idea that bigger is better.
- \* Can worry so much about not attracting lots of new people that they neglect knowing and loving each other well. Sometimes, that worry leads to unhealthy behaviors driven by anxiety or conflict, which also weakens relationships.
- \* Can have bylaws and ways of working that are not suited to a small congregation, using up their energy on meetings and failing to be responsive to the spirit moving in new ways.
- \* Can be so attached to a building that drains their energy and finances that they fail to listen to the Spirit calling them toward another way of being church together.
- \* Might try to be all things to all people rather than choose a singular focus, at least for a season, because they are scared that one unhappy person leaving will make them even smaller.
- \* Can turn inward out of shame about being small and thus fail to know and love those who live in the area around their congregation.

*Continued on page 3*

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

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

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Roxxe and Chris                           | Jan Gordon                           |
| Tariq Malik                               | James Gallant                        |
| Bobbie DiBattista                         | Dot                                  |
| Brian & June Coombs                       | Audrey Brogan                        |
| Charlie Snell                             | Eleanor Brogan                       |
| Steve Collar                              | Lorna Ducharme                       |
| Sally Calhoun                             | Bryan Castle                         |
| Shirley Saari                             | Don McKendry                         |
| Eddie Hannula                             | Sally Aalto's friend, Marge          |
| Dee Smith                                 | The Lafferty family                  |
| Bob Anderson                              | Peter Rakowski                       |
| Julie Gagnon                              | Dolores Tamulen                      |
| Amelia Lavenski                           | Amanda Arsenault                     |
| Lorraine Gallant<br>(Jan Witman's mother) | Ellie Grace<br>(Peter's great niece) |
| Bob Kilgo<br>(Margaret's brother)         | Kiernan Wilson<br>Simari family      |

**"Prayer List"**

If you added somebody to the prayer list, please let us know when to remove their name.

More information can always be shared privately with Pastor Stacey at [fccw.pastor@outlook.com](mailto:fccw.pastor@outlook.com) or at (603) 903-5621.



Our deepest condolences go out to the family and friends of Don Miller, M.D. who passed on September 27, 2023.

**Thank You**

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation for the many cards, texts, emails, and visits, from my church family, while I was dealing with surgery and recuperation during the last few months. It made such a positive difference. I am so grateful to be part of such a caring and thoughtful church community. Your prayers and well wishes helped to carry me through. Thank you so much.

Julie Gagnon

Anyone who would like Weekly or Monthly offering envelopes for next year, please call Sally Aalto at 978-874-0220 or email me at [saraaalto@verizon.net](mailto:saraaalto@verizon.net) by November 30th and I'll arrange to get them to you.

**Call to Meeting**

You are hereby notified that the Annual Election & Budget Meeting for 2024 will be held on Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup> 2022 in the sanctuary, immediately following the service.

On the agenda is the election of nominated individuals and a vote on the 2024 budget. Anyone may attend and participate in discussion, but only members may vote.

Snow Date: November 26

Julie Gagnon, Clerk

Please note the flower chart has been moved outside of the church office on the bulletin board. Please remember to email Lisa what you would like printed in the bulletin @ [fccw.westminster@gmil.com](mailto:fccw.westminster@gmil.com)

Please email Lisa your Annual Reports no later than Wednesday, January, 3rd in copy ready (Word) format.

**Be on the Lookout**

Order forms for Poinsettia's will be available in Worship Bulletins and on Mailchimp starting next Sunday ( Nov 5th).





\*Friday, November 10, 5:30 PM, Open Table in FH A Community gathering for all ages!

\*Sunday, November 12, Church Council immediately following Worship

\*Wednesday, November 15, **EPISTLE DUE FOR DECEMBER**

\*Sunday, November 19, Annual Election & Budget Meeting immediately following Worship  
(Snow Date: Sunday, November 26)

\*Sunday, December 3, **ADVENT CRAFT and SOUP LUNCHEON** immediately following worship. *(Help us spread the word...this is an event to welcome the whole community to. Details of our craft exploration for this Advent will be revealed in the December Epistle...)*

\*December 10, Christmas Pageant Prep

Please mark your calendars for pageant prep on **December 10**

Details will be made available to church families and friends as they become clearer for the Christian Ed. Committee.)

