



# APRIL 2025 STEEPLE NOTES

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



JOIN US FOR  
**HOLY WEEK**

**SUNDAY APRIL 13TH - PALM SUNDAY**

9:00 - 9:15 AM: GATHER OUTSIDE ROWLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
9:15 AM: PROCESSION WITH PALMS TO CHURCH  
9:30 AM: PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE

**THURSDAY APRIL 17TH - MAUNDY THURSDAY**

7:00 PM: SERVICE OF COMMUNION & TENEBRAE

**SUNDAY APRIL 20TH - EASTER SUNDAY**

5:45 AM: OUTDOOR SUNRISE SERVICE AT ROWLEY TOWN LANDING  
9:30 AM: EASTER WORSHIP SERVICE AT CHURCH

175 MAIN STREET ROWLEY MA 01969  
(978) 948 3993

FIRSTCHURCHROWLEY@GMAIL.COM  
WWW.FIRSTCHURCHROWLEY.ORG

## **MINISTER'S CORNER**

### **A Compass for Disorienting Times**

When a rare earthquake shook Rowley and the region on Jan. 27, our first impulse – once we'd steadied our feet – was to connect. We grabbed our phones and computer keyboards: Did you feel that? What was it? Did anything get damaged? Is everyone OK?

Reaching out seems to be instinctive when disruption leaves us disoriented. Pushed off of our familiar moorings, we scramble to understand what's happened and what it means. We need context for the chatter in our frenzied, anxious minds. We reach out to hear and be heard; to understand and be understood. These are disorienting times – and not just when the tectonic plates are moving.

At breakneck pace, we're seeing federal agencies shuttered, thousands of jobs lost, markets gutted of their value and formerly close alliances frayed by spiking levels of distrust. Foreign students are being detained and taken away for activism that the Government deems threatening.



Meanwhile, artificial intelligence is curled up like a loaded spring, ready to explode and transform how we do everything from medicine to education, travel and day-to-day work. Climate change isn't slowing down, nor are its myriad ripple effects. No wonder it feels like the earthquake in our neighborhood never stopped. It just keeps taking new forms.

But big questions remain constant: Where do we turn for context, for authentic connection to make sense of it all? Where can we turn to process what's going on, what's ultimately at stake and to be understood – to be appreciated for who we are – in the midst of it all?

We are blessed in this region to have settings where ideas, concerns and feelings can be shared. Residents forge bonds through schools and teams, community gardens, fitness activities, public events and arts programs. We hope no one ever feels overwhelmed alone, yet we know plenty don't feel a sense of belonging.

## **MINISTER'S CORNER**

### **A Compass for Disorienting Times**

For our part as Rowley's First Church, we aim to spread the welcome mat lavishly wide and honor the wisdom every person brings. We build it into how we worship, how we learn, grow and create things of beauty together. When we process this wild world together in dialogue with God, tradition and each other, we end up manifesting what we're meant to be and do in this world. We get there by making room for everyone to be heard each time we gather.

This ethos comes alive every Sunday morning in worship and carries us through Holy Week (April 13 – 20). As we recall together the final days of Jesus' life, as well as his death and resurrection, our lives and world just might get perceived anew against that backdrop.

If you don't have a church home, I hope you'll join us at First Church for Holy Week, including a Palm Sunday procession through town before worship; Maundy Thursday Tenebrae at 7 pm; and Easter worship, outside at 5:45 AM and at church at 9:30. Full details are on our website: [firstchurchrowley.org](http://firstchurchrowley.org).

Friends, what you've gained in wisdom, curiosity and wonder can help all of us appreciate what matters and what's true. May we find our best connections together and use those relational threads to navigate, with wisdom and grace, all that lies ahead.

Yours in faith,

Rev. Jeff





# Finance and Trustees Board

Our church provides spiritual inspiration and support to our congregation and the local and greater community. These are our top priorities. To fulfill our reason for being, the church needs to fulfill many practical and legal requirements. In that latter context, the Finance and Trustees Board is entrusted by the congregation to manage the finances, investments and numerous business requirements for the church AND to maintain the buildings and grounds, and manage access to the entire campus. The Board ensures guidelines set by the Safe Church Committee are followed, and that Sanctuary-access and usage also requires review and approval by the Diaconate.

