



# Steeple Notes

First Church of Rowley United Church of Christ

175 Main Street • P. O. Box 364 • Rowley, MA 01969



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

## Getting What You Did Not Pray For

It goes without saying that the wisdom of God is greater than that of humanity. Despite that truth, most of the time I pray for outcomes that are often about me and my preferences - and probably not as tied into Divine Wisdom as I might think.

When things don't transpire the way we hope, we have two basic choices. One is to complain, resist and remain frustrated. The other is to look with fresh eyes on the circumstance and ask if there might not be something beneficial in the situation. Moreover could it be that the bad news in my disappointments somehow help the Good News of God coming into being?

We are now in the season of Epiphany. This word in Greek means "manifestation". In the next few Sundays the scripture will encourage us to look at our moment in time and ask where is God present? And most importantly what does God intend?

I have begun the new year of 2023 with a serious cut in my hours and salary at our church. It took me a while to absorb this lump and bump. Anxiety about money combined with the fear I cannot do the job in only 20 hours per week. Then something happened. Moving to half-time I suddenly had the opportunity of more unscheduled time - and this time was free and absent of guilt!

Almost like a shock to my soul, the desire to create came over me. I had not painted in oils for over four years. The desire to paint now became irresistible.

I went out into the world suddenly seeing colors and forms and beauty I had not observed for a long time. Then, I realized I serve a church in one of the more beautiful parts of the world - right in the heart of the Great Marsh, one of the richest (and most stunning) ecosystems in the world.

So I did the painting above, "December Sunset on the Great Marsh" Oil on canvas. 18"x 48"  
 Thank you God.  
 Amen.

### PANCAKE BREAKFAST

January 14, 8-9:30am



### SPAGHETTI SUPPER

January 21, 4pm and  
 5:30pm sittings



### BOOKWORM CAFE

February 4, 9am-2pm



***"We are a church that lives by faith, is known by love... A VOICE OF HOPE SERVING THE COMMUNITY"***



Christmas Eve Service with the Baptism of Harrison Bentley

**Committees for  
“After Church Fellowship”  
Pastry or Treat!**

**1st and 3rd Sunday Schedule**

**January** – Compassionate Care Network

**February** – Thrift Shop

**March** - Diaconate

**April** – Sunday School, Missions

**May** – Music Committee and Inspirational Singers

**June** – Compassionate Care Network

**July** – Thrift Shop

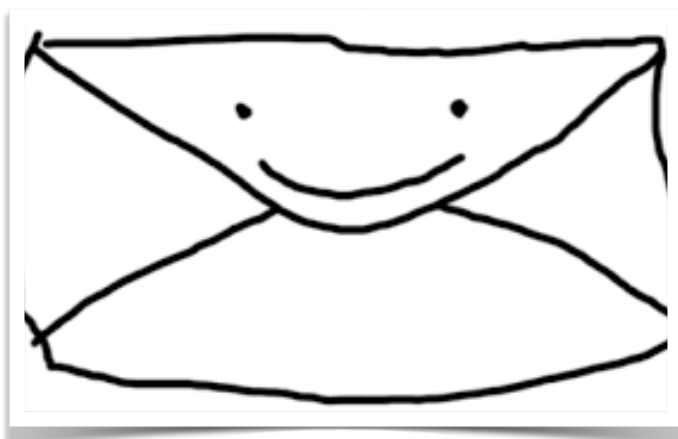
**August** - None

**September** – Sunday School, Missions

**October** – Finance/Trustees

**November** - Diaconate

**December** – Music Committee and Inspirational Singers.



Offering Envelopes, normally distributed in late December and early January, will be delayed until the end of January or the first half of February. We will advise when the envelopes are available for distribution.

If your offering is in the form of a check, with your name we will know that your account should be credited. If your offering is in cash, be sure to indicate your name on the envelope. Please remember if you use pew envelopes labeled for Missions or UCC Donations, those amounts are *not* used for our local church operating expenses.



**Coffee Fellowship**

**January Birthdays**

Stone Butler 1/6

Doug Chadbourne 1/21

Nicola Pyburn 1/11

Cynthia Kneeland 1/16

Scott Palazzo 1/16

Pat True 1/26

**Fellowship Thrift Shoppe**

**Drop in on Thursdays 3-6pm and Saturdays 9am-1pm**

**We have an ongoing food drive to benefit the COA.**

**Please deposit donations in the box adjacent to the kitchen.**