



EST. 1639

# First Church of Rowley

*...A voice of hope serving the community*



## JUNE 2025 STEEPLE NOTES

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# THE MINISTER'S CORNER

## TIME FOR A SUMMER REFRESH

Summer is pretty much upon us! Time to break out the grills, sprinklers and water toys. And why not include some refreshment for the soul while we're at it?

With kids out of school and long days delivering extra sunlight on both ends, summer reshapes how we live – at least for a brief season. Here are a few practices that can keep us feeling grounded, grateful