

Congregational Connection



Pastor's Column

Dear Church,

There are so many ways to pray. I hope in your spiritual journey you try many ways. There are prayers of intercession that we offer during Sunday worship. We ask God to intercede for us and for our loved ones. We offer prayers of joys and concerns. There are prayers we offer for our world. We can even take a newspaper and pray over the headlines. There are breathe prayers, where we combine a simple prayer and match it to our inhale & exhale.

A new way of prayer I encourage all of us to try on is Prayer Walks. While we are developing a vision for how God is calling us as a church and in our community, prayer walks can enrich our discernment. Our Vision Team would love if you could share your discoveries from these prayer walks with our team and during our Congregational Meetings on Vision.

We will have two all church prayer walks. If you are not able to walk, we will find someone to drive with you.

Sunday, May 19th at 11:30-12:15

Sunday, June 23rd at 11:30-12:15

Try a prayer walk in your neighborhood or in neighborhoods surrounding our church. When you walk, ask yourself, what is God calling your attention to? What are you noticing? Do you find yourself praying for anyone, anything as God lays this prayer on your heart? You could also try a prayer walk with other parishioners of our church, a group prayer walk. Give me a call and I'll walk with you if you need a walking partner. If walking is not possible, you can also do a prayer drive.

Our Coach Paul's article, included in this newsletter, "Growing a Heart for our Neighborhoods" can give you some inspiration for prayer walks and drives.

Let's get praying, walking and driving together. I can't wait to hear what this sacred time is like for you. Let's share our discoveries together. If you want to talk with me or anyone on our Vision Team, we'll feel blessed to hear from you. On the Vision Team is Tara, Kerry, Victor, Bettyanne, Donna and yours truly.

Blessings,

Gretchen

When I talk with churches about how to reach new people in the community, the response I often receive is "But what about us members?" Well, of course we want to continue to nurture our current members and help them to go deeper in their walk with Jesus. But often that complaint about "us" reveals a deeper issue of how current members view the community around them. Greg Weins said,

"(Members) get so much comfort from the traditions, rituals and familiar songs lyrics that they will gladly deny the gospel to others so that they can continue to enjoy their coveted church experience."

When Jesus encountered crowds his heart broke, for He saw the hopes, dreams, needs and concerns of people. Vital churches develop the "eyes and heart" of Jesus and see their community the same way. This faith vantage point causes existing members to ask, "who is out in our community and what do they need to hear the Good News?". This perspective means that members put the needs of those who do not have a

church ahead of their own needs and comfort. Jesus said that if we are to find our lives, we have to deny ourselves for the sake of the Gospel. Growing churches understand this and worry less about "us" and more about people in the community.

If your church tends to focus more on member's personal tastes and preferences than the neighborhood, please start organizing prayer walks in your community, get your folk out of the church and "seeing people" with fresh eyes. Ironically (another one of those wonderful faith paradoxes), when we focus on others, we actually find our needs get met in new and powerful ways that never happen if we only ask, "but what about me?"

-Paul Nickerson



From the Desk of the Deacons

What a glorious Easter Sunday celebration! Over 100 joined us for worship, song and praise on Easter Morning. Alleluia! Our Holy Week leading up to Easter began with Palm Sunday 'Hosannas' and our anticipated Children's Message with participating sound effects. On Maundy Thursday, we all listened to our Shadow scripture readings and somber hymns then shared communion in circle offering the Bread of Life and Cup of Salvation to each other. Good Friday's afternoon vigil was time for quiet reflection. On Saturday, the Deacons spread joy and tulips around Jackson Square inviting our neighboring businesses to Easter and thanking them for being part of our community. It was wonderful to see such an extravagant Easter welcome to all!

In May, we will celebrate Mother's Day with pink carnations and learn how to blanket the world with love. During worship on Memorial Day weekend, we ask you to bring in photographs of loved ones who served our country and have passed. We will honor them with a display at the altar. On Memorial Day, we will host a water stand and open our church facilities during the parade, so please join us as we honor those who served and meet our neighbors.