\* **Sunday, December 17, Christmas Pageant**

*Continued from page 1*

Although these challenges can keep many small churches stuck in place, the thriving small church will find ways to move past them.

### Small churches can be...

Rev. Dr. Anna Hall identifies four strengths of small, locally focused churches. She writes:

1. **Places to know and be known** – If you are a part of a small church, **everyone** will know **your** name. When open to it, relationships in a small church can be deep and permeate all areas of members' lives. **Members** can be there for each other at the hospital, at funerals, and at the birthday party. A true sense of community can grow and thrive.
2. **Focused** – Since a small church can only do one or two things at a time, they can focus all their energy and best thinking on doing those one or two things as well as possible. They can increase impact by not spreading energy thinly across numerous programs and activities. Small churches can be clear with others on that focus and invite them to help fulfill it.
3. **Responsive** – Small churches can, when working well, respond quickly to community needs or changes. Without multiple layers of bureaucracy, a single council can decide within hours how the church will help those who have experienced displacement, disaster, or other emergencies. Small also means the ability to quickly respond to a new movement of the spirit in the congregation. Supporting a new direction is easier when there are only a few dozen people to gather, unify, and work together for good.
4. **Locally Rooted** – Small churches can know their community well, whether it is a neighborhood, town, or rural area. Members usually know others who live in their community, sometimes knowing almost everyone! This makes it easier to understand community needs, generate partnerships, and truly love the church's neighbors.

This work is challenging, but if a small church actively seeks to maintain strong relationships among active participants, expends significant energy in developing relationships with secular partners in reaching the wider community, and is unafraid to adapt in all aspects of its being, the cohesion articulated above can help them face the challenges and live into their future. The results can be transformational within the faith community and within the towns around.

## CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

The children continue their exploration and understanding of what it means to be part of God's family. This past Sunday, Covenant Hall was filled with smiles and "soft" ball games as the children focused on the *Families Remember God* unit memory verse: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your being and all your strength." Deut. 6:5

Scheduled for next Sunday, Oct. 22, is the Storytelling and Drama station as we begin a new unit on *Ruth*. Come and hear the story of a family's faithful love and loyalty during trying times. We'll also learn a new bible verse using American Sign Language.



### Church School Schedule Change

On the last Sunday of October (the 29th) and November (the 26th), the children should go directly to the classrooms instead of to the Sanctuary. Pastor Stacey is not here those Sundays and there is no Message for All Ages.

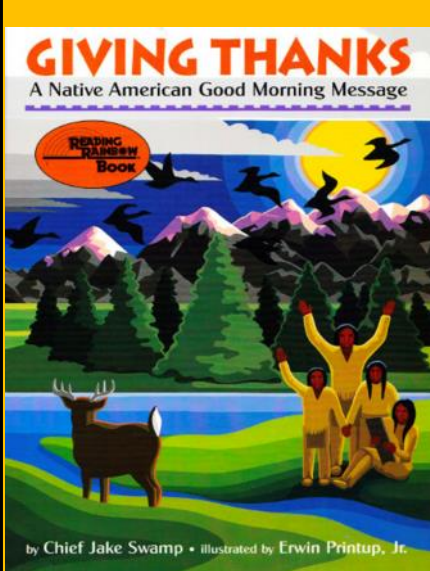
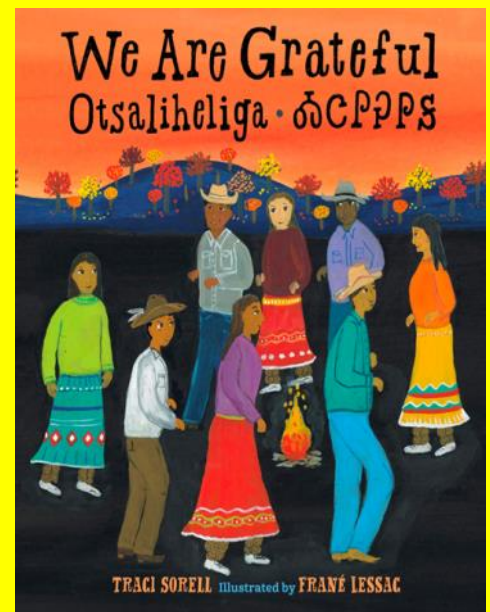
## FAITH FORMATION FOR CHILDREN and FAMILIES

Thanksgiving is upon us. As we become increasingly aware in of our complicated history related to this important celebration of family, community, home, land, harvest and God remembering the truths of this day is important. Children and youth have the capacity to understand more about its complicated nature than we often acknowledge, wanting to protect them from hard truths. An excellent place to start is to honor the lives of Native Americans and the truths of this day, as they have come to articulate them. Here are some book resources to use with the young people in your lives to help with these conversations.

