

EST. 1639



First Church of Rowley

...A voice of hope serving the community



SEPTEMBER 2025
STEEPLE NOTES

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

PASTOR'S CORNER

Life Groups Bring a New Kind of Connection

Between computers, smartphones and AI, it might sometimes feel like we have everything at our fingertips these days. Connection is our middle name... to a point.

But how about our deep human needs to feel known, understood and valued? In other words, to feel seen as God sees us?

Those needs aren't exactly satisfied by talking to a customer service bot or a data-hungry algorithm. And if our friends and family don't ever invite us to open up, then some important things might never get discussed.

For real connection, we need to know each other. We need to glimpse how God is revealed in 2025, in real lives like yours and mine. To foster that kind of awareness, we need settings where personal experiences – spiritual and otherwise – are actively appreciated. Where it's OK to share our stories, to be moved by others' and to simply listen. Such settings are rare in our fast-paced, impatient world, but they nourish our thirsty souls when we create and tend them.

Such spaces now exist at First Church of Rowley. We call them Life Groups. They began in August with two pilot sessions to test the format.

By all accounts, the Life Groups are striking a chord and meeting a need. Fifteen people attended the second one: 13 in-person and two on Zoom. When asked what they found meaningful about it, here's what they said:

"Being part of the life group felt like such a rare gift—a safe place to open up and share honestly, surrounded by the love of Christ and the care of others."

"I enjoy getting to know my fellow parishioners as real people."

"A group of Christians sharing thoughts and experiences with an openness of love and support."

"I am encouraged by the fellowship and compassion of the group."

"The life group gives me hope for FCCOR – we are truly living out the New Testament call to be the church – gathering together and carrying one another's burdens."

PASTOR'S CORNER

Life Groups Bring a New Kind of Connection

The Life Group provides a valuable bridge between worship and daily life. As we process our experiences (including hard ones) in light of others' and in conversation with scripture, we make connections in our hearts and minds that leave us feeling more integrated and whole.

As the fall season gets rolling, I invite you to take part in a Life Group. We have one coming up Mondays 6:30 to 7:45 on these dates: Sept. 22, 29 and Oct. 6. A few weeks later, a second one (same times) will convene Oct. 27, Nov. 3 and Nov. 10. If it's not your thing, that's OK – we'd still welcome your prayers that God would foster an ongoing spirit of openness and compassion in these groups. If you have questions or would like to get the Zoom link, please reach out: firstchurchrowleypastor44@gmail.com.

Your brother in Christ,
Rev. Jeff



FALL BRINGS NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN, REFLECT & SERVE

Fall season has arrived! And that means opportunities galore to take part in community life at First Church.

Worship is central to what we do. If you haven't been to worship in a while, come check it out! It might not be quite what you remember. Our Sunday service begins at 9:30 AM. It lasts about an hour and is followed by fellowship and refreshments in coffee hour.

Beyond that, we have opportunities aplenty. Here's a sample:

- **Life Groups.** New this fall. See nearby column for details.
- **Affirming Our Baptisms.** This four-week course explores what it means to us to be part of the body of Christ. It's a chance to learn, reflect on our spiritual journeys and ponder where our paths lead from here. It prepares participants for baptism (if not already baptized) & church membership; it also refreshes those who're already members. Dates and times coming soon.
- **Thrift store.** Find amazing deals or enjoy camaraderie by volunteering. Open Thursdays and Saturdays.
- **Congregational gatherings.** All are welcome to attend Cabinet meeting at 6:30 on Monday, Sept. 8 and Semi-Annual Meeting after worship on Nov. 2.
- **Special events,** including our fundraiser Golf Tournament on Friday, Oct. 17. See the rest of Steeple Notes for more info.

That's just a sampling. There's more where that came from! I hope to see you soon & please reach out if you have any questions that I can help answer.

Blessings,

Rev. Jeff MacDonald
Designated Pastor





PHOTO POLICY HAS AN OPT-OUT PROVISION

Dear friends,

The fall season is here! That means fresh opportunities to share all that's happening at First Church with the wider community.

To do this, we need photos and videos showing church life in action. One reason: when neighbors see visually interesting activities – everything from setting up for Communion to sharing a laugh while washing dishes to preparing signage for events – they get a sense for what's going on & what it could feel like to take part.

I hope you'll take many photos and videos all year round. When you get good ones, please share them with Nicole in the church office by emailing them to firstchurchrowley@gmail.com. I also hope you'll be glad when your image appears on the web. It helps foster engagement with First Church.