- Work of the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Chairpersons is overseen by the Board. The functions of the Sexton, Bookkeeper, Technology Committee and Memorials are also under its jurisdiction.
- Each month the Board monitors overall financial position, year-to-date expenses and income. It follows spending guidelines approved in the Annual Budget for maintenance and regular operations, reviews specific expense and access requests, ensures bills are paid, payroll is processed and maintains a relationship with the firm that manages our investments. *(In this church year, Boston Financial the firm selected by the Board, was sold to CapTrust that took over management for our investments).*
- To respond promptly to urgent needs, the Board expanded its voting sessions to occur twice a month: At our scheduled meetings on the last Wednesday of the month **and in addition** if needed, on the Wednesday midway between meetings. The Board does not meet in December and July, but online votes can still take place in those periods, when necessary.

So far this year the Board has accomplished 11 additional milestones: **It...**

- Adapted updated Rates for Room Rentals and Personal Services of the Pastor and Sexton
  - This was based on research by Eric Gundrum and the Finance Chair to compare our pricing structure to other churches and incorporate requests from Rev. Jeff and Eric Fila.
- Developed a comprehensive Contact-Database
  - Representing the Board, from multiple sources the Finance Chair developed a list of all people who are, or have been, affiliated with the church that was reviewed and approved by Dave Irving - Clerk of the Church.

# Finance and Trustees Board

- This database will be now be continuously updated, allowing the Board to identify all people who have an interest in the church and may choose to contribute to our programs, as a result of being kept informed of the great strides being made by our congregation
- Defined and approved a list of responsibilities for each person with official responsibilities on the Board and each person who reports to the Board
- Adapted two chairpersons: one for finance and one for property management.
  - This organization reflects the two major components of the Board's purpose: (1) Financial and Business Management and (2) Property Management, Access and Safety
- Authorized purchase of new software to enable identification of the appropriate people to receive mailings for each topic that was implemented by the Bookkeeper for use in mailings to raise funds. In addition, in the role of Church Administrator, Nicole can also use this database for mailings requested by all organizations
- Assumed responsibility to internally process our own payroll including all of the state and federal reporting, thereby eliminating the need for an outside accounting firm for payroll.
  - Implementation of the online version of QuickBooks made it possible for our Bookkeeper to now perform this responsibility
- Invested in technology to enable our Church Services to be recorded and posted on the Church website: <https://www.firstchurchrowley.org>
- Updated our insurance coverage to keep pace with inflation and current uses of the church
- Added outside directional signage to make the campus more inviting as designed by Glen Pyburn
- Replaced the windows in the Thrift Shop to eliminate the leaks, with the work done by Eric Fila
- Had selective trimming of dangerous tree limbs performed around the church property and at the property lines

Following the adapted role definitions, the Board also writes and negotiates agreements, manages the work of the bookkeeper, and ensures filings and responses to regulatory requirements and denominational expectations are fulfilled.

Every fall, the Finance Chair prepares a complete draft of the following calendar-year-budget for the full Board to review. It includes amounts from the Boards and



# Finance and Trustees Board

Committees that submit budget requests. When approved, the Board presents it to the congregation for examination and final approval.

- Importantly, the budget is a plan that estimates income and expenses. Expenses approved by the congregation reflect its priorities for the next calendar year. It is **not** an authorization to automatically spend. Just like a household budget, the approved budget becomes a guideline to be followed, subject to having enough money to meet current and foreseen obligations.
- Accordingly, during the year, the Board monitors our income and evaluates specific expense requests as they occur to ensure the church has enough money to honor its obligations.

The Thrift Shop, Technology and the Memorials Committees also report to the Board. Sharon Emery represents the Thrift Shop and provides a perspective of its operations. Richard Jesionowski reports technical status, needs and recommendations to the Board. Eric Fila reports work he has performed and work that is needed. Each year a member of the Board is selected to attend meetings of the Missions Committee. One person from the Board is also elected to serve on the Nominating Committee. The multifaceted purposes and authority granted to the Board are defined in our Bylaws.

Current members are Eric Gundrum - Treasurer, Gary Confalone – Assistant Treasurer, Cheryl Watson – Financial Secretary, Douglas Phillips – Financial Chairperson, Glen Pyburn – Property Chairperson, Jeremy Schmidt – Board Scribe, Sharon Emery, Brian Barrett, Stu Dalzell and reporting each month, Eric Fila – Sexton and Richard Jesionowski – Technology Committee Chairperson.

Again this year, the Board is blessed by having some members who have a history with our church, including Sharon, Stu, and Glen, whose perspective provides historical context for decisions and actions currently needed. Conversely, new members bring new ideas and balance the aggregate perspective.

*As stated in last year's article*, being a member of the Board is an honor, privilege and significant responsibility. There is one top priority for every decision made collectively by the Board and practiced individually by each member: **Exercise fiscal responsibility administering the business of the church, consistent with the intent of the congregation.**

*Prepared by Douglas Phillips on behalf of the full Finance and Trustees Board*







# THE REST OF THE DEACON'S NOTES

We're back from the land of croissants, baguettes and warm trade winds, otherwise known as the island of St. Barts. In the March issue of Steeple Notes I said I might write a quick blurb if we attended a church service at Saint Bartholomew's Anglican Church. We did indeed go on February 23. We were excited to hear la Chorale de Bons and we were not disappointed. We arrived early for the 9:30 am service and enjoyed their warm up. We could hear them as we walked along to the head of the harbor where the church is located. For a group that appeared to number twenty plus, their voices filled the small sanctuary and spilled out the open windows and doors. We got our bulletins (one is the same every week, the insert changes weekly) and sat in the back left pew just like at home. We shared the pew with a woman to our right and a woman to our left who turned out to be one of the wardens (deacon). The choral group sang the processional, Here I am Lord, a tune familiar to all of us. By now the church was filled to capacity with a few still filing in and standing in the back. Throughout the service the congregation often had a choice of responding in French or thankfully for us, in English. Many of the responses were sung.

Father Charlie began his sermon by sharing that he arises at 4:30 in the morning, declaring it the best part of the day. He loves the stillness, the quietness and the fact no one is up to interrupt his peace and quiet. Prior to his message everyone was invited to take part in the Sunday Family Eucharist. During this time the choral group lead the congregation in three hymns. Prior to Communion there was a Greeting of Peace, much like what you experience if you have been to a service at St. Mary's.





Father Charlie, Father Philip and Father Terry all made their way down the center aisle greeting as many as possible. The most enjoyable part of the service for us was the recessional. La Choral de Bons sang Oh Happy Days. It was just so joyous and inclusive of the entire church body that it was goose bump worthy. The Dismissal followed, The Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen. He then offered a short prayer, "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen. After the final hymn Father Charlie declared," The mass is over, go get a drink!"

Champagne and canapes were served by la Petite Colombe-Boulangerie Bakery in the Brook Lacour Garden just outside the church. The French really know how to host a coffee hour! Will we go back for another service? Yes, and hopefully our stay will coincide with the yearly Celebration Mass and we will again enjoy the sounds of some amazing music.

Jennette Loring





**First Congregational Church, U.C.C.**

**Rowley, Massachusetts**

April 1, 2025

To: The Members and Friends, First Congregational Church, U.C.C., Rowley  
Rowley, Massachusetts

The 385<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the church will be held on Sunday, April 27, 2025  
beginning no earlier than 11:00 a.m. after the 9:30 a.m. worship service.

Items on the agenda for the business meeting are:

1. To hear and act on annual reports of the various officers, boards, and committees from the previous year.
2. To hear and act upon the report of the Nominating Committee (elections).
3. To hear a report from the Moderator
4. To hear an update from the Pastor
5. To hear an update on the 2025 budget as it pertains to the Music Committee Request
6. To hear a report from the Clerk - Historical Project Dedication
7. To hear and act upon any other business which may properly come before the church membership.

Respectfully submitted,

*David E. Irving*

David E. Irving, Clerk

# MISSIONS

## FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS

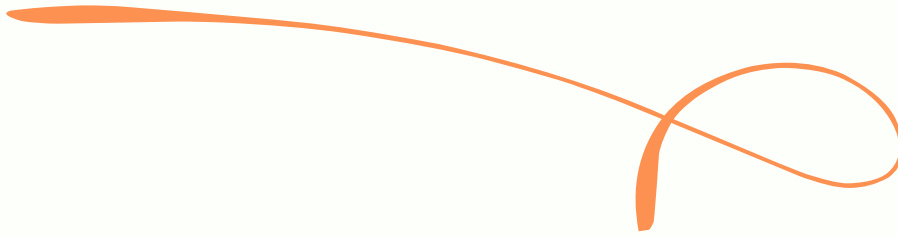


Logan Mysliwy, a senior member of our local Boy Scout troop and an Eagle Scout candidate, contacted our church last fall to explore his idea of designing and creating a large, sturdy container to facilitate collection of items for the Rowley Food Pantry. Our Missions Committee worked with Logan to fine-tune his plans, which were then approved by both his Eagle Scout review board and the church. The container has been completed and is in use in the church activity rooms; it has sturdy wheels that will enable us to move it as needed for maximum visibility. The Boy Scouts meet here at the church weekly and have agreed to deliver the contents to the food pantry as needed. We look forward to utilizing this new collection container to increase awareness and donations to our local food pantry!

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

4/5 Jerry Schmidt  
4/10 Scott Parker Loring  
4/11 Sara Stafford  
4/15 Elizabeth Ruth (Somers) Reep  
4/16 Les Warren  
4/20 Katie Blouin  
4/21 Bradley Reep  
4/23 Sabba & Sara Whitmore  
4/28 Beverley Phillips  
4/28 Sean Pyburn  
4/29 Amanda Rotberg





# Happy Anniversary

4/7 Ray & Nancy Hill

4/13 Roger & Karlene Merry

4/13 Barbara & Thomas Friend

4/17 David & Gidget Roberts

4/24 Bill & Ellie Manning



# 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!***





# Upcoming Events



## PANCAKE BREAKFAST

APRIL 12 2025 8:00A - 9:30A

\$10.00 PER PERSON

UNDER 12 FREE!



## FELLOWSHIP WALK

APRIL 13 2025 SUNDAY 1:00 PM

ROUGH MEADOWS



## COMMUNITY CAFE - FREE

APRIL 30 2025 8:30A - 10:00A

FREE MONTHLY EVENT TO HAVE  
COFFEE, TREATS, AND CONVERSATION  
WITH AMAZING PEOPLE



## PLANT SALE

MAY 17 2025 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

- PLANTS FOR SALE
- ENTER RAFFLE TO WIN A BEAUTIFUL PLANT!

We are a church that lives by faith, is known by love... a voice of hope serving the community







# PROGRAMS AND TIMES

## PROGRAMS

Council on aging Fitness  
Mondays & Thursdays 9-  
10:30A

Council on aging Line dancing  
Beginner  
Monday 4:30P - 5:15P

Council on aging Line dancing  
Intermediate  
Monday 5:30P - 6:15P

Getting to know us  
Wednesdays 10AM - 12P

Alcoholics Anonymous  
Saturdays 7-8PM

AL ANON  
Thursdays 7-8:15Pm

## ANNUAL MEETING

**Sunday, April 27th after  
worship**

## THRIFT SHOP

Tuesdays  
3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Saturdays  
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

## OFFICE HOURS

Tuesdays and Saturdays  
9:00A - 1:00P

Remote hours daily, reach out  
any time!



## COMMUNITY GROUPS

Girl Scouts  
Boy Scouts

Council on Aging

LAST  
EVENT  
UNTIL  
SEPTEMBER

# PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Saturday April 12th  
8:00AM - 9:30 AM

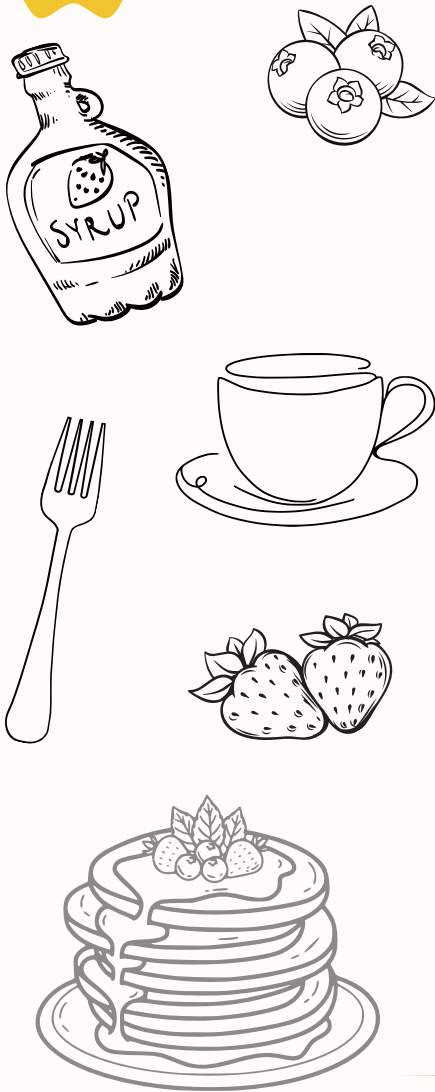
\$10.00 per person

Children under 12 eat free

175 Main Street Rowley MA 01969

firstchurchrowley@gmail.com

www.firstchurchrowley.org





APRIL 2025



# Community Cafe



*April 30th 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](http://www.firstchurchrowley.org)

---

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



THANK YOU MISSIONS FOR A GREAT EVENT!

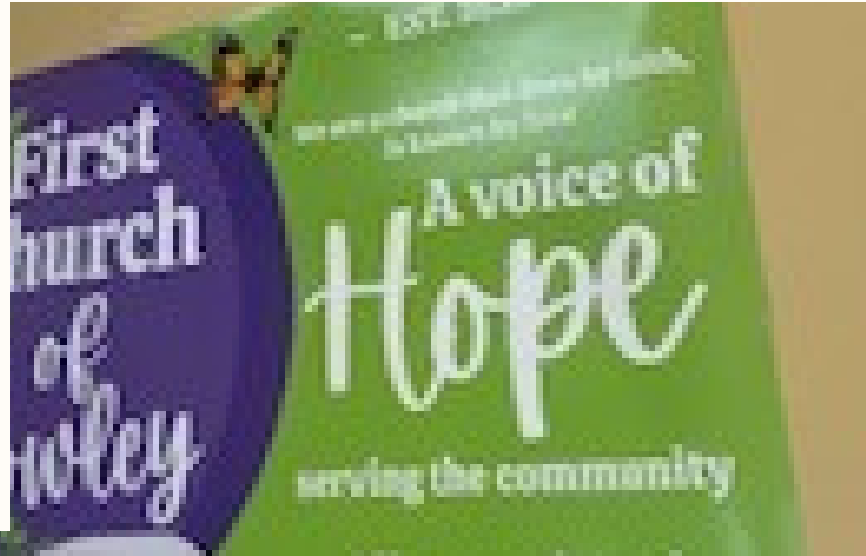
# BOOKWORM CAFE



WE ENJOYED LUNCH, BOOKS, FANTASTIC AUTHORS ALL  
WHILE HAVING A GREAT TIME TOGETHER



# Learning Modules



**The learning modules are now complete! Fantastic work everyone!**



First Congregational Church of Rowley  
175 Main Street Rowley MA 01969  
[firstchurchrowley@gmail.com](mailto:firstchurchrowley@gmail.com)  
[www.firstchurchrowley.org](http://www.firstchurchrowley.org)