### [We Are Grateful Otsaliheliga](#)

by Traci Sorell (Cherokee), illustrated by Frané Lessac

*“Cherokee people say otsaliheliga to express gratitude. It is a reminder to celebrate our blessings and reflect on struggles — daily, throughout the year, and across the seasons.”* This story takes the reader through all four seasons and introduces children to the individual beauty of each one. From cool breezes and falling leaves, to elders. Sharing stories and gathering spring’s first food, contemporary Cherokee culture is woven throughout the journey.



### [Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message](#)

by Chief Jake Swamp (Tekaronianeken), illustrated by Erwin Printup, Jr. (Cayuga/Tuscarora)

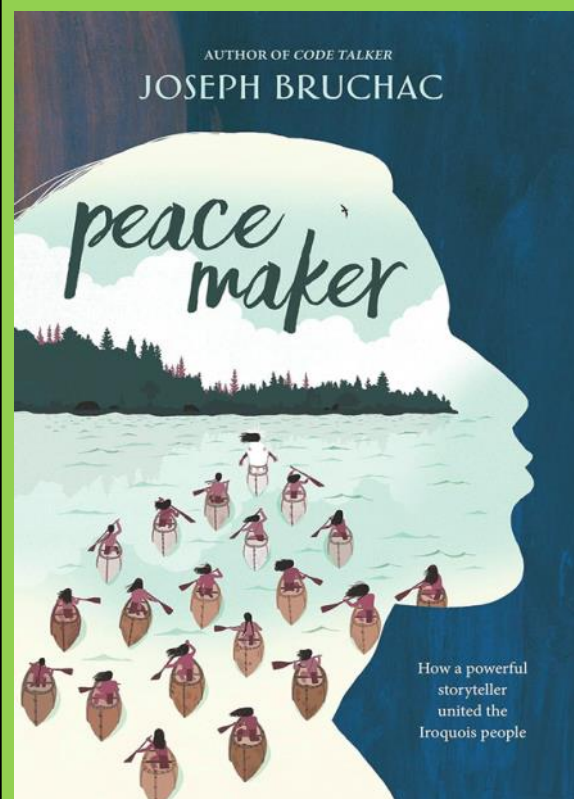
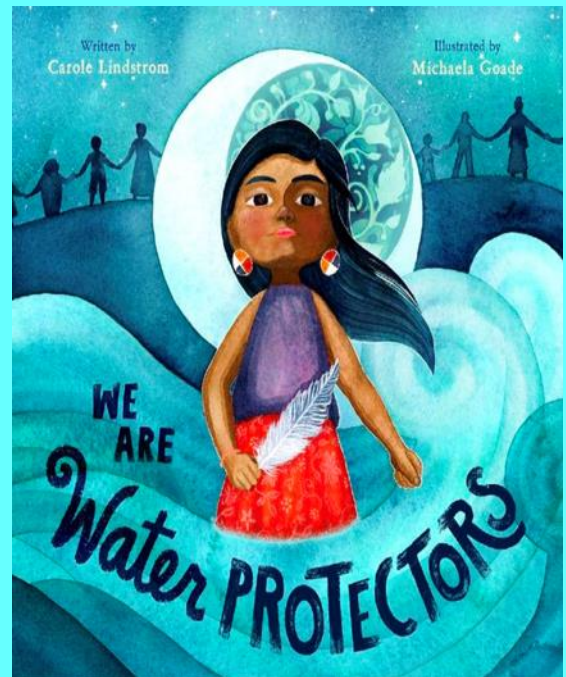
This book is based on the Thanksgiving Address, a morning prayer message of gratitude for Mother Earth from the Haudenosaunee or Iroquois (Six Nations) people— Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Onondaga, Seneca, and Tuscarora. These words are still spoken at ceremonial gatherings held by the Iroquois. and...one of Pastor Stacey's favorites...

