



Steeple Notes

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ROWLEY, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

175 MAIN STREET, PO BOX 364

WWW.FIRSTCHURCHROWLEY.ORG - 978-948-3993

Pastor's Corner

Hello All,

In June of 2022 I wrote one of these Pastor's Corner posts on the new lemonades available at Panera. I learned at the time that these drinks had an insane amount of caffeine. The fact they had some caffeine was not surprising, after all they were promoted as "charged lemonades". What was shocking was the amount they had. One cup had the equivalent of caffeine found in 10 cokes! I stopped drinking the lemonades and would warn other Panera patrons about them at times. Not long ago I saw a mother about to let her 9 year old fill a cup with the lemonade. She seemed more weirded out than appreciative.

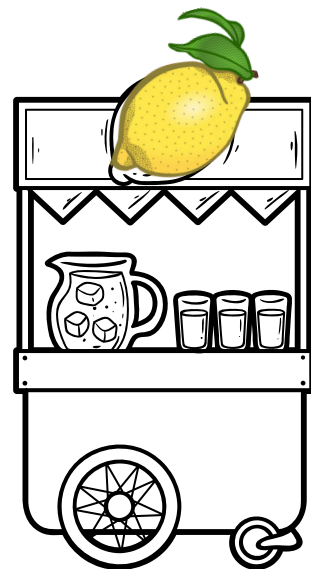
Recently I heard that Panera was dealing with lawsuits from people that had experienced negative health outcomes, and even death, due to the drinks. Not long after signs started popping up at Panera warning people about the caffeine content. In the past week or so the drinks are not even being put out anymore. What seemed like a very good idea for Panera's business is turning out badly. Those responsible for developing and promoting these drinks took into account all the good that could come from having a tasty drink that was full of caffeine. I am sure the company's bottom line benefitted for a while. They failed to fully take into account the potential downsides. Now nobody is happy. Some people have had negative health outcomes, Panera is getting sued, and those that enjoyed the drinks can no longer get them.

Christians should consider the consequences of our action for the future more than anyone. We believe in eternity after all. Too often we are like the executives at Panera. Our focus is short term instead of long term. We should be eternally minded in all that we do.

Meditation Verses: 2 Corinthians 4:16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self[d] is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

In Christ,
Brent

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



From the Compassionate Care Committee

By Penelope Hurley

Network/ Church Branding :

If anyone has a photo or music request they would like to see in a future Inspirational Message, kindly let Penny know! (Also, if you know of someone with email access who would like to receive)

penelopehurley@gmail.com

**or leave a note for me in the office
c/o Angie**



We will be introducing some different photos for the Spring season in Parish Hall! We are especially interested in older photos showing the church or its grounds in our history. Thank you to Sharon for starting us off - I have a special beautiful picture of Sharon and Ray Emery's wedding!

(I can usually scan it either from your phone or a photo. They will be made into 8 x 10" prints)

Message from our Moderator

Nancy Schmidt

In appreciation for all who contributed to the meal train during my recovery from back surgery.

Your delicious meals, gift cards, prayers, and compassion were deeply felt and contributed to my recovery!

As is written, Matthew 25:40, "Truly I say to you, inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these, my brothers, you have done it to Me ."



