



# Steeple Notes

The First Congregational Church of Rowley  
United Church of Christ  
175 Main Street • P.O. Box 364 • Rowley, MA 01969



*Christmas Eve Service - Drive In Style. Thanks and blessings to these folks who braved the cold to be part of the worship service.*

A quick “pivot” as they say, happened last week as Reverend Tom and colleagues talked about how to deal with the rapidly increasing Covid numbers due to the Omicron Variant. While some local congregations stuck with their plans of indoor candlelight services, Rowley made the decision to err on the side of caution and hold their services out of doors.

Some fast maneuvering on Eric Fila’s part, when he brought the electronic equipment to broadcast, down to the Thrift Shop Foyer to set up. The Diaconate jumped in and decided who would fulfill all the roles needed to hold an outdoor service. And we all prayed the weather would hold out for the service.

It wasn’t our traditional candlit Christmas Eve, however we are grateful that with open minds and hearts, we were able to be in community and celebrate the Savior’s birth together.



**Sunday Worship Services**  
**10am**  
Reverend Tom Bentley

Drive In Church - located in the parking lot behind the church.

Tune to FM 90.3 to listen in

- Sunday, January 2
- Sunday, January 9
- Sunday, January 16
- Sunday, January 23
- Sunday, January 30

We will assess the CDC Guidelines on when to return to our Indoor Sanctuary Services.



## Sometimes It's Not Always Merry

Christmas is supposed to be a beautiful sacred day filled with joy, hope, and gathering of family and friends. Such was not the case for many in the Christmas of 2021. In my neighborhood two families directly across the street were slammed with Covid and had to stay home in quarantine. At church we were forced to relocate to the parking lot in the cold and dark to sing our Christmas carols on Christmas Eve. It was hard to feel joy and peace on earth.

As Americans our Christmases have seen times of pain and despair as well as happiness. When such feelings happen, our happy carols can feel out of tune.

One such Christmas was in 1863 at the peak of the Civil War. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was sitting in his Cambridge home feeling down. A few years prior his wife had died in a tragic accident. His son was grievously wounded in battle and was living with him trying to recover. In sadness he began to write this poem which later became a Christmas carol:

I heard the bells on Christmas day  
Their old familiar carols play  
And mild and sweet their songs repeat  
Of peace on Earth, good will to men  
And the bells are ringing (peace on Earth)  
Like a choir they're singing (peace on Earth)  
In my heart I hear them (peace on Earth)  
Peace on Earth, good will to men  
And in despair I bowed my head  
"There is no peace on Earth," I said  
For hate is strong and mocks the song  
Of peace on Earth, good will to men...

Then rang the bells more loud and deep  
God is not dead, nor doth He sleep  
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail  
With peace on Earth, good will to men...  
Do you hear the bells, they're ringing? (Peace on Earth)  
The light, the angels singing (peace on Earth)...

### YouTube Link:

<https://youtu.be/M7670CXvPX0>

Longfellow invites us at the end to open our hearts to the message of the bells. In 2022 we need this message more than ever. If you want to connect, you are invited to log on to the attached video. This is a contemporary expression of this hymn that offers us the healing inspiration we need.

*Peace and Hope*

*Rev. Tom*

# Fellowship Thrift Shoppe

Tuesdays and Thursdays 3-6:00pm  
 Saturdays 9am-1:00pm (Not open Jan. 1)

We take donations of home goods and clean clothing during our hours of operation. Please no toys, stuffed animals or electronics.

Contact Paul Chang if you have furniture to donate, or email the church office at [FirstChurchRowley@gmail.com](mailto:FirstChurchRowley@gmail.com).



## JANUARY

### Happy Birthday!

Robin Kay	1/2	Doug Chadbourne	1/21
Charles Hazen, Jr.	1/2	Amanda (Russo) Clemenzi	1/24
Bill Faircloth	1/6	Sophia Jensen	1/26
Nicola Pyburn	1/11	Luke Confalone	1/28
Stone Butler	1/17	Zachary Ward	1/30
Amanda (Mulkern) Johnas	1/17		



The Call is out for MENS New or Gently-used, clean Winter Jackets. For the Men at Lazarus House.