[We Are Water Protectors](#) by Carole Lindstrom (Anishinaabe/Métis), illustrated by Michaela Goade (Tlingit/Haida)

*“Water is the first medicine, Nokomis told me. We come from water. It nourished us inside our mother’s body as it nourishes us here on Mother Earth.*

*Water is sacred, she said.”* Inspired by the many tribal nations fighting to protect Indigenous lands and waterways, this story illustrates the power and importance of rallying together to stand for water, land and life. And...for readers...

(another of Pastor Stacey's favorites...)



[Peacemaker](#) by Joseph Bruchac, (Iroquois)

Twelve-year-old Okwaho's life has suddenly changed. Everyone in his village fears raids and killings: The Five Nations of the Iroquois have been at war with one another for far too long, and no one can remember what it was like to live in peace.

Okwaho is so angry that he wants to seek revenge, but before he can retaliate, a visitor with a message of peace comes to him in the woods. The Peacemaker shares his lesson tales—stories that make Okwaho believe that this man can convince the leaders of the five fighting nations to set down their weapons. So many others agree with him. Can all of them come together to form the Iroquois Great League of Peace?



**FYI:** First Sundays kids are in Sanctuary for the whole service. Last Sunday of the month they will go directly to church school, they will not be in the Sanctuary, unless it's a holiday such as Christmas.



Women's Fellowship would like to share with the congregation opportunities for caregivers and loved ones with dementia in the form of local Memory Cafes.

**1. Memory Lane Cafe (Sign in at the front desk as a visitor)**

Acton Senior Center  
30 Sudbury Road Rear Acton, MA 01720  
Noon – 1:30 PM, last Tuesday of each month

**2. North Quabbin Memory Cafe  
Athol Council on Aging / Senior Center**

82 Freedom Street Athol, MA 01331  
(10:00 AM – Noon, 1st Monday of each month)

For more information, please contact Cathy Savoy at 978.249.8986 Visitors welcomed

**3. First Baptist Church of Littleton (Fellowship Hall)**

461 King Street Littleton, MA 01460  
(10:00 AM – Noon, 4th Saturday of each month)

There is no cost to attend and no RSVP is needed. Bring a spouse, family member, or friend and meet new friends of all ages! We provide light refreshments, discussion, games, music, and entertainment. Enjoy spending time in a relaxed and supportive setting. For more information, please contact the First Baptist Church of Littleton office at 978.486.4660, or Anne Lee at 978.486.4075.

**4. A Cup of Joy Memory Cafe  
Eagle House Senior Community Center**

25 Memorial Drive Lunenburg, MA 01462  
(10:00 AM – Noon, last Friday of each month)

Open to all living with dementia and their care partners. Free continental breakfast and music. For more information, please contact Susan Doherty at 978.582.4166.

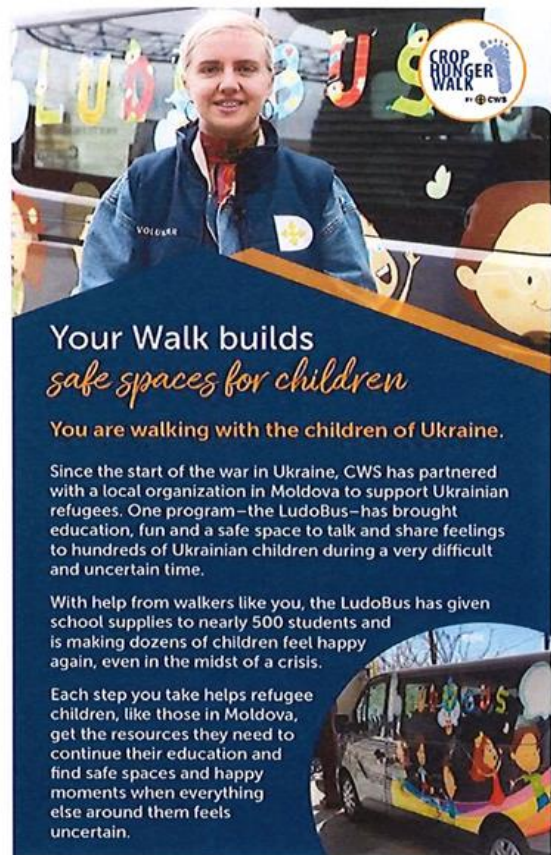
## Christian Outreach



### Thank you!

On October 15, FCCW raised over \$400 for the CROP Walk for Hunger in Leominster in partnership with Pilgrim Congregational Church. Thank you to Judy Guilford, Audrey Brogan, Sandi Thibodeau and Jessica Caouette for raising donations and for walking! Between the two churches, we raised over \$1000.

