

# Congregational Connection



## Pastor's Column

*"Gratitude is not about stuff. Gratitude is the emotional response to the surprise of our very existence, to sensing that inner light and realizing the astonishing sacred, social, and scientific events that brought each one of us into being."* Diana Butler Bass

English essayist Samuel Johnson once said, *"Gratitude is a fruit of great cultivation."*

*"For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers."* Ephesians 1:16

Dear Church,

I am grateful for the month of November we will walk and pray through together, with the love of God, the grace of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. We have so much to look forward to. What will God reveal to us? How will God use us to benefit God's people? What new things will God do in each of our lives, with our families, our neighborhoods and together as community inside and outside the walls of our church? For all that is divinely ordained and yet to come, church, let us say in advance, thank you Almighty One.

Most fittingly, our Pilgrim Association, with whom we are in covenant, is having their Fall meeting with a nationally influential theologian – Diana Butler Bass, whose newest book is on Gratitude: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks. The Fall Fellowship gathering for our three southeast associations in the UCC (Barnstable, Pilgrim and Old Colony) will be on Sunday, November 17th at the First Congregational Church in Fairhaven.

Butler Bass, will present What's Gratitude Got to Do With It? Why We Need 'Thanks' Now More Than Ever. She writes that gratitude is not just a private feeling but is also inherently social, connecting us as individuals with others. If we can practice radical gratitude, and stop conceiving of gratitude as transactional, she said, we can change ourselves and society. Gratitude is a spiritual awareness and a social structure of gift and response.

"There's a different way to live that's really possible. And I think that gratitude is one of the gateways into that world," she said.

Speaking of the world, we are growing in gratitude and becoming more porous and open to our wider community and purpose in this world. For example, the good people of Jackson Square Business Association are partnering with us to put forth a wonderful 3rd Annual Jackson Square Holiday Stroll and Tree Lighting while also giving holiday gifts to Weymouth Youth and Family Services. As we plan, we find ourselves thankful to make new friends.

We also can be so grateful to our Stewardship Committee this month especially, the Mighty Trio, who not only have organized our Stewardship campaign, but also our Christmas Fair coming up.

We can be grateful for our Veterans and that we can greet them right in front of our church on Veteran's Day and collect hygiene kits for Brockton VA Hospital. We can be thankful for the children and teachers putting together gift boxes for Operation Christmas Child and to the

dedicated people of Mission and Outreach & Christian Education who will bring youth and adults to Interfaith Social Services Food Bank to stock up the shelves for Thanksgiving. We're grateful to our Deacons, Music Director and Choir who will bring forth a cornucopia of blessed worship services. Actually, come to think of it, we can be thankful to each and every one of our church leaders, staff and committees, please thank them this month for all the ministry they unfurl day after day.

We are grateful in anticipation and will celebrate to the rafters when the Joyful Voices of Inspiration Gospel choir comes to our church, Music at Sanctuary Hall, Nov. 10th and "Magnifies" all that is holy here.

We can most especially be thankful for each one of you. A new pew study reports that fewer and fewer people are going to church "religiously." What the Pew report left out however, is gratitude for all the "mighty people" (Sonia's apt description) who fill this church with love, hope and light and praise God through worship and presence NO MATTER WHAT everyone else is doing.

Thank you, church. I am so grateful to minister and grow in faith and gratitude with you.

Blessings and thanksgiving,  
Gretchen



## From the Desk of the Deacons

This is an exciting time for worship, growth, sharing, and fellowship. There will be opportunities to work together sharing our light. Your Deacons are busy planning worship and special services for Thanksgiving, the Season of Advent and Christmas. Lots of fun things to do. Our Christmas Fair will be on November 16. After that there is Thanksgiving Sunday, November 24th. On Saturday, November 30th the Deacons will decorate our Church for Christmas. Please join us for this annual tradition. The Advent Season begins on December 1st. There will be many opportunities to participate in the services and other activities as candle lighters, readers, and participants in the pageant.

The time of the Christmas Eve services is currently being surveyed. Times suggested are 5:00, 6:00, 6:30, 7:30. If for some reason you have not been reached, please speaking to a Deacon.

The Southeastern Philharmonic Orchestra's Annual Christmas Concert will be on Sunday, December 8 @ 2:30 pm. If it is anything like last year it will be amazing!

