

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF FALMOUTH,
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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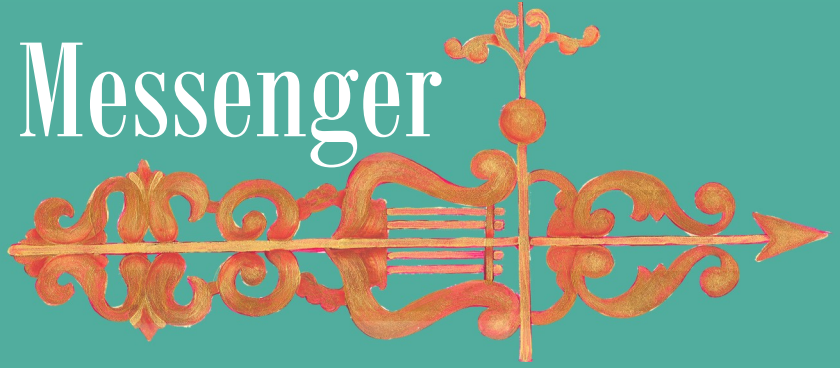
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Close your eyes to all that surrounds you. Close your senses to your current reality. Quiet your mind and breathe deeply and slowly. Now, welcome a serene image into your mind. See it, hear it, smell it. Feel yourself into a place of peace... and let the peace of that place permeate your heart and mind and spirit.

When you find yourself at peace, I encourage you to offer to God this prayer:

Open my lips that I may sing with joy your Good News.

Open my hands that I may reach out to my brothers and sisters.

Open my eyes that I may recognize Christ in the face of each and every person.

And open my heart that I may live out your purpose through my life.



In moments of quiet reflection, I thank God for the gifts that abound in blessed work, the wonder of this awesome creation all around me, and the precious ministry with which I have been entrusted. We are the body of Christ... his hands, feet, mind and heart in this wonderful world. Let's breathe in, drink in and give thanks for each amazing day as we continue to be co-creators with God in this excellent adventure together.

Amazing things abound in this world, and I believe we are called to celebrate God and to be thankful. This spring, I hope our return together will remind us again that God's love is all around us... and through the efforts of our community this love can be magnified, reflected, and shared with the world.

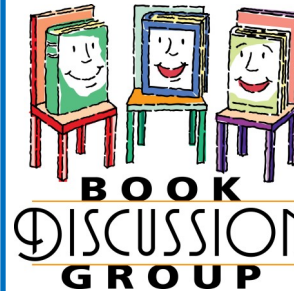
I am proud to be part of a church of people who care for one another the best we can. Thank you to everyone who is part of this effort. The First Congregational Church in Falmouth exists because of thoughtful people who work hard to make it happen. Your efforts are recognized, and they are appreciated. And I hope you know at the First Congregational Church, after we have prayerfully said thank you for God's amazing and welcome grace, we long to celebrate with you the passing of this past year's dark shadows with shouts of triumph and adoration! *"For the people who walked in Darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the shadow, upon them a light has shined!" Isaiah 9:2*

Go now and live, Jonathan

Outdoor Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday, April 4 at 11:00 AM.

All grades are welcome to find eggs outside on Easter morning.

FCC Kids will begin meeting again on Sunday, April 25 at 11:30 AM. All grades are welcome. If the weather is nice, we will meet outside the church near the fenced area. If not, meet in Fellowship Hall. We'll hear from Jonathan Drury about a Bible story. Then we'll play games. Masks required. We can't wait to see you.



The Church Book Club will meet on Monday, April 26 at 1:00. We will be discussing the book, "The Vanishing Half" by Brit Bennett. This is the story of two identical twin girls who choose very different lives as they mature.

We welcome all members of the church to attend for one session or become a regular member of the group. We will be meeting either at the church (safe distancing) or via zoom. If you are not a regular attendee, please call Bette West 508-457-9860, to sign up.

Update on re-opening the church...

As stated by Marcia Young in her report (page 4), the Church Council approved opening our facilities to several outside groups that have used them in the past. The next step is to open our beautiful sanctuary for Sunday Services. The Church Opening Committee will meet again on April 12 to make a recommendation to Council. We will consider the state of the virus in Massachusetts and particularly in both Barnstable County and the town of Falmouth. Levels of the virus have plateaued recently. Is this the beginning of another surge or just a pause in an encouraging trend? We should know better in early April. Also, the weather will improve, and we will be able to open windows to increase ventilation. We have a good procedure for a soft opening and hopefully we can increase attendance as we get further into Spring.

John Honey, Moderator

Women's Union

The Women's Union will not meet in April. If conditions permit regarding the pandemic, we plan to meet in May and June. Until then Happy Spring time – enjoy going outdoors. We hope to see you soon!



2020 Pledge Statements

I know many of you have been hanging on my every word in my weekly emails, but I figured I'd send one more reminder that 2020 Pledge statements will be available until April 15, at which time they will be destroyed. They can be found on the table in the lobby of Fellowship Hall.

From Christian Outreach...

The Outreach Committee is pleased to invite you to two upcoming events this spring. The first is the **Emergency Cleanup Bucket** collection project, a ministry of Church World Service. We are partnering with the North Falmouth Congregational Church in sponsoring this project. This will involve the collection of specific cleaning items that fit into a five-gallon bucket, which are then sent to areas of the country that experience disasters requiring cleanups. We will collect the required items throughout April from both congregations. Details listing the specific items needed and how the collection process will take place will be forthcoming. For more information about this Church World's bucket project, please see the following website: <http://cwskits.org/assemble-kits/emergency-cleanup-buckets>

Here's what you'll need:

One five-gallon bucket with resealable lid (If bucket has been used, clean well but do not use if it has held chemicals of any kind.)