- Christian Outreach



**Your Walk builds  
*safe spaces for children***

**You are walking with the children of Ukraine.**

Since the start of the war in Ukraine, GWS has partnered with a local organization in Moldova to support Ukrainian refugees. One program—the LudoBus—has brought education, fun and a safe space to talk and share feelings to hundreds of Ukrainian children during a very difficult and uncertain time.

With help from walkers like you, the LudoBus has given school supplies to nearly 500 students and is making dozens of children feel happy again, even in the midst of a crisis.

Each step you take helps refugee children, like those in Moldova, get the resources they need to continue their education and find safe spaces and happy moments when everything else around them feels uncertain.



## The Outreach Committee

### Thanksgiving Food Collection - 2023

Thankfully we have been able to make necessary adjustments to the current new normal, and some things have not changed. Poverty and homelessness still exist. People have lost jobs or had their income reduced resulting in more need for shelters and food pantries.

We are fortunate to have the Westminster Community Food Pantry housed in our church. In a recent conversation with Doras Hurd, Director of the Westminster Community Food Pantry, she expressed great appreciation for everything our church does for the food pantry and our generous support.

One of our largest food collections has always been around Thanksgiving. You can drop food off at the side door on Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, a week before Thanksgiving between 2:00 and 5:00 p.m. Our congregation can also bring their annual Thanksgiving food donation to church on Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup>.

Below are suggestions of items needed for the food pantry, including items for the Thanksgiving baskets. Please remember that the Food Pantry does not give out expired food, so please don't give it to them. The Christian Outreach Committee thanks you for your support of this important local mission!

Canned meats (beef, chicken, tuna, ham)

Canned pasta (spaghetti rings, ravioli)

Canned fruits of any kind

Canned soups on any kind

Peanut butter, jams, and jellies

Macaroni and cheese boxes

Pasta of any kind

Spaghetti sauce

Canned tomatoes

Juice, coffee, tea

Baking mixes

Cereal

Oatmeal

Juice boxes

Bags of goldfish

Granola bars

Animal crackers

Yogurt covered raisins

Individual apple sauce squeeze pouches

Seasonal canned vegetables like sweet potatoes, squash, asparagus, beets, etc.

Cornbread mixes

Ready mix stuffing in box or bag

Pie crust mixes

Pie fillings such as pumpkin, apple, etc.

Cranberry sauce

#### *A Thanksgiving Blessing*

*Our God, provider of all good things,  
we offer you praise and thanksgiving.  
We pray for Your blessings on this food and  
on all those who will receive it,  
those who will sort and distribute it, and  
those who have contributed it.  
May this food nourish those who receive it  
both physically and spiritually. Amen.*



## SAFE CHURCH CORNER

### Who, What, Where, When, Why and How?

These questions can apply to many problems that crop up in our lives. They particularly apply to incidents or accidents that affect us, at home, at work, at play **and at church**. Hence, the **INCIDENT REPORT**. Let's examine these criteria as they apply to filling out the report.

**WHO** is anyone who has been involved in an incident or accident relating to a church activity; a child in Sunday School, an adult in worship, a volunteer, a staff person, a committee member, or workman working on a Church project to name a few. Examples: Someone falls on the stairs, someone slices their hand in the kitchen, someone has a medical emergency in the Sanctuary, or someone who is disruptive during the service. The second **WHO** is who would be the appropriate person to write the report, as the person who is directly involved may be unable to fill out the form. It then falls to whomever is closest to the event, for example, a Sunday School teacher, a Deacon, a co-worker, a Pastor, or a bystander who has observed the incident. A hearsay or third person report is less credible than that of an observed report.

