



EST. 1639

First Church of Rowley

...A voice of hope serving the community

MAY 2025 STEEPLE NOTES



(978) 948 3993
175 MAIN ST ROWLEY MA 01969
FIRSTCHURCHROWLEY@GMAIL.COM

PASTOR'S CORNER

How to Reap the Health & Happiness Benefits of Church

If you want to find the happiest, healthiest people in any society, a good place to look is inside its houses of worship.

In the United States, active participants in congregational life are almost 50 percent more likely to say they're "very happy," according to data from the Pew Research Center. The religiously active are also more likely than others to say they're "very healthy" and to avoid risky health behaviors such as frequent drinking, smoking and physical inactivity. Pew finds active religious life correlates with happiness and healthy habits globally as well.

Explanations for high well-being scores among the faithful include the social factor. Active congregants build solid friendships, feel an overarching sense of purpose and regularly do activities together that feel good, such as group singing and volunteering to make others' lives better.

Now, new research shows which churchgoers tend to reap the most wellbeing benefits from church life – and why some people, conversely, experience few durable benefits after attending church occasionally on a Sunday morning. This insight can help as we consider: does it matter whether churchgoing becomes a habit? Can't I get the same boost from a church service if I just go now and then when I'm not so busy?

Yes, it matters, according to findings published in 2024 in the Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion. The same worship service that leaves regular attendees feeling positive and empowered can cause very different feelings among those who don't attend often enough to feel part of the community. Attending occasionally can be fraught with anxiety because church always feels a bit unfamiliar; versus attending regularly, which makes church feel peaceful and anchoring, like a wellspring of reliable strength for the week ahead.

"We observed that positive and negative emotions appeared to be optimized... when the respondent had attended church during the past weekend and had a routine of regularly attending religious services," says the 20-page JSSR article titled, "See You Sunday?".

PASTOR'S CORNER

How to Reap the Health & Happiness Benefits of Church

“This result lends support to the spiritual capital thesis, which suggests that only those who have capital built up (e.g., know how to use or get the most out of religious practices) will gain the most benefit from participation.”

When I saw this article, I was intrigued, so I interviewed the lead author for a news story. He told me that if a person attends worship now and then, they have fewer touchpoints to relate to and struggle to gain a true sense of belonging.

“The study shows that people who attend regularly, and attend a particular weekend service, see a gain in positive emotions and a decrease in negative emotions as functions of worship attendance,” said Dr. Blake Victor Kent, a sociologist at Westmont College and lead author of the study. “We have to lean into Sabbath and rhythm as fundamental aspects of our created nature.”

Simply put, habitual attenders get more out of worship and church life overall. A closer look shows why. They know how to appreciate and engage any number of beneficial features on a given day in the sacred space. They're able, for instance, to ask for prayer support while going through hard times, sing a familiar hymn, hug a friend, be surprised by an announcement or delight in cheery altar flowers that they know came from a friend's garden.

In these times when so many of us are looking for ways to feel happier and healthier, it helps to ponder what's in our control. Finding ways to practice regular churchgoing can dramatically raise your quality of life and help you live longer. In church, everyone belongs. Now we know how to systematically evoke that feeling and the many benefits that come with it. See you Sunday?





The Music Committee Welcomes You to the May Edition of Steeple Notes!

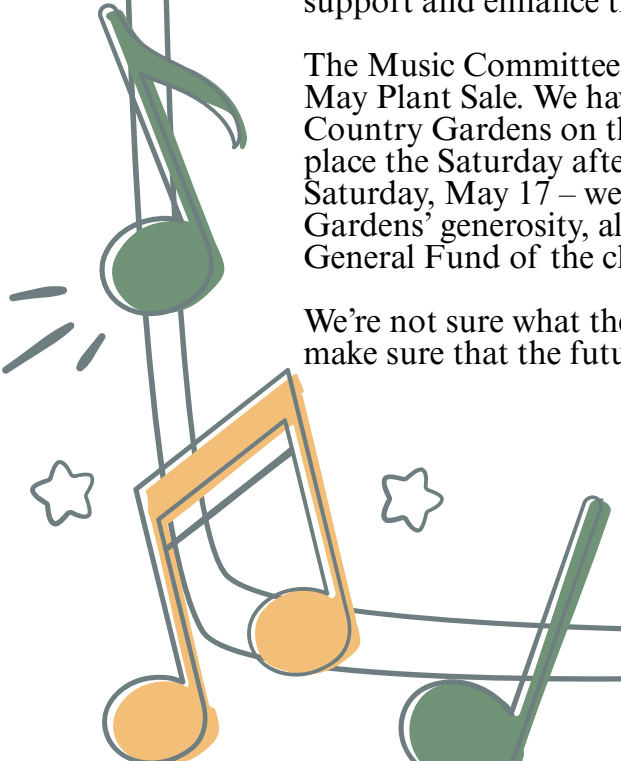
The core mission of the Music Committee comes from the Bylaws: “The Music Committee is responsible for providing appropriate music for Sunday and other services of the Church.” We’re also responsible for hiring an organist/keyboardist and/or choir director at the church’s request.