Finance and Trustees Board for the April, 2024 Steeple Notes

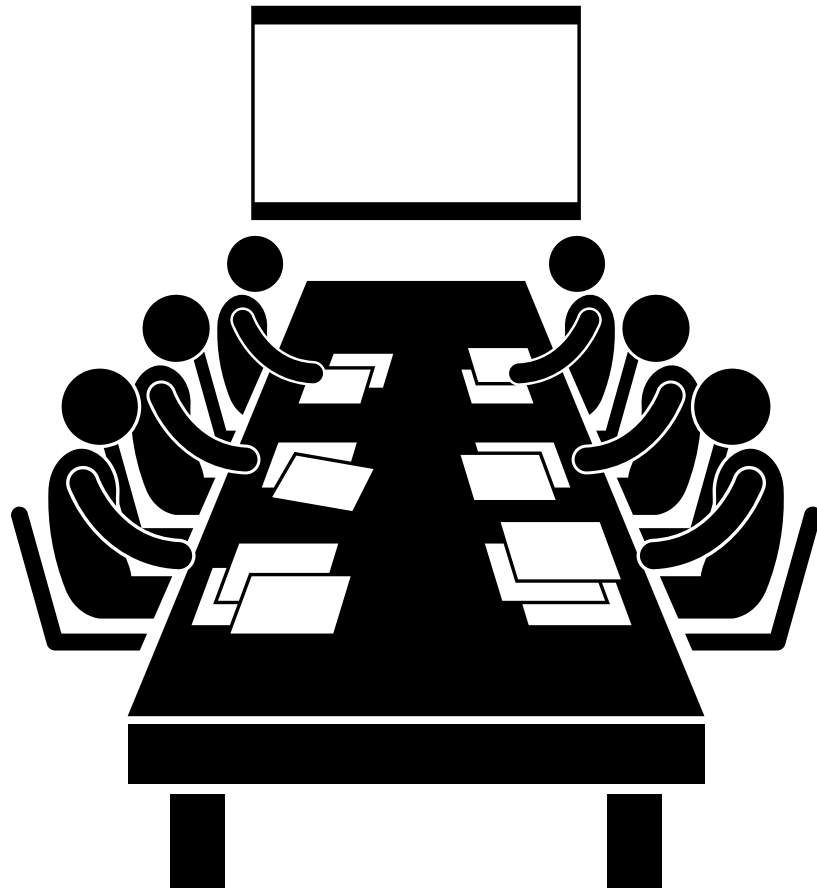
The Finance and Trustees Board has two primary responsibilities. The Board is entrusted to manage the business, finances and investments of the church AND to manage maintenance of the buildings and access to the entire campus, with the caveat that Sanctuary access and usage also requires review and approval by the Diaconate.

For several years, the Board has been blessed by having some members who have a long history with the church, whose knowledge provides context of decisions and actions previously taken. In addition, new members bring new ideas and balance the aggregate perspective.

Work of the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Financial Secretary is overseen by the Board. The functions of the sexton and bookkeeper are also under jurisdiction of the Board. The Board monitors the church financial status each month, sets spending guidelines for maintenance and regular operations

approves specific expense and access requests, ensures bills are paid and payroll is met, and manages the investments and numerous business requirements for the church.

Representing the Board, the Chairperson writes and negotiates agreements, assembles the annual budget, manages the work of the bookkeeper, and ensures filings and responses to regulatory requirements and denominational expectations are fulfilled.



Finance and Trustees Board, Cont...

Every fall, the proposed budget includes amounts from the Boards and Committees that are required or choose to submit requests. The budget is a plan that estimates income and expenses. Expenses approved by the congregation reflect the priorities for the next calendar year. Just like a household budget, the approved budget becomes a guideline or plan to be followed, subject to having enough money to meet current obligations and foreseen future obligations. Accordingly, specific expense requests are evaluated as they occur.



The Thrift Shop, Memorials Committee and Technology Committee - when active, report to the Board. 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 the Bylaws.

Current members are Gary Confalone, Jeremy Schmidt, Sharon Emery, Glen Pyburn, Sean Pyburn, Holly Ardito, Paul Chang, Chairman Doug Phillips, Acting Treasurer Eric Gundrum and reporting each month, Sexton Eric Fila. Stu Dalzell is an emeritus member.



Being a member of the Board is an honor, privilege and major responsibility. There is one top priority for every decision made by the Board: Exercise fiscal responsibility administering the business of the church, consistent with the intent of the congregation.

SNEUCC's Super Saturday!

Angie, Holly & Penny attended the SNEUCC's "Super Saturday" on March 9 in Southbridge, MA. We experienced our workshops with open hearts & minds, & connected with friends and pastors, old and new. It was a time of inspiration & encouragement, balanced with hard realities & cultural changes.

Penny's first workshop, "Should We Stay or Should We Go?" focused on our church buildings, our attachment to them, and their maintenance - which is a crushing burden to most churches. Opening up our spaces, partnering with a strong local group, creating sustainability were all topics.

The critical need for ongoing cash flow aside from church pledges & fundraisers was highlighted.

Takeaway quote: "Give yourselves and each other permission to look, through God's eyes, at the question of your mission, your vision, and your building. Wonder together, and with the creative power of the Holy Spirit's help, about adaptive re-use or even letting the building or its uses go - at least in their present form."

Second workshop, "Managing Change in the Congregation" focused on the need to stay open, to have curiosity, to remain empathetic in the face of change. Acknowledgement that no one likes change, yet it is an undeniable part of sustaining churches!