**WHAT** has happened in a nonjudgmental statement. An Incident report is not the time to speculate. Stick to the facts. If the report is based on an altercation or incident between two (or more) people, there should be statements from **each** participant included. **WHAT** also indicates the immediate outcome of the event. Was 911 notified? Did they go to the ER?

**WHERE** did it happen? Was it in the building, outside the building, during an off-site Church activity? Be specific about where the incident happened. **Where** are blank Incident forms available for use? They should be on Bulletin Board outside the Church Office and in the SS Office.

**WHEN** did it happen? What time of day? Was it AM or PM? What was the date of the event? Dates must **be complete and in the following format**. (dd/mm/yyyy) **Most importantly, WHEN** refers to when the report was written, which is as soon after the event as possible. It should be written the same day as the event occurred. Reports written days or weeks after the event hold less credibility.

**WHY** What were contributory factors? Loose carpets, signs of physical weakness of person falling, church school student rough housing with another student, spontaneous symptoms of medical emergency could all be factors in why an incident happens. The other **WHY** is to consider is why we fill out the report. We do so for follow-up within the church. Timely resolution by the appropriate persons/committee of causative factors, whenever possible, is essential. Insurance purposes and possible litigation are two other reasons why we document such incidents. In fact, insurance companies ask for an example of our Incident Form so that they can critique it for possible revision.

The **HOW** to fill out the report will be in the next Epistle. Examples of what to write or not to write to make it an effective document will be included.

ASB

13 October 2023

### Archives and CE Office:

#### Shifting Space in the Church Building

At the beginning of the summer, our Church Historian, Deenie Burgess, made members of the congregation aware of safety concerns related to volunteers working in the archive room of the church (a closet off the Parlor).

After exploring the options for relocating the prime storage area for our congregation's records a decision was reached to move the CE Office to one of the classrooms in the Church School wing. The church paper archives will be moved into that soon to be vacated space.

This will allow for more than one volunteer to be archiving at the same time. It will also ensure a safer exit in case of an emergency and a safer space altogether to be working in for this important aspect of our congregation's life.

#### Many Hands Make Light Work!

I am seeking a few individuals who are willing to help with the church's Facebook page. We need admins! Responsibilities will include:

- \* Creating events for upcoming church events.
- \* Creating posts using the Meta business platform to schedule future posts.
- \* Finding devotional content and placing content in the Meta Business platform.
- \* Maintaining a presence for your committee's activities
- \* Answering the occasional request from Messenger

Having a Canva account is a plus, but not necessary, for creating photos for the posts.

Please email Joanna if you would like to ( [joallen1583@gmail.com](mailto:joallen1583@gmail.com) ) help out.

### More Safe Church News

We welcome Amanda Wrigley Stone as the CE designee to Safe Church response Team (SCRT) She will join us at our next meeting on 05 December 2023.

SCRT is pursuing the possibility of offering a CPR course soon. John Aalto has sent out a notice thru Mail Chimp to determine how many are interested in taking the course. There is a \$10 fee per participant and a 12-person limit for the 4-hour course. If we get more than 12 people signing up, we will consider a second class. Contact John if you wish to participate. [johnaalto@verizon.net](mailto:johnaalto@verizon.net)

SCRT is also reviewing the Key Policy, particularly as it pertains to the outside door keys. You may have already received a query from John about whether you have a key and what number it has on the front of it. Please contact John if you haven't already confirmed your key status.

### Historian Room

The Historian and CE Committee have agreed that the History Room will soon be in the office down the hall from the Main Office, while the CE office will be moved to the upstairs Classrooms.

I am grateful for the opportunity to move to a larger, more pleasant room. Artifacts and the safe will remain in the closet area off the Ladies Parlor.