However, if you do not want your image shown on the Internet in connection with First Church, we will honor that request. Just let Nicole know at firstchurchrowley@gmail.com that you're opting out. We'll do our best to make sure none of our posted photos show your face. If we don't hear from you, we will assume you're OK with having your photo taken and shared.

One exception is children. If you have minor-aged kids, please provide explicit permission if you're OK with us posting photos of them. Otherwise, we will omit them from our publicity shots.

Let us know if you have any questions.

Blessings,

Rev. Jeff

Designated Pastor

firstchurchrowleypastor44@gmail.com



FLOWER COMMITTEE

The Flower Committee oversees the flowers that are on the communion table for each church service. There is also the opportunity to have an arrangement on the chancel wall. Members of the congregation can choose a special Sunday to celebrate or dedicate an occasion to their loved ones. These acknowledgments are included in the service bulletin each week. Members may have the Flower Committee order an arrangement from Gordon's Florist in Ipswich Ma with any special requests for flowers or colors. The cost would be covered by the church member. The congregation also has the option to have a seasonal artificial arrangement placed on the communion table with a bulletin notice. We ask that a small donation be made to the church.

The Flower Committee has a calendar in which they use to contact members that have reserved a certain date or week and confirm the bulletin notice and floral preference. There are many weeks throughout the year that are available to the congregation whether it be for that year or wish to reserve this date each year.

For Christmas and Easter, the Flower Committee provides the opportunity for the members of the Congregation to order a seasonal flower from Country Gardens in Rowley Ma. at their own cost. These arrangements are placed on the chancel wall during the holiday service and add some beautiful color and symbolism.

The Flower committee is also available to assist members and guests with any floral arrangements for a special occasion such as a baptism, funeral or celebration.

Please reach out to a member of the Flower Committee if you are interested in reserving a date for flowers on the communion table. Members include Debbie Confalone, Ellie Manning and Gale Wilkinson.

Debbie Confalone: dconfalone@comcast.net
Ellie Manning elliebilly136@gmail.com
Gale Penton: craftynana54@gmail.com



★ GOLF ★

We are delighted to host the 16th Annual Ezekiel Rogers Golf Tournament on Friday, October 17th with a 9:30 AM tee-time at the Far Corner Golf Course in Boxford, Massachusetts.

The day will include 18 holes of golf followed by a luncheon for each player. The event will also feature a variety of auction items, raffles, and on-course contests with prizes.

We have been blessed over the years to have the support of many local businesses and friends and families of our church through participation and sponsorship.

We are looking for golfers and volunteers who can assist with follow-up calls to local businesses and volunteers the day of the event. We will provide the list of businesses that have been sent a letter from the golf committee.

We would also benefit from donations to support the purchase of lottery tickets, golfer's goody bag and silent auction items. We welcome any donations of silent auction items or baskets. If you have any items you would like to donate to the auction please feel free to drop them by the church or give me a call and I will arrange a pickup. Please know that this generosity will not go unrecognized!

The day is always a lot of fun, with a chance to network and make some new friends and support the programs of our church.

We look forward to having all of you share in this fundraising event.

Debbie Confalone,

Ezekiel Roger's Golf Event, Chairperson

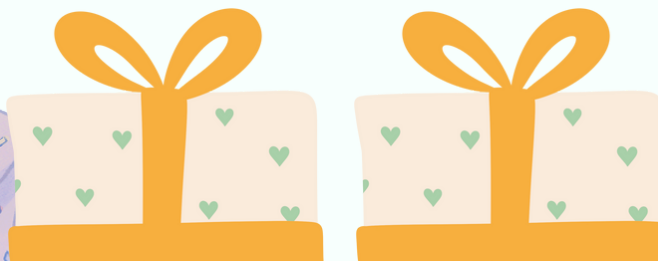




Happy Birthday



9/1 Sylvia Wood
9/3 Claudia Umanita
9/4 Sally Mc Rae
9/10 Sharon Emery
9/12 Eilene Chadbourne
9/15 Glen Pyburn
9/20 Abigail Dixon
9/21 Shawn Pinette
9/23 Ellie Manning
9/25 Debbie Confalone





Happy Anniversary

September 9th
Dennis and Rhonda Ward

September 26th
Ellen and Brian Barrett

September 27th
Glen & Nicola Pyburn



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 Us
September - Golf Tournament & Flower Committee
October - Old Tyme Country Fair
November - Community Dinner Team
December - Pancake Breakfast Team

Welcoming additional entries as needed!