We are also preparing to hold a New Member Sunday soon, so please speak with Nancy or Bettyanne if you would like to join our church. Grace and Peace,
Your Deacons: Nancy Haley, Bettyanne Lang, Tara Haley, Cheryl McMillan & Donna Eliasson



From the Trustees

NEW FIRESIDE ROOM FLOORING! --- It's here! It's beautiful! It's clean! The flooring in our Fireside Room (that's the one on the lower level of the main church building right beneath the Chapel) was replaced just in time for Easter.

Using funds from a trust set up in 1984, trustee and Church School Superintendent Kerry Mortland reports that the newly renovated room will provide better and more flexible space for our various programs.

The total cost of the project was \$4,151.17, but we also had help from Cormac Hogan and Ruben Valentin, who volunteered their time on April 13 to help rip up and get rid of the old carpeting. Hope we haven't forgotten anyone!

This part of our beautiful building has undergone quite a transformation in the last year: repair of the chimney and repainting of the shabby walls to a calming blue shade.

We're still working on other building challenges: repairs to plumbing and floors in the annex kitchen and the repairs to the chimney in the church's 1960 annex.

NEW COPIER IN CHURCH OFFICE --- Sometimes faster-better-cheaper is a good option. So it is with the copier in the church office, which will allow us to print twice as fast for less cost. Thank you to Donna Eliasson for shepherding this project.

Please keep in mind that much of the Trustees work, which is to maintain and enhance our beautiful building, takes place behind the scenes so we can focus on what's most important: Worship of God and welcoming new people. If you see a trustee, thank them.

NEXT MEETING WEDNESDAY, MAY 22 at 6:30 P.M. --- Anyone and everyone is welcome to attend a meeting of the trustees.

For YOUR Trustees
Kathy Mosher, chair, Bob Criswell, Victor DeRubeis, Donna Eliasson, Tom Kosonen, Kerry Mortland, Norm Fulton, trustee emeritus



Notes from the Music Director

SPRINGTIME FOR JACKSON SQUARE! --- It's time to celebrate the Resurrection AND the arrival of spring in another way: the annual Barbara Knapp Memorial Concert by our own historic orchestra in residence, the Southeastern Philharmonic.

Braintree music teacher Michael Coronella, principal clarinetist with the orchestra will play Carl Maria von Weber's bravura "Concertino for Clarinet and Orchestra" in a program that will also include Edvard Grieg's "Almost Spring" some orchestral jazz from Duke Ellington, and tunes from the venerable musical, "My Fair Lady." You can't get much more spring like than that!

Doors will open at 7 p.m. for coffee and dessert. Music will start at 7:30.

Tickets are only \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors and students and \$25 per family. A concert of this quality in Boston would cost you at least three times as much.

Bring a friend, bring an enemy, bring a kid, bring everyone you can. This is THE musical/social event of the year!

Barbara Knapp, who died in 2005, was a longtime member of our church and its choir and played violin in the orchestra. Fun fact: Our own Samantha Mortland was a student of Barbara many years ago.

GREAT JOB, KIDS AND ADULTS --- Many thanks to all the kids who participated in our special procession on Palm Sunday and choral introit on Easter Sunday. They, along with the help of teachers Kerry Mortland and other members of the Church School staff, added immeasurably to our worship.

This year we were also grateful to have the North River Brass Quintet for Palm Sunday, and Jonathan Kessler and Scott Doughty for our Easter Sunday services.

Finally, thanks to the members of our Senior Choir, who commit to providing their very best to our worship week in and week out.

MUSIC AT SANCTUARY HALL 2018-19 --- Plans are already under way for our ninth season of Music at Sanctuary Hall, including our third annual Holiday Extravaganza in December and our 21st annual Little Christmas in Jackson Square in January 2020.

We're also working on a possible music festival to celebrate the 200th anniversary of our church in 2022 and the 400th anniversary of Weymouth.

More in the June newsletter!