I am seeking a table/desk about 40-45 inches long and 30 inches deep (give or take) to use as a worktable. If you know of one, please contact [ardeen37@gmail.com](mailto:ardeen37@gmail.com)

Deenie Burgess, Historian




HELLO november

2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 10:00 AM Staff (Parlor) 6:30 PM Boy Scouts (CH)	2 6:30-7:30 PM Food Pantry Drive-Thru	3  Office closed	4
5 9:30 AM Worship Service  Daylight Saving Time Ends	6 8:00 AM Meditation (Zoom)	7 8:00 AM Yoga (Zoom) 7:00 PM Diaconate (Parlor)	8 6:30 PM Boy Scouts (CH)  Lisa on vacation, return 11/13	9 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry Drive-Thru	10 5:30 PM Open Table (FH & Kitchen)  Office closed	11 8:30 PM Scouts (CH) 
12 9:30 AM Worship Service 9:30 AM Church School (Sanctuary) 10:45 AM Church Council (CH)	13 8:00 AM Meditation (Zoom)	14 8:00 AM Yoga (Zoom)	15 9:00 AM Outreach (Parlor) 6:30 PM Boy Scouts (CH)  DECEMBER EPISTLE	16 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry Drive-Thru 3:00 PM Trustee (FH)	17 7:00 PM CE (Parlor)  Office closed	18
19 9:30 AM Worship Service 9:30 AM Church School (Sanctuary) 10:45 AM Annual Election Meeting (snow date 11/26)	20 8:00 AM Meditation (Zoom)	21 8:00 AM Yoga 5:30 PM Cub Scouts (FH)	22 6:30 PM Boy Scouts (CH)	23 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry Drive-Thru	24  Office closed	25
26 9:30 AM Worship Service 9:30 AM Church School (CE Wing)	27 8:00 AM Meditation (Zoom)	28 8:00 AM Yoga (Zoom) 6:00 PM Generous Giving 6:00 PM Food Pantry (FH)	29 6:30 PM Boy Scouts (CH)	30 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry Drive-Thru		

 December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1  Office closed	2
3 9:30 AM Worship Service 10:45 AM Advent Craft & Soup Luncheon	4 8:00 AM Meditation (Zoom)	5 8:00 AM Yoga (Zoom) 12:30 PM Safe Church 7:00 PM Diaconate	6 6:30 PM Boy Scouts (CH)	7 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry Drive-Thru 3:00 PM Trustees (H)	8 5:30 PM Open Table (FH & Kitchen)  Office closed	9 8:30 PM Scouts (CH)
10 9:30 AM Worship Christmas Pageant 9:30 AM Church School (Sanctuary) *Prep for Christmas Pageant	11 8:00 AM Meditation (Zoom)	12 8:00 AM Yoga (Zoom)	13 6:30 PM Boy Scouts (CH)  January Epistle	14 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry Drive-Thru 3:00 PM Trustee (FH)	15  Office closed	16
17 9:30 AM Worship & Christmas Pageant 9:30 AM Church School 10:45 AM Annual Election Meeting (snow date: 11/26)	18 8:00 AM Meditation (Zoom)	19 8:00 AM Yoga 5:30 PM Cub Scouts (FH)	20 6:30 PM Boy Scouts (CH)	21 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry Drive-Thru	22  Office closed	23
24 9:30 AM Worship Service  Christmas Eve	25 8:00 AM Meditation (Zoom)  Christmas Day 	26 8:00 AM Yoga (Zoom) 6:00 PM Generous Giving	27 6:30 PM Boy Scouts (CH)	28 6:30- 7:30 PM Food Pantry	29	30
31 9:30 AM Worship Service  New Years Eve						

*From the Moderator*

*We are moving forward in our process to find our next settled pastor. Since September, I have sought individuals in our church family to reach out and offer their time and talents for the Search Committee. At the Church Council's 15 October meeting, I asked and received the unanimous support of the Council for the eight individuals I recommended appointing. The following individuals have been appointed: Karen Brighenti, Deenie Burgess, Sue Christ, John Fairbanks, Candi Hitchcock, Ellen Holmes and Lisa Roberts with Jessica Caouette selected as an Alternate. The Council recommended November 19<sup>th</sup> as the date when a special portion of that morning's worship service will include a dedication of our search committee members. Thank you to those willing to provide this gift to our faith family.*

*The Church Council meeting also included an update of what occurred during the transitional period. The purpose of this initial step requested by the conference was to help us draft a Church Profile which best identifies where First Congregational Church's faith community is at this moment in time as well as where we would like to be in the future. Much of the information derived from the congregational conversations which took place in person or on Zoom. Pastor Stacey shared a draft profile which will now receive comments, corrections and updates from Council members. This draft will be discussed at the upcoming Council meetings to make sure it is a complete and accurate reflection of FCCW.*