Significant discussion of how a church's structure is integral to how successfully they can adapt. Takeaway quote: **"Change is happening everywhere, and it's happening fast"**



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NEUCC's Super Saturday!, Cont...

Holly attended "**Governance and Decision Making**", presented by Rev. Doug Bixby, author of several books including 'Challenging the Church Monster: From Conflict to Community'. The topic was very pertinent to small churches such as ours. He asked us to think about what percentage of our time and effort is spent on administration vs. mission. The consensus from the audience was 80-90% administration. He then asked us to imagine our church 20 years from now if we were to devote 80-90% of our efforts on mission. And what are things going to look like 20 years from now if we stay rigid.

We need to find the balance between change and stability; momentum comes from the overlap between the two. A small church should only have one top level board. People should be able to focus on serving in ministry rather than sitting on committees.

Holly also attended a workshop on Community Outreach to Refugees. The presenters were part of the Immigration and Refugee Asylum Seeker Task Force of the SNEUCC. I learned a lot about the work involved in sponsoring a family. One takeaway is that it requires a major expenditure of time and money, and many churches partner together with several other churches to ensure the resources. I also took away many ideas about small ways we can help our local families.

Angie attended "**Bringing Curiosity, Wonder & Good Questions to Difficult Conversations!**" facilitated by Rev. Dr. Patty Kogut. The workshop offered creative coaching tools, that when used, can open the possibility for healthier and more productive processes rather than reactive and damaging conversations.



NEUCC's Super Saturday!, Cont...

A session highlight was hearing from a "Regional Youth Director" who was hired by a group of churches to provide Youth Ministry to the youth of each respective community using a shared ministry model. She is employed full time, each congregation contributing towards her salary. All of the involved churches take turns hosting youth services & events.

Memorable quote: **"Churches used to see other as competition, it's time for us to start seeing one another as collaborators."**

The second session Angie attended, **"Church Administrator Round Table"** led by Hillary Sage, occurred online. In this session, participants shared challenges and best practices inherent in most secretary, admin assistant, office manager and church admin positions.

Church (data) Management systems were discussed and compared at great length. This was relevant as we are hoping to implement one of these data management systems in the near future.

Highlights: Angie was invited to participate in an online support group for church admins.

Angie is scheduled to participate (remotely) in a two day UCC Admin Assistant retreat in April which will include participation from UCC Church Admins across the country.

Feel free to contact Penny, Holly or Angie if you would like to learn more or have any questions. This is just a quick summary of our day!



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Happy Anniversary

Ray and Nancy Hill 4/7

Roger & Karlene Merry 4/13

Barbara & Thomas Friend 4/13

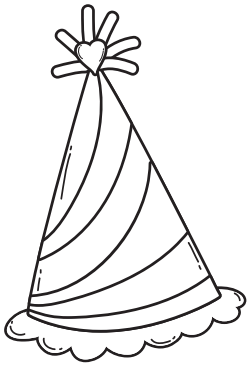
Larry & Melissa Gaspar 4/15

David & Gidget Roberts 4/17

Bill & Ellie Manning 4/24



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HAPPY
birthday

- Jerry Schmidt 4/5
Scott Parker Loring 4/10
Sara Stafford 4/11
Elizabeth Ruth Somers Reep 4/15
Julie Grover 4/16
Nicholas Morris 4/16
Les Warren 4/16
Katie Blouin 4/20
Bradley Reep 4/21
Don Russo 4/21
Allison Russo Sayre 4/21
Ethan Davey 4/22
Sabba & Sara Whitmore 4/23
Annalise Jensen 4/27
Beverley Phillips 4/28
Sean Pyburn 4/28
Amanda Rotberg 4/29
Christopher Barry 4/30



Steeple Notes Schedule

January - Compassionate Care Network

February - Missions - Holly

March - Deacons (including Christian Ed) - Jerry and Nancy (for 2024)

April - Finance/Trustees - Doug

May - Music Committee, including Inspirational Singers - Karen Schmuch

June - The Thrift Shop - Paul Chang

July - Pastoral Relations Committee - Penny

August - Getting to Know You - no response

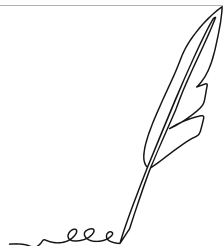
September - Golf Tournament and Flower Committee - Debbie Confalone

October - Old Tyme Country Fair - Donna Irving and Kay Dalzell

November - Community Dinner Team - Liz Butler

December - Pancake Breakfast Team - Jerry Schmidt

Staff - Any month as needed - you know this team :)



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

March 15, 2024

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

The 384th Annual Meeting of the church will be held on Sunday, April 28, 2024 beginning no earlier than 10:30 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 and act upon any other business which may properly come before the church membership.