The Sunday before Christmas we will be asking for cookies and other items for our shut-in baskets. Particulars will be in your Sunday bulletin.

More information will be forthcoming on the following events: December 7th – The Jackson Square Christmas Stroll and Tree Lighting and the 20th Little Christmas in Jackson Square Concert, January 5th at 3:00 P.M.

It is our hope that this season of thanksgiving will bring peace, joy and love into our hearts and homes. God Bless.

Deacons: Donna Eliasson, Nancy Haley, Tara Haley, Bettyanne Lang, and Cheryl McMillan

### Veteran's Day Worship, Sunday, November 10th

Veteran's Day (Armistice Day) is a federal holiday observed annually on November 11, for honoring military veterans, that is, persons who have served in the United States Armed Forces.

### Veteran's Day Parade, Monday, November 11th

Traditionally we open our church so participants and attendees at the Parade are able to use our rest rooms. This is so welcome by the folks. We serve coffee/cocoa for those who would like it. If you would like to help, all that is required is to set up a card table and a couple of chairs for the workers, distribute the coffee/cocoa and clean up. Helpers will need to be at the church by 9:00 A.M. The service held at the Memorial is at 9:00 with the parade starting at 10:00. The streets are closed for the service and parade. Please let Bettyanne know if you are able to help.



### **Notes from the Trustees**

**A BEAUTIFUL NEW PLAYGROUND** --- The Trustees and South Shore Stars last month celebrated the newly renovated playground that is designed to provide a safe and creative play for young minds who use the space at least through 2031. More than 100 people attended the grand re-opening with food, dancing, and great fellowship. If you get a chance, check it out!

Still to be done: the remediation of an underground oil tank that can no longer be used. We have been working with an Everett company named Tanks-A-Lot (!), which is expected to provide a safe and environmentally sound solution that consists of removing several thousand gallons of oil and then filling a tank with a slurry, essentially a mixture of rocks and water, which will provide a clean and stable permanent foundation for the playground

**ANNEX BOILER CHIMNEY** --- Repairs to the annex boiler chimney were to be completed before the winter. It was heavily damaged in heavy winds earlier this year, have been delayed until this fall and are being co-ordinated with the day care's playground work.

**DAY CARE KITCHEN FLOOR** --- We are ready to move on replacing the floor in the kitchen of South Shore Stars. The damage that resulted in the need for the floor replacement will be covered by the church's insurance policy.

For YOUR Trustees

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

**WHO WE ARE** --- Your Trustees are members of East Weymouth Congregational Church, UCC, who have been elected to take care of the 114-year-old main church building and the nearly 60-year-old annex, plus the grounds. We are responsible for making sure the building is as safe and secure as possible, both physically and financially.



### **Notes from the Music Director**

**"MAGNIFY" WITH JOYFUL VOICES OF INSPIRATION!** --- The date is Sunday, Nov. 10. The time is 3 p.m. Invite someone for the moving experience of a gospel choir. Joyful Voices of Inspiration is an interfaith, multicultural, intergenerational group of 40 voices strong who LOVE to sing in our beautiful sanctuary.

Donnell Patterson, the conductor, will have you up on your feet (or rising in your heart) in the celebration of life and faith.

This is a pay-what-you-can event, with a suggested donation of \$10 a person (or \$20 per family) to help defray the group's costs.

**SPO HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA DEC. 8** --- This year's Southeastern Philharmonic Orchestra promises to be yet another extraordinary celebration of our community orchestra in residence. Mark the date and time: Sunday, Dec. 8, at 2:30 p.m. This is a major year-end fundraiser for the orchestra and the church, and it also promises to draw a capacity crowd, as it has for the last two years.

We're working to keep the admission prices as low as possible to make it accessible to as many as possible. Watch the Sunday bulletin for more details.

**JAZZ BRUNCH DEC. 22 AT NOON!** --- Weymouth High School student Luke Seto will lead a jazz band from Weymouth High School's Music Department will join us for a Jazz Brunch following our Christmas Sunday/Fourth Sunday of Advent service on Dec. 22.

We're planning an extended coffee hour of fellowship at 11:15 while the group sets up, and then about 40 minutes of Christmas music in some great jazz arrangements.

Let's start a new community tradition!