Four scouring pads

Seven sponges, including one large

One scrub brush

Eighteen reusable, lightweight dry cleaning towels (e.g. Handi wipes)

One 50 oz. bottle or two 25 oz. bottles of liquid laundry detergent

One 16-28 oz. bottle of liquid disinfectant dish soap

One 12-16 oz. bottle of household cleaner that can be mixed with water (no spray bottles)

One package of 48-50 clothespins

Clothesline, two 50 ft. or one 100 ft.

Five dust masks

Two pairs heavy-duty, waterproof dishwashing gloves (latex-free, non-surgical)

One pair work gloves, cotton with leather palm or all leather

24-28 heavy duty or contractor type 30-45 gallon trash bags on a roll and removed from carton

One 6-9 oz. bottle of non-aerosol insect repellent

All cleaning items must be new – all liquid items must be capped and securely tightened

Mark your calendars for our second highlighted event, the annual **HAC Walk for Hope** on Saturday, June 26th. The **Housing Assistance Corporation's** third annual **Walk for Hope** on June 26th will give you the opportunity to walk to help our neighbor's most in need access to safe, stable housing on Cape Cod and the Islands. Whether you walk as an individual or a team, you'll be offering hope. Due to concerns with COVID-19, this year's walk will remain a virtual one. That means you can walk wherever you want. You can walk in the weeks and days leading up to the event as well as the event day itself. Registration for the **Walk for Hope** will open on Saturday, May 1st. In the meantime, you can find more information and the pledge form through the following link: <https://haconcapecod.org/events/walk-for-hope>. Your participation will make this a fun and beneficial event.

During the month of March, the Outreach Committee met and voted to make the following donations. A donation of \$1,000. was made to **Big Brother's and Big Sisters of Cape Cod and the Islands**. The mission of this non-profit organization is to partner with under-resourced families to provide their children with transformational, one-to-one professionally supported relationships with caring adult mentors, so that their children can thrive. A donation of \$1,500. was made to **Cape Cod Council Of Churches**. The Council works with community organizations, churches and volunteers alike, to serve residents of the Cape and Islands without regard for religious affiliation or lack thereof. From programs like **A Baby Center, Faith Family Kitchen, Hope Food Pantry and Youth Street Reach**, the Council is actively helping those in need on Cape Cod.

Thank you for your continued support of these important ministries.





Milestones

Richard U. Palmer
 Sherry Martin
 William A. Day
 Rev. Mark Strickland
 Frances Mitchell

Church Council

The Church Council held its twelfth meeting via Zoom on March 17. Reverend Drury opened the meeting with prayer.

Jonathan reflected on this past year saying that major projects had been completed while the church was closed, and an excellent set-up for virtual services was developed. He then said we need to see this coming year as a revival year for our church. Our future depends on attracting new members.

John Honey, Moderator, noted that the Church Reopening Committee had met once and will meet again in mid-April. John has a detailed article elsewhere in the [Messenger](#).

Greg Mills put forward a motion *that the Church Council undertake an Inviting and Welcoming Initiative for the purpose of planning and implementing church-hosted events open to the community-at-large, with the ultimate aim of promoting new church membership.* Following discussion, the motion was approved unanimously by Council. Greg will provide details of this initiative to the congregation.

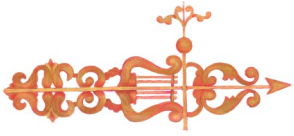
Goals developed by the Board of Deacons, the Outreach Committee, and the Music Committee also relate to being welcoming and more open to community involvement. Expanding our use of social media to attract younger people will also be investigated.

The Treasurer's report showed that member support in February was similar to that received in February 2020 when the church was open. Also, the second Paycheck Protection Program loan of \$40,255 was received in late February. This will become a grant in 2022.

Council then heard reports from the church boards and committees. The Board of Christian Education, with assistance from Eight Cousins bookstore, plans to purchase books for the FCC Kids. Expectations are that FCC Kids will begin meeting again at the end of April. In partnership with the North Falmouth church, the Outreach Committee will help organize a Church World Service project to collect cleaning supplies and assemble emergency clean up buckets. The buckets will be sent to areas of our country that have experienced disasters. Watch for announcements of ways we can assist in this effort. The Deacons noted that the Maundy Thursday service will be the same as last year, Jonathan will participate in the Good Friday service at John Wesley, and the Easter service will be prerecorded. The Deacons will also be reaching out to those who have shown an interest in our church in the past. The Music Committee reported that we will continue to see small musical groups in the Sunday services through the end of summer, with the hope that a choir in some form can return in the fall. The Nominating Committee filled two vacancies on the Trustees and hopes to fill one remaining vacancy on the Stewardship Committee soon. The Reception Committee looks forward to the possibility of having refreshments outside when in-person services resume. The Trustees reported that the roofing project has been completed. The board continues to gather information on the internal and external condition of the steeple and on an estimate of the cost to make necessary repairs. The goal is to have the information-gathering completed by year's end. A second goal is to research and make a recommendation on "outsourcing" the project management of our capital projects. The Women's Union hopes to be able to meet in May.

Looking ahead to better days.

Marcia Young, Clerk



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YOU are welcome here!

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Elected Officials of the Church

Moderator—John Honey

Clerk—Marcia Young

Treasurer—Carol Mills

Board/Committee Chairmen...

Christian Education—Elsa Partan & Julie Fitzpatrick

Christian Outreach—John Bowers

Deacons—Evelyn Johnson

Music—Steve Birmingham

Nominating—JoAnn Coleman and Joanne Blum-Carnevale

Reception—Sue Simchock

Stewardship—Dennis McGillicuddy

Trustees—Bob Johnson