

Congregational Connection

SUMMER S E A S O N



Pastor's Column

“Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night.” George Herbert.

“Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into ... Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” Jeremiah 29:7

Summer Prayers

How have we been praying? What new ways of prayer can we try on? Over the past couple of years, we have grown as church in embracing different ways of prayer in our church. We have our Sunday prayer journal which has been part of our tradition for many years, with prayers for parishioners, our community and our world. We've added to that “Joys and Concerns” as an open time of prayer sharing during worship, and on Communion Sundays, this includes the kids. We have had special rituals of prayer in worship during national or international disasters or tragedies. We pray in ordinary time and at sacred moments like baptisms and funerals. Our prayer team prays confidentially for people every week. Our weekly bulletin includes a prayer list we can include in our daily worship. This Spring and Summer, we have opened our committee meetings with scripture and prayer based on theme of discerning God's vision for us. For our summer worship, we include the ritual, prayers of Hopes and Worries, using rocks, a bowl of water and flower petals. Opportunities for prayer are ceaseless.

What can we try next? How can our prayers grow? I'll share a story of how I was pleasantly surprised a few weeks ago about how desiring the general public is of prayer. Victor, Brenda and I were at an all-town meeting and listening session with Rep. Stephen Lynch where people were invited to speak up about their concerns regarding a gas company's pursuit of imposing a compressor on the South Shore against the will of the majority of citizens and legislators. The auditorium was packed at Abigail Adams Middle School. Many impassioned citizens spoke w/ compelling concerns. When it was my turn to speak, I introduced myself and said I go to the site of the proposed compressor and I pray. Sometimes I pray with children of our church. They create “Prayer Walls.” I then spoke about the need to protect our children from harm.

What surprised me was the applause that filled the room before I even finished a sentence --when I said two simple words -- “I pray.” Wow, are people applauding merely because I pray about this situation? Were they applauding because they know we need prayer and divine intervention? Were they clapping their hands because they are grateful their safety is prayed for? Whatever the answer is, we can be sure of one thing. We have the gift of prayer that we develop from abiding with our Lord Jesus Christ, from worshiping daily with our spiritual prayer practice, and weekly at church. We can freely share this gift. Not everyone knows how to pray and perhaps some don't even know they're important enough to pray for. Our community needs people of faith to pray with and for them. Attached in this newsletter are some great thoughts about prayer, our church and our community from our coach Rev. Paul Nickerson.

How can we pray for our community in new ways?

Will you take the time to find a church member this summer and go on a prayer walk. Write down your thoughts after and see what has come to mind as you have prayed for our community.

Share these thoughts at our worship and Vision meeting on July 21st.

Blessings and thanks. I am praying for you and with you with love.

Gretchen



From the Desk of the Deacons

Summer has finally arrived and the children are on vacation! No more school work; now the fun begins.

The Deacons have decided to try something new; Summer Worship hours and location. We are exploring a different format and want to hear your feedback. Starting on Sunday, June 30th, our Sunday Worship Service will start at 9:30 am and be held in the Chapel. It will be a less formal service; still spiritual but more relaxed for everyone. The Chapel is cooler which will be welcoming in the summer heat. Everyone will sit in a circle so we can see each other and enjoy the company. Bibles and hymnals will be available; pick up your books and find a seat.

Coffee, cold drinks and refreshments will be available before the Worship Service begins. This way everyone can leave right when the service ends and have more time to enjoy with family and friends on Sundays. So set your alarms earlier, and we will see you at 9:30 am on Sunday, June 30th.

Thank you to everyone who attended and helped with the Strawberry Fair. It was a nice community event and helped raise funds for the church expenses.

Even though it is summer and time to enjoy some outside fun, we are still busy going through the vision process. See the Vision Team article in this newsletter for more information. There will be a congregational meeting on July 21st.

The Vitality Team also continues its important community work. There are plans to do Prayer Walks around town and at local parks. Feel free to gather friends and walk around your neighborhoods.

Remember to relax and enjoy the summer months.