*At the time of this writing, we have had several activities taking place. Robert Hoyt, on behalf of the Deacons, coordinated the ordering and delivery of mums. Special thanks to Lisa Roberts and John & Sally Aalto for distributing the notice and collecting the funds. The mums were delivered by Cauley's Florist and set up on the front steps by Lee Ann Gikis and Sandi Thibodeau (with Robert's "Mums Diagram"). They provide a wonderful welcome to our church and the Westminster community. The Safe Church Committee has been actively engaged in plans for a CPR/AED workshop (additional information included elsewhere in The Epistle). This is an important offering for individuals to consider, but note space is limited.*

*The Women's Fellowship held a program with the Westminster Police and Fire Departments (Be Aware) which also shared information about how to use an AED should the need arise, and how to stay safe and identify scams. Keep an eye out for future Committee and Board activities in The Epistle, weekly Worship Bulletins (NYCU) and MailChimp. Thank you to all involved for these informative offerings.*

*A final reminder to join us at our November 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Election and Budget Meeting immediately following our worship service to share your voice and contribute your thoughts and ideas for our future. The challenges before us may seem daunting, but we need to turn the table and address them as opportunities to move our faith community forward and grow!*

## Music Committee Update



Earlier in October, the Music Committee made the decision that it would not be renewing Chris Berquist's (Music Director) contract for 2023. This decision is a result of difficult conversation & dialog, all while keeping the best interests of the Church at the forefront. The committee feels that this is the first step in building a program that will provide a more meaningful and spiritually connected worship service.

### **The Music Committee's ongoing and forward-looking activities include:**

- Ensure that Worship Service is enriched by a music offering, each and every Sunday.
- Encourage members and friends to participate in this growth phase with whatever talents (you think you may or may not have).
- Obtain financial support to effectively seek and hire a qualified candidate for a permanent position to lead our music program.

### **We certainly could use you help, by.....**

- Speaking up and raising your hand if you have a musical talent that you wish to share (solo or within a group of like-minded volunteers).
- Providing administrative support with sheet music sorting and archiving.
- Being patient and understanding as we take this journey together.
- Use music to help the congregation engage both the spiritual heart and mind.
- Utilize a variety of musical offerings, both traditional and contemporary.
- Actively engage all ages to use music as a means of creating excitement, energy, and vibe.

Thank you & God Bless,

The 2023 Music Committee:

Doris Forte, Carol McGee, Candi Hitchcock & Doug Greenlee





# *INTERNATIONAL FAIR*

*Where: Westminster Senior Center  
68 West Main St., Westminster, MA*

*Date: November 4th, 2023*

*Time: 1-4 PM*

*Come meet your neighbors  
from  
countries around the world!*


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

The Epistle  
November 2023  
Phone: 978-874-5790  
Church office Email:  
fccw.westminster@gmail.com  
Visit our Website at [www.westcong.org](http://www.westcong.org)

Don't Miss the  
**DEADLINE!**

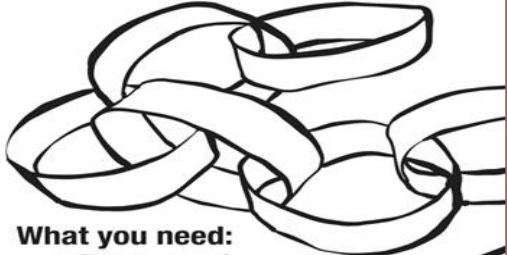
**Wednesday,  
November 15, 2023**

**Reminder: Turn your clocks back 1 hour the  
first Sunday after Halloween, Nov. 5, 2023**



## Links of GRATITUDE

Make this meaningful decoration for your Thanksgiving table.



**What you need:**

- Construction paper (in fall colors)
- Scissors
- Pen
- Jar
- Stapler
- Adult help

**What you do:**

1. Cut the paper into strips about 2 inches wide.
2. Place the strips and pen in the jar. Then set it in a prominent place in your home.
3. Throughout November, have family discussions about what you're thankful to God for. Write or draw each item on a paper strip.
4. Make a paper chain by linking and carefully stapling the strips.
5. Keep adding to your decoration and display it during your Thanksgiving meal.