Victor DeRubeis
Director of Music
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Church School News

Alleluia Christ is Risen! We celebrated Easter Sunday with such excitement and joy, gathering together with family and friends in worship. We have so much to be thankful for this past year and so much hope for the next year!

We are very grateful for the stunning Annex bulletin Board, handmade by our Sam Hogan. It shows the joy as well as the sadness that we feel during Easter week. If you haven't seen it yet just go into the hallway to view it.

HEIFER COLLECTION

Our amazing church school children collected \$130.00 before Easter to be donated to Heifer. We learned that the money met the criteria for a donor match program and we actually were able to double our donation to \$260.00 with the matching funds. Thank you to the children who worked very hard doing extra chores to earn the money and there was even a donation made in the name of a child by their Prayer pal.

EASTER SUNDAY 4/21

Easter Sunday was such a beautiful day to share with each other. I want to especially thank our Youth singers that sang "Revelation Song" at the opening of the service, what a beautiful job they did, and we look forward to hearing it sung at another worship service. I would also like to thank the hard work and planning that went into our Easter Children's program in the gym by teachers Michelle, Tara and Sam, along with student helpers Alex, Alannah, Emilio and Sinead, that helped with the Egg Hunt, story time and crafts that delighted almost 20 children. In the Nursery Niamh and Jada got right down on the floor and played with our smallest toddlers, keeping them busy and happy. Thanks also to Conor and RosieMae for making the Welcome sign for Visitors on Easter, it was very helpful. Thanks to the floor washers, the egg fillers, the egg "hidlers", the music singers, the gift givers, the prayers, the bulletin board makers, the craft shoppers, the furniture movers, the rug and nail removers, the neighborhood walkers and everyone that put their heart into making Easter the most important and joyful day of the year for us here in East Weymouth!

BIBLE STUDY May 14th at 6:30

Bible Study will start again for the following 6 weeks on Tuesday, May 14th at 6:30. We hope that you will come and share your desire to learn more about the scriptures as we enjoy the fellowship and sharing our faith together. This bible study will begin with the lectionary readings as follows:

May 14- Acts 9:36-43,

May 21- Rev. 21:1-6

May 27- Acts 16: 9-15

June 4: Acts 16: 16-34

June 11: Acts 2: 1-21/ Gen. 11: 1-9

June 18: Prov. 8: 1-4,22-31

FIRESIDE ROOM EDUCATIONAL SPACE

What started with an idea seen in a workbook that I was given has ended with a bright, clean, safe space for our children to be welcomed into each Sunday morning. Two years ago after reading about what it takes to have the best Sunday School, the CE looked into what it would take to remove the old tattered rug from the Fireside room, repair and paint the walls and purchase up to date storage and materials for the best and brightest space. The new vinyl floor was installed on Good Friday and the room was ready for use on Easter Sunday. We have some more things to do before it is complete but it has been transformed from an old tired space to its' present splendor. Come down and take a peek when you are at church.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

I wanted to share a story with you about our annual Operation Christmas Child collection. Here's how it started in East Weymouth. A lovely kind lady Lynne Tenney wanted to share a special project with the children here at the church. She had learned about this opportunity to reach needy children around the world through her daughter that lived in Florida at the time. It involved filling shoeboxes with school items, hygiene items and gifts for children that find themselves in refugee camps and extreme poverty. This is accomplished through the efforts of Samaritan's Purse that will ship the shoeboxes around the world along with health, nutrition, educational and missionary services.

So over 20 years ago we set a collection time of September and October each year and asked for donations from the congregation. Last year our students earned money to buy the items for the boxes. We reached a milestone decision to pack the 20 shoeboxes in plastic, sealable shoeboxes that were sent with a photo of our Sunday School Children and letters of hope and encouragement from them as well.

Last month our dear friend Lynne passed away and some of us from the church went and met with her family at the wake. When we started talking to her children, they mentioned that their mother had made a list of her accomplishments throughout her life and one of those amazing accomplishments had been that she got the Operation Christmas Child Collection started here in East Weymouth.