The Board of Deacons



From the Trustees

DAYCARE PLAYGROUND REPAIRS --- The Trustees are expected to meet with representatives of South Shore Stars, our biggest tenant, at our July meeting to discuss a proposal to repair a retaining wall in the playground. This is in conjunction with a proposal to extend the day care's current lease, which expires in 2021. This meeting was postponed from June due to a scheduling problem.

ANNEX BOILER CHIMNEY --- Repairs to the boiler chimney, which was damaged in heavy winds earlier this year, are expected to take place this summer.

PLEASE STAY BETWEEN THE LINES --- As you well know, our church parking lot is small. So when you park for worship or other church events or business, please make sure your vehicle uses just ONE space. Remember: If the Holy Spirit can fit, then so can you!

CARILLON OPTIONS --- Our church's digital carillon, given in memory of the late Jean Veno in 2005, is due for some updates. Bob Criswell is exploring the most cost-effective options to restore its comforting sounds to Jackson Square and beyond.

ONLINE GIVING --- In March, Victor DeRubeis attended a Mass. Conference UCC Super Saturday workshop on online giving. He is exploring our options for making it easier for anyone --- church members and not --- to give to our church either one-time or on a regular basis. For YOUR Trustees

Kathy Mosher, chair, Bob Criswell, Victor DeRubeis, Donna Eliasson, Tom Kosonen, Kerry Mortland, Norman Fulton, emeritus (1933-2019)



Notes from the Music Director

SUMMER SERVICES AND DISCO POSTLUDES --- The Deacons have been experimenting this summer with more intimate (and much cooler) Sunday services in the chapel. We're making good use of the old Baldwin Acrosonic spinet piano, and a 1970s-era Wurlitzer parlor organ that was donated to the church years ago.

While the sound doesn't compare to our historic sanctuary organ, it offers a capability the sanctuary instrument doesn't have: the ability to play hymns to a disco beat. So until we return to worship in the sanctuary in September, we'll conclude our services by sending you forth with disco versions of your favorite hymns, including "God of Grace and God of Glory" and "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee."

WE WELCOME NEW CHOIR MEMBERS --- Please say hello to Carolyn Gustine, who has joined Joanne Haley and LeeAnn Wielhouwer in the alto section. And the tenor section has been graced with the presence of Peter Parnell, who is a friend of the Rev. Gary Ritts from when Gary was pastor of the Second Congregational Church in Cohasset.

A HUB OF ARTS ON SATURDAY, SEPT. 21 --- The Weymouth Art Association and Music at Sanctuary Hall will team up for a day-long celebration of visual art and music to kick off the fall season in Jackson Square.

The art association will hold an exhibition and demonstration in the chapel during the day. Then, that evening, the great Jake Armerding will open the ninth season of Music at Sanctuary Hall with his fantastic blend of insightful song-writing and off-the-charts instrumental and vocal virtuosity.

A LITTLE CHRISTMAS IN JACKSON SQUARE XXI --- It seems strange to be even thinking about this now, but preparations have begun for the 21st annual Little Christmas in Jackson Square on Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020. We started with one choir and two soloists in 1999. Who knows what this year's edition will bring? We're hoping to bring back folks who haven't been with us in years.

Stay tuned for further developments!

Victor DeRubeis
Director of Music
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Church School News

Our Church School students and teachers celebrated a blessed Children's Day on June 9th with all of us gathering during worship with gratitude for another year of journeying together in faith. All students received prayer journals so that they could keep a daily routine of faith during their busy Summer, writing about kindness, hope, family time, sports, fun and anything that impacted them. We continue our Summer Sunday Classes each week during worship time which will start at 9:30 beginning on June 30th. This will allow families to leave earlier and have more time for the beach and cookouts on Sunday's.

Wishing you and your family a Summer that allows you to plant the seeds of Faith and Love!

Kerry Mortland, Dir. Of Children's Faith Formation

Here is an excerpt from the book: Faithful Families with an idea for creating some family fun this Summer.
"Prayer Walk"

When I ask adults in my congregation when they feel the presence of God most clearly, I often hear things such as "while hiking," or "when the sun sets, or "in Nature." So often when we consider the wonders of God, we see evidence of God's creative power in snowfall, or rain, or wind. This practice involves walking in nature and noting the marvels of God's creation.