**THANK YOU, MUSIC COMMITTEE** --- Our concerts would not go nearly as smoothly if it weren't for those who work behind the scenes to help with refreshments, collect money, and prepare payment for the musicians' fees. A big thank you to Kerry Mortland, Karen DeMasi, Lee Wielhouwer, Tara Haley and (and others I forgot) who play an important part of making our visitors feel welcome and making our hospitality extraordinary.

Our Sept. 28 season-opening performers, Andy and Judy Daigle, were blown away by the way we bring hope, love, and light to others. And Jake Armerding celebrates us every time he visits.

**CHRISTMAS KIDS' CHOIR** --- The children's choir is an important part of our musical ministry. We will have a meeting in the sanctuary on Sunday, Nov. 4, right after coffee hour.

The children will be singing during the Christmas season and at A Little Christmas in Jackson Square on the afternoon of Sunday, Jan. 5.

Remember: The gift of music is one of the best gifts your child can give to the Christ Child --- and to all of us.

**JACKSON SQUARE HOLIDAY STROLL DEC. 7** --- Our church and the businesses of Jackson Square are planning a bigger and better celebration to kick off the Christmas season on Saturday, Dec. 7, from noon to 5 p.m.

Our own Niamh Hogan will be leading a group of carolers with help from Kerry Mortland, and we're planning a great music program. More in next month's newsletter!

Victor DeRubeis

Director of Music

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### **Church School News**

In mid-October our Church School students took a walk down to Lovell Park and spent their time placing Kindness rocks around the field for children and families to find. They took great care to write kind and encouraging words of hope on each rock. This was a lesson about reaching out to our community in a loving, caring way to show them what we learn each week in church, which is to "Love our Neighbors, as Ourselves." The children have also placed rocks in their Prayer Garden on the church lawn to reach out to others with their message. Each week we see children who gather at the Prayer garden while waiting for their siblings who are in Dance Classes. There will soon be a sign from the children that will grace the Garden.

Don't forget to help us fill our shoeboxes with your donations. We are accepting items for Operation Christmas Child up until November 10th. On the 10th we will gather all of our children to help fill the 20 shoeboxes that will be delivered around the world to needy children in crisis. Check your bulletin each week for the items that can fill a shoebox. We thank you in advance for your generosity and graciousness in helping us to serve others.

November and December and always busy months for families and we will certainly be busy in our Church School, too. Our children and youth will offer to volunteer at the ISS Food Pantry on November 24th as food donations come in. Each year the kids sort food and check expiration dates of all donated food items before they are put on the shelves.

On December 7th we will be Christmas Caroling in Jackson Square from 3:00 to 4:00pm. We will gather at the Artisan's in the Square shop and then Carol all through the Square ending up at the church for the Annual Christmas Tree Celebration on our lawn that starts at 4:30 with many musical offerings from the community.

On December 15th we will be presenting our annual Christmas Pageant where we tell the story of Christ's birth in Bethlehem, an amazing story that has been retold for over two thousand years. We hope that you will bring your nana and papa, your friends, your neighbors, your cousins and your excitement and celebrate this blessed event with our children. There will be a rehearsal at 4:00 on Saturday, December 14th.

Since November is upon us, I am including an excerpt from the book "Faithful Families" about being Grateful this Thanksgiving Season. Here is a prayer for families to use around their Thanksgiving table. Kerry Mortland, Dir. Of Children's Faith Formation Seek Joy!

Lord,

We feel so blessed to have been given such a wonderful family. We ask that our roots would be deep in your love. Fill our hearts, friendships and homes with your truth and forgiveness. We thank you for each person, for their unique qualities and special characters.

Watch over each one and keep them safe,  
Fill their lives with your goodness,  
Inspire their hearts to follow you,  
Bless the work of their hands,  
And weave us all closer together.

Amen.

Read more: [https://www.living-prayers.com/events/thanksgiving\\_prayer.html#ixzz63N1bZpsu](https://www.living-prayers.com/events/thanksgiving_prayer.html#ixzz63N1bZpsu)

### Gratitude Tree

Cultivating a spirit of gratitude has proven to lower stress and lead people toward a more optimistic worldview and greater life satisfaction. What better day to cultivate a spirit of gratitude than Thanksgiving? Thanksgiving is not a religious holiday, but it is a perfect day to focus on our blessings. This version of a gratitude tree is simplified in that it makes use of a tree you already have growing rather than having you craft one.