I am so humbled and proud to be part of this major effort each year along with our dedicated teaching staff and amazing children and a congregation that has a heart for those less fortunate. This year we hope you will continue your kind efforts to donate to our project. We have already received some toys for the boxes, and I can't wait to tell the children.

Kerry Mortland, Dir. Of Children's faith Formation
Seek Joy!



Bible Study

We invite you to join us for 6 consecutive Tuesday evenings as we delve into the Lectionary scripture. We encourage you to bring your Bible and your curiosity. Please call the church office at 781-335-6919 and leave your name and number so that we can contact you in case of a cancellation. Dates: Tuesday Evenings: May 14 through June 18
Time: 6:30 to 7:30



Mission and Outreach

Mother's Day there will be envelopes in the bulletin for donation of blankets to Church World Service. Think of this as a way to honor our mothers sharing warmth and love remembering our own mothers. Thousands of these blankets are sent worldwide to be used in disaster areas. Please consider a donation to share warmth and comfort. Blanket the world with Love. We will collect these envelopes through May. Food Donations are also being accepted for ISS' Food Pantry through April.



Stewardship

The Strawberry Festival and Craft Fair will be held on Saturday, June 15th. The Stewardship Committee is looking for donations of strawberries, cans of whipped cream and biscuits. If you would like to purchase strawberries to donate, please wash, slice and store in a zip lock bag and freeze them. They are on sale now in stores. We have two refrigerators with freezers at our church, one in the Thrift Shop and one on the stage in the Chapel. You may also place your cans of whipped cream in the refrigerators. Please check the expiration dates on the cans before purchasing.

The Stewardship Committee decided not to have a Flea Market table this year, to reduce some of the work required with doing the Fair. The Thrift Shop will be open, and it is accepting gently used clothing and other items to sell.

We will be looking for adult and youth volunteers so please look at the sign-up sheets in the Chapel after church or ask one of our Stewardship Members. A donation list for our Snack Bar will also be placed out if you would like to donate items to that as well.

If you would like to purchase a table to sell your crafts, a 6-foot table with 2 Chairs can be rented for \$30.00. There is a Vendor Registration which must be submitted by June 7th with full payment of cash or check to the East Weymouth Congregational Church. Please ask for a registration form if you want one. There is a 24-hour cancellation policy prior to the

fair, if you have applied and paid, to reimburse anyone who cannot keep or make the date of the 15th.

There will be a raffle item, yet to be decided, and raffle tickets will be available for purchase and sale of \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. This is a wonderful opportunity for Fellowship and to welcome our community to our church. It is a great event to bring family and friends and the neighborhood together to eat some of our famous, well-known Strawberry Shortcake and to browse and shop.

Peace be with you,
The Board of Stewardship



Upcoming Pastoral and Preacher Coverage

May 5th – Rev. Gretchen Elmendorf
May 12th – Rev. Gretchen Elmendorf
May 19th - Rev. Gretchen Elmendorf
May 26th – Rev. Richard Bartlett



Birthdays

May 4
May 19
May 28



In Our Prayers

Brian W + children	Emily	Dave
Pat F	Ann W	Dottie J
Mary	Shirley	Family of Lynn T
Family of Chickie	Jack	First Responders
Servicemen + women	Michael B	Kristin
Mary C	Wendy	Paul
Michael F	Dorothy W	Spring
Longtime friends	Stori L + family	Gigi
Ethan	Caden	Matthew
Rosaria	Muriel	Barrington C
Brian C	Tony D	Tameika D
Justin C	Jordan C	Jada S
Tatiana C	Marlon F	Gov't leaders
Church leaders	Frank	Family of David M
Rita + Darren	Marathon runners	
Security personnel	Joshua M	Alice M
Health of family + loved ones		Joy M
Veronica K	Sri Lanka	Linda P
Amanda Y	Lu	Brody
Brian	Braleigh	Brooklyn
Tanya D	Pastor Gretchen	Karen
Johnathan T	Ed M	Natalie
San Diego		



From the Office

Please have your June submissions to me no later than May 20th. Thank you.