Designed for ages 5+

Materials (All of these materials are optional)

1. Paper bag, basket, or other container for collecting interesting things
2. Magnifying glass
3. Binoculars
4. Camera
5. Sketch pad and pencil or crayons
6. Any material that you need on a hike (sunscreen, bug spray, sunglasses, lunch)

Time Investment: 30 minutes-2 hours or more

How To

1. Pick a day and location appropriate for a walk or hike outside
2. Prepare for your walk and take with you items that are relevant for your context and weather conditions.
3. Introduce that idea of a prayer walk to your family by saying, "We are going for a walk now and to think about all of the special ways that we can see the work of God in the world around us."
4. Choose a way that your family might decide to identify how you see God on your walk. Some options: a. Collect items along the way that seem meaningful and put them in a bag or basket (if appropriate: many parks and nature reserves do not allow the removal of any living things, so take only things such as leaves already lying on the ground, etc.)
b. Encourage everyone to take photos of places where there is evidence of God's work.
c. Draw sketches.
d. Write poems.
5. After the walk, gather together to share what you have learned by sharing your photos, drawings and/or paintings.

Notes: * Consider doing this prayer walk not only on a sunny or pleasant day, but also on days that are rainy, "too hot, too cold," or otherwise not ideal. These imperfect days offer a rich opportunity to see evidence of God's work in ways that might not be apparent on other days.

- This activity will vary greatly depending on the interests and activities of family members. Consider allowing each family member to pick out the ways that he or she sees God's work. One person might photograph, while another collects things, and yet another sketches.

- Variations:
 - Do this prayer walk inside a unique location: a mall, church, etc.
- Take the same walk and travel the same route over a period of time (one time per month for a year, for example) and compare how observations change over time.

- Travel to a special location for the purpose of this practice. Try different national parks, or other local parks and trails.
"This practice excerpted from the book Faithful Families: Simple practices for Daily Family Life, by Traci Smith. Pub. By Chalice Press, 2017. All rights reserved. Used with permission."



Mission and Outreach

Mission and Outreach is collecting socks for homeless shelters in June and July. There will be a basket in the chapel.

We will also be collecting backpacks and school supplies for the Weymouth Youth Office for August and September. Some stores already have sales on school supply items!



Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee wants to extend a HUGE thank you to everyone that helped to make this year's Strawberry Festival and Craft Fair a great, community event. We understand how busy everyone is with all your other commitments and truly appreciate you taking hours out of a beautiful Saturday to spend time at the Church. Everyone was busy selling baked goods and strawberry shortcakes, working in the Thrift Shop, on the Snack Bar and helping to set up and clean up! It would not have been possible without all of you and the donations of strawberries, whipped cream and shortcakes, snack bar items, and even the Dunkin Donuts coffee and donuts! Our vendors enjoyed the conversations and visitors at their tables and Gretchen even set up a Welcome table with giveaway items.

This year's raffle item was six tickets to the Seekonk Speedway along with two padded bleacher seats and was won by Jackson, Donna and Leo Eliasson's grandson. We know where they are going this summer! Enjoy the races!!

We raised \$1,146.13 which included the Thrift Shop sales of \$166. for the day.

Some of you weren't finished when the Fair ended; our dedicated Gillette crew headed off to serve hot dogs, pretzels, and beverages to the Monster Truck spectators. Needless to say, their entire Saturday was spent volunteering their time and efforts for EWCC.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you to our EWCC family for all that you do!

Enjoy your summer!

The Stewardship Committee



Vision Team

Happy Summer everyone! Thank you to all of you who were able to participate in the four Vision Discussions over the past few months. The Vision Team appreciates you taking the time out of your busy Sundays to participate in this very exciting process.

As you know, things change in our lives, environment, and community that are out of our control. We are going through a visioning process to discover what we want the East Weymouth Congregational Church to be in the future and how to get there.