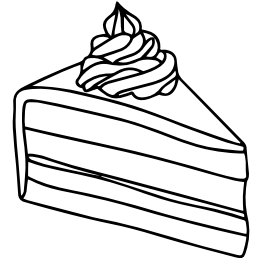
Respectfully submitted,

David E. Irving

David E. Irving, Clerk

After Church Fellowship Board/Committee Assignments

Pastry or treat 1st and 3rd Sunday Updated Schedule



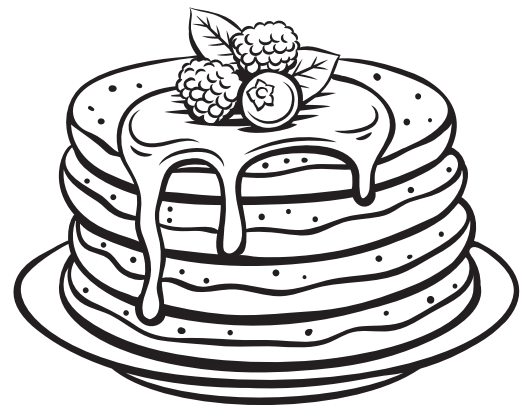
- January - Compassionate Care Network
- February - Thrift Shop
- March - Diaconate
- April - Missions
- May - Music Committee and Inspirational Singers
- June - Finance/Trustees
- July - Thrift Shop
- August - None
- September - Missions
- October - Finance/Trustees
- November - Diaconate
- December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



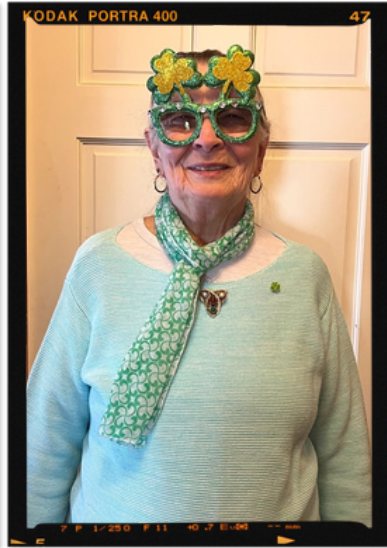
*The schedule will be posted at coffee hour and reminders will be sent via email.

Community Pancake Breakfast

2nd Saturday in each month from
September 2023 through April 2024
\$10.00 - Under 12 free!
Looking Forward to Seeing you!



March Pictures



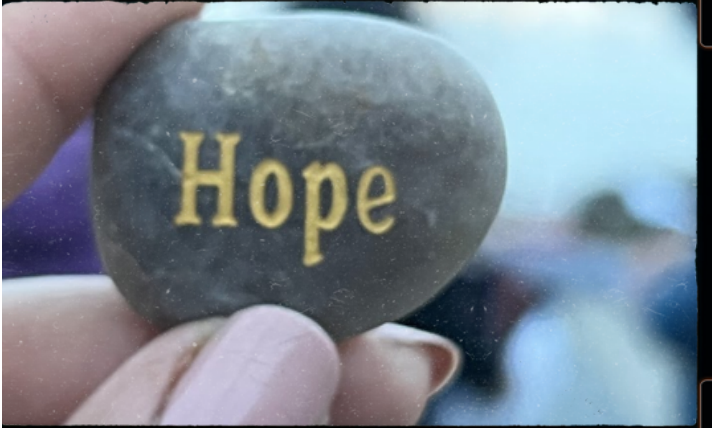
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March Pictures



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Easter Sunrise Service Pictures



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April 2024

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

Plant Sale



Saturday, May 18, 2024
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

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ROWLEY'S GOT TALENT



SUNDAY, 19 MAY 2024

12PM | 175 MAIN STREET, ROWLEY, MA

Contestants do NOT need to be Rowley residents.
Performers can be any age, but winners must be 19 years old or younger.
Prizes: 3rd: A limo ride, 2nd: A Hotel Stay
1st: Roundtrip Airplane Tickets



978-948-3993

REGISTER NOW



www.firstchurchrowley.org