Designed for ages 5+

#### Materials

1. Construction paper
2. Scissors
3. Hole Punch
4. Markers/crayons/pencils
5. Yarn
6. A tree (or bush) in the yard with branches low enough to hang ornaments from.

Time Investment: 15-45 minutes for the activity, plus time to make the gratitude ornaments.

#### How To;

- 1) Cut out construction paper circles, punch a hole in each of them, and tie a loop of yarn through each hole. This will create the circle ornaments that can hang on the tree. Make enough circle ornaments for each family member to have at least three.
- 2) On Thanksgiving Day, before or after the meal, ask each family member to sit at the table and write down on the ornament at least three reasons he or she is thankful (one reason per ornament). Younger children can draw pictures. Remind everyone that the reasons will be shared.
- 3) Gather outside at the tree.
- 4) Take turns naming the items and hanging them on the tree.
- 5) After the conclusion of the tradition, someone says "Our tree is full of so many reasons why we are grateful this day. Let us continue our celebration together knowing that our lives are full! Let's say Amen!
- 6) Invite everyone to take their ornaments home with them.

Notes:

It is easy for some people to think of things that they are grateful for. It's more of a challenge for others. Help those who need a little assistance by prompting. Is there anyone in this house you are thankful for? What about the food you eat or the clothes you wear?

Try not to evaluate what people (particularly children) list on their gratitude ornaments. A child might want to be grateful for her toys, her videos games, and her puzzles instead of the bed she sleeps in, the food she eats and the clothes she wears. The exercise is about naming things that we are grateful for, not inspiring guilt.

Variations:

Create an indoor tree by putting a large branch in a tall vase.

Make gratitude ornaments shaped like leaves

Do this exercise on a different Fall day.

*This practice excerpted from the book Faithful Families: Simple Practices for Daily Family Life by Traci Smith. Published by Chalice Press, 2017. All rights reserved. Used with permission.*



### Stewardship

On Saturday, November 16th Santa's helpers will be working hard at our Annual Christmas Fair. The Church will be bustling with vendors and members selling crafts, children visiting Santa and people buying baked goods and taking chances on raffles and silent auction items. It will be a fulfilling day of holiday celebration with our family, friends and guests who come through our doors to shop, eat, and watch the South Shore Dance Academy performance.

It takes months of preparation and a full team effort to make this happen every year. The Stewardship Committee is very thankful to everyone on our Church team. It is so heartwarming to see our Church family laughing and working together!

There will be a Holiday Food Basket Raffle again this year. There are lists out for anyone to sign up and volunteer their time and talents. Or, just ask a Stewardship member where you can help.

The Stewardship Committee appreciates all the help it receives to make this day so prosperous and successful. Bless you all for your dedication and commitment.

Our Kick-off luncheon for the Stewardship Campaign was delicious and wonderfully filled with prayer and good fellowship. Also, please remember to turn in your 2020 pledge cards. "The Way" is our theme all through the year of 2020. When you make a committed pledge to the Church, it is helpful to the Trustees who have the task of completing the Church budget. And your commitment helps the Church to do God's work in many other ways throughout the year, in the community and around the world. If you need a pledge card, please ask anyone on the Stewardship Committee and hard copies are on the table in the Sanctuary. Thank you so much.

Thank you again to our Church Family. We wish you all a very Blessed Holiday Season.

The Stewardship Committee

Tara Haley, Cheryl McMillan, Kathy Mosher



### Birthdays

Karyl Lew  
Tara Haley  
Yvonne Gillis  
Stori Levarity  
Diane Gillespie

November 1  
November 6  
November 11  
November 16  
November 30



### In Our Prayers

Michael B	First Responders	Kelly
Jack	Servicemen & women	Kristin
Sonia	Peace	Angela
Bette	Wendy	Michael F
Paul	Ethan	Mary W
Linda D	Shirley	Mighty Quinn
Brian & Crystal	Brody	Kathy
Brooklyn	Braleigh	Joy M
Alexis	Dave	Johnathan T
Francisco	Linda O	Mary W
Sam's birthday	Mary W	Paul & Priscilla
Dave C	Paul F	Anita
Georgia L	Dottie J	Donna
Linda K	Natalie	

Volunteers walking for breast cancer



### From the Office

Please have your December submissions to me no later than November 20th. Thank you.