Here is a quick recap of the topics discussed in the four Vision discussions:

1) Reflective History of EWCC, its community and around the World from 1940 to 2019

2) EWCC Community – An Executive Insite Report was reviewed that used a 3-mile radius around the Church and highlighted 12 insites of the demographics of the neighborhoods including the ethnicities, ages, income levels, education, and employment. Also MOSAIC Segments were reviewed. Incredibly, the estimated 2018 population within the 3-mile radius is almost 69,000!!

3) Development of a Purpose Statement – Why do we exist as a Church and what is our impact to be?

4) An exercise to determine "What are our core values?" This was an exercise to determine the top three values that drive the EWCC ministry. Both "current" and "aspirational" values were discussed.

The following represents the top three core values of EWCC from the worksheets submitted.

1. We value treating all people with kindness and respect through our words, actions and deeds.

2. We value reaching with abundant welcome those who may not know us and what we can offer.

3. We value worship that makes us want to be here; preaching, teaching, singing and prayer that inspires hope and renewal.

The next discussion to take place will be to develop a Vision Statement for EWCC; a "picture" of our future in the next 3-5 years as we live out our newly formed values and purpose.

This fifth Vision Church Discussion will take place on Sunday, July 21st in place of a worship service so that everyone can participate. We want you all to be part of this process because our future depends on it. Please plan to attend.

Thank you again to those of you who were able to contribute to these valuable discussions to help determine our Vision for the future of EWCC and how we are going to achieve this.



Can I Pray For You?

Our Coach Rev. Paul Nickerson sends our Pastor and Vitality Team articles every week about church vitality. Here's a recent article great for our church to ponder over and find our own ways to put into action:

If you have been reading this newsletter fairly regularly, you know that a key in reaching new people is to be out in the community meeting people and building relationships. These connections lead to hearing people's stories and having opportunities to share our journey as well.

As you build these new relationships, and hear the life situations of others, I want to encourage you to ask people the following question:

"Can I pray for you?"

Or, "Can my church pray for you?"

Or, "How might I best pray for you?"

When we ask such questions, we are offering one of the most incredible things a church has to give to the community: the power of corporate prayer for someone's life situation. We are inviting someone we have come to know the opportunity to have their joys and concerns lifted up to God by a group of faithful people. As one author said, "I don't know how intercessory prayer works, but I know what it feels like when people are praying for me". We can give people that wonderful experience of knowing and feeling that a congregation is praying for them.

I have found that most people in our community, regardless of their faith background, or lack of any faith or church experience, readily accept an invitation of prayer. Such an offer shows our genuine concern and care for others and it deepens the relationships we are building. And an added side benefit is that we grow in our faith when we offer to pray and do pray for others.

As you meet more and more new people in the community, be sure to ask, "How can I pray for you?"



UCC Desk Calendar Plan Book

UCC Desk Calendar Plan Books (July 2018- December 2019) are available for purchase. The cost will vary depending on the quantity ordered. It will be either \$16 or \$18 per Plan Book. Please let Bettyanne know if you wish to order a Plan Book.



Birthdays

Greg Sewell

July 7th

Tom Kosonen

July 9th

Bettyanne Lang

July 26th

Samantha Hogan

July 27th

Michelle Young

August 15th

Donna Eliasson

August 17th

Summer McMorrow

August 20th

Victor DeRubeis

August 29th



In Our Prayers

Michael B	Jack	Mary
Dave	Kristin	First Responders
Servicemen & women	Shirley	Angela
Bette	Lu	Wendy
Paul	Michael F	Caden
Ethan	Mary O	Sharon
Olive	Karen	Paul F
Dottie J	Linda P	Successful fair
Victims of tornadoes & floods		Brian O
Jane	Joy	Linda
Michael B	Dorothy J	Kaycee B
Linda P	Graduates	Beautiful weather
Haley family gathering	Richard B	Frank
Linda D	Harold M	Ed M
Virginia Beach victims	Ethel	Tom K
Jim W	Karen G	



From the Office

Please have your September submissions to me no later than August 20th.
Thank you.