We’ve had the chance to work with many church leaders over the past few years. Some pastors like to choose their own music, so under their leadership, the Music Committee only coordinated special music for services. Recently, Rev. Jeff has been choosing the majority of hymns, while the Music Committee has been coordinating musicians for services. Like all FCOR committees, we need to balance what we want to do with the budget that is available.

How does Rev. Jeff or the Music Committee go about choosing music for a service, whether it is the opening or closing hymn or the music for the Inspirational Singers? Usually, we start with the Bible verses and the sermon topic or the church season or service. We’ll check to see if there are any hymns that are a thematic match or if there is music for that particular church season (for example, a communion hymn for communion Sunday, Advent music for December, etc.). We draw from many different hymnals as well as from FCOR’s music library. Sometimes there will be a recommendation from one of the folks involved in the music program or a request from someone involved with the service. Other times, if we can’t find a match, we might choose a hymn that is simply a favorite! We do always try to find music that will support and enhance the content of the service.

The Music Committee holds one major fundraising event each year: the May Plant Sale. We have been fortunate to be able to partner with Country Gardens on this yearly sale. Generally, the Plant Sale takes place the Saturday after Mother’s Day. This year it is being held on Saturday, May 17 – we hope you will stop by! Thanks to Country Gardens’ generosity, all proceeds of the Plant Sale go directly to the General Fund of the church.

We’re not sure what the future will bring, but the Music Committee will make sure that the future is full of music!





HAPPY Birthday



5/1 Charles Hazen

5/2 Dennis Ward

5/6 Lauren Sanford

5/9 Dick Cummings

5/10 Susan Hazen

5/13 Roger Merry

5/17 Ray Hill

5/19 Megan McCormick

5/22 Michael Mulkern

5/23 Karlene Merry

5/24 Jordan Ward

5/25 Elizabeth (Hazen) Morris

5/27 Madeleine Schmuck





Happy Anniversary

5/8 CRAIG & LISA STEVENS

5/10 SHAWN & LISA NESTOR

5/10 JIM & HEIDI SOMERS

5/12 CHARLES & SUSAN HAZEN

5/19 ANDREW & ROBIN KAY

5/28 DICK & PATTI CUMMINGS

Many Hands make light work

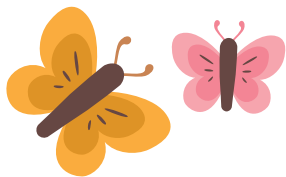
After Church Fellowship Assignments

January – Compassionate Care Network
February – Thrift Shop
March - Diaconate
April – Missions
May – Music Committee and Inspirational Singers
June – Finance/Trustees
July – Thrift Shop
August - None
September – Missions
October – Finance/Trustees
November - Diaconate
December – Music Committee and Inspirational Singers.

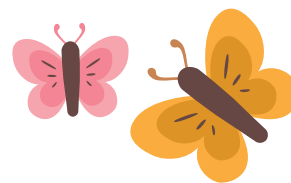
Steeple Notes Entry Schedule

January -Compassionate Care Network
February - Missions
March - Deacons (including Christian Ed.)
April - Finance/Trustees
May - Music Committee
June - The Thrift Shop
July - Pastoral Relations Committee
August - Getting to Know You
September - Golf Tournament & Flower Committee
October - Old Tyme Country Fair
November - Community Dinner Team
December - Pancake Breakfast Team

Welcoming additional entries as needed!



MAY



UPCOMING EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MAY 17 **PLANT SALE**
8:30AM - 10:00AM

MAY 28 **COMMUNITY CAFE**
9:00AM - 1:00PM

Mondays

COA Fitness Group 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

COA Line Dancing (Beginner) 4:30 AM - 5:15 PM

COA Line Dancing (Intermediate) 5:30 AM - 6:15 PM

Wednesdays

Getting to Know Us 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Thursdays

COA Fitness Group 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Thrift Shop 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Al anon 7 PM - 8:15 PM

Saturdays

Thrift Shop 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

AA 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM





Community

Cafe

May 28th 2025

8:30 AM - 10:00 AM

We welcome new and familiar faces to our community cafe where we gather to enjoy coffee and a treat!




Sponsored by the First Congregational Church of Rowley's Missions Committee.



*FIRST
CONGREGATION
AL CHUCH OF
ROWLEY*

*175 Main Street
Rowley MA 01969*



*firstchurchrowley@gmail.com
firstchurchrowley.org
(978) 948 3993*



Get ready for summer at the
First Church of Rowley's

Plant Sale

Saturday, May 17, 2025 9:00 am–1:00 pm
Kick off the summer with beautiful plants for your garden!
Enter our raffle to win a beautiful hanging plant!

**First Church
of Rowley**

175 Main Street (Rt. 1A), Rowley, MA
Questions? Contact the church
at 978-948-3993
or visit our website
www.firstchurchrowley.org

*We are a church that lives by Faith. is known by Love.
A voice of Hope serving the Community.*