EVENTS SCHEDULE

at a glance

**SUN
SEPT.
7**

FELLOWSHIP WALK

1:00 PM

Tracker's Trail behind Pine Grove School

**MON
SEPT.
8**

CABINET MEETING

6:30 PM

**SAT
SEPT.
13**

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

8:00 AM - 9:30 AM

\$10.00 per person

* Kids under 12 are free *

**WED
SEPT.
24**

COMMUNITY CAFE

8:30 - 10:00 AM

FREE TO ALL - Coffee & Treats

**MON
SEPT.
22***

LIFE GROUP

6:30 PM - 7:45 PM

* Sept 22nd, 29th, and Oct 6th

Theme to be announced

**WED
OCT.
17**

GOLF TOURNAMENT

8:30 AM Registration - 9:30 AM Tee

Time Far Corner Golf Course

\$7

**Fill - a - bag sale
Sept 4th - Oct 4th**

For more details and updates about these events, please visit see the event flyers below

An illustration of two stylized figures walking on a winding road. The figures are composed of simple shapes: a yellow circle for the head, a yellow rectangle for the torso, and a purple rectangle for the legs. They are walking on a dark blue road with yellow dashed lines. The background is a light yellow circle.

FELLOWSHIP WALK

Join us for a
community walk at
Tracker's Trail,
located behind Pine
Grove School.

SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER
7TH
AT 1:00PM

Weather Permitting

CALL (978) 948 3993 OR VISIT
WWW.FIRSTCHURCHROWLEY.ORG



Cabinet Meeting

**Monday
September 8th at 6:30 PM**



THRIFT SHOP

FILL - A - BAG SALE

Fill a bag provided by the thrift shop with apparel for only \$7.00! Limited time only.

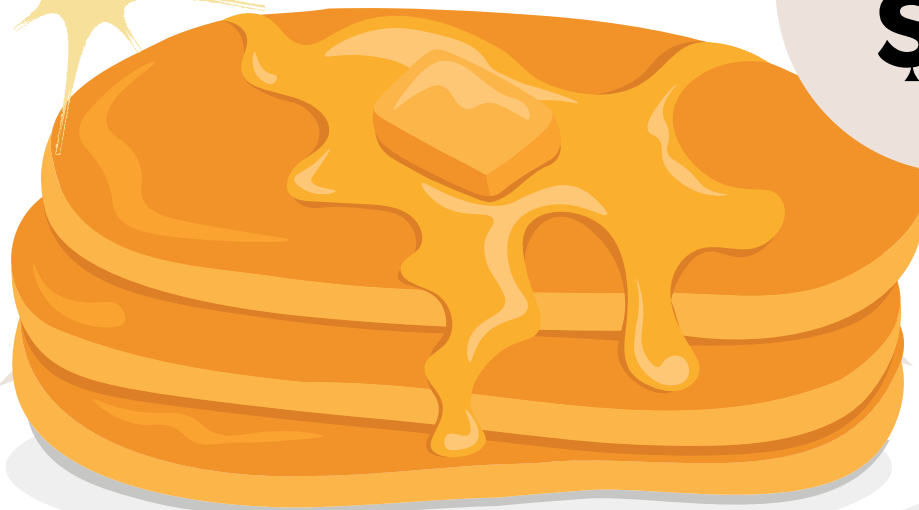
SEPT 4TH - OCT 4TH

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF ROWLEY

PANCAKE *Breakfast*



PER ADULT
\$10



SAT. SEPT 13TH
8:00 AM - 9:30 AM

Children under 12 eat free!

175 MAIN STREET ROWLEY MA 01969

www.firstchurchrowley.org



EST. 1639

First Church of Rowley

...A voice of hope serving the community

Community Cafe

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 24TH
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!

175 Main Street
Rowley MA 01969

FREE TO THE COMMUNITY



LIFE GROUP

WHEN

6:30 PM - 7:45 PM

Sept 22nd, 29th and Oct 6th

WHERE

Corinthian Room
and Zoom

ZOOM LINK

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83978471269>



175 MAIN STREET ROWLEY MA 01969

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ROWLEY'S
16TH ANNUAL

EZEKIEL ROGERS GOLF TOURNAMENT

17 OCT - 9:30 AM TEE

Registration at 8:30 AM

Lunch at 2:00 PM

Far Corner Golf Course 5 Barker St Boxford MA 01921

SPONSORSHIPS

- **\$75 FAMILY**
- **\$150 CORPORATE**
- **\$500 LUNCH**

*INCLUDES TEE SIGN &
EVENT RECOGNITION*

\$165
PER PERSON

**GOLF &
LUNCH**

\$35
PER PERSON

**LUNCH
ONLY**

For more information:

Deborah Confalone

(781) 290 6502

dconfalone@comcast.net