Donations may be left in the Church Parish Hall, if you do not have access to the hall, please contact the office Monday-Thursday 10am-2pm.

Send out prayers and healing to all of the Afghan families and children that have found themselves on a new journey.

Donating Market Basket gift cards for Triton School? They can be placed in the offering basket.

Contact [DanbyWhitmore@gmail.com](mailto:DanbyWhitmore@gmail.com)

## Office Hours

**Monday-Thursday  
10am-2pm**

email:  
[FirstChurchRowley@gmail.com](mailto:FirstChurchRowley@gmail.com)

Facebook and Instagram:  
[@FirstChurchRowley](https://www.facebook.com/FirstChurchRowley)

[#FCRowleyCares](https://www.instagram.com/FirstChurchRowley)



## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Amy will be reaching out to the families with children during January and is hoping to make videos to share and drop of craft projects.

Please contact Amy Hanson at [aleehanson@hotmail.com](mailto:aleehanson@hotmail.com) or Shawna in the church office if you would like to register for Sunday School or Youth Group.



**January  
Pancake Breakfast  
Cancelled**

Fingers crossed we're safe to eat together in February.



Whenever there is a need for spiritual support, you are encouraged to call anyone on the Prayer Chain with your concerns and they will inform the others so that our prayers of love and support can be with you immediately.

*The Prayer Chain members are as follows:*

- Patti Cummings .....(978) 948-8176.....Patti.Cummings@livanova.com
- Kay Dalzell .....(978) 948-2674 .....kdalzell@comcast.net
- David & Donna Irving .....(978) 948-7020 .....dvd Irving@aol.com
- Nicola Pyburn .....(978) 948-2598..... nicola.pyburn@gmail.com
- Ken Sanford .....(978) 948-2847 .....kcsanford1@gmail.com
- Dennis Ward .....(978) 432-1021 .....rward3024@comcast.net
- Jerry & Nancy Schmidt .....(978) 388-1417 .....schmidtnancy36@gmail.com, jschmidt22@comcast.net
- Les Warren .....(978) 352-7551 .....leswarren3@gmail.com



<b>Beverley Phillips</b>	<b>Kurt Reese</b>
<b>Janet Brown</b>	<b>Jason Kent</b>
<b>Al Locke</b>	<b>Pat and Steve True</b>
<b>Helen Downing</b>	<b>Dede Todd</b>
<b>Nancy Cook and her daughter</b>	<b>Jean Short (Kay Dalzell's neighbor)</b>
<b>Paul DuVal</b>	<b>Helen Dobbins</b>
<b>Gretchen Lee (friends of Bev and Doug Phillips)</b>	<b>Family of Gerry Ernstrom</b>
<b>Millie and Nat Dummer</b>	<b>Lisa Levandowski</b>
<b>Ginny Merry</b>	<b>Colin Wilson (Rhonda Ward's father)</b>
<b>Sally McRae</b>	<b>Arnold and Patti Cisco</b>

# What's Happening?

During the month of January 2022 Worship will be held outside - Drive-In style, as we have done in the past.

The Building will remain open to small meetings, reminding EVERY ONE to wear masks inside the building, stay socially distanced and use hand sanitizer when possible.

The Thrift Shoppe will continue with regular business hours, except they will be closed on Sunday.

We are concerned about the larger gatherings and do not want to spread Covid amongst the congregation or anyone visiting.

The Diaconate and Executive Board will be meeting via zoom to stay updated on the situation and we'll be ready to come back inside for worship as soon as it's safe.

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Please note Missions is collecting Mens Jackets for Lazarus House, contact Danby at [DanbyWhitmore@gmail.com](mailto:DanbyWhitmore@gmail.com).

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Giving Envelopes should arrive by the end of January, so it is OKAY to use another envelope or previously unused envelope during January.  
Thank you in advance.

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Do we have any photographers in our group? Contact the office at [FirstChurchRowley@gmail.com](mailto:FirstChurchRowley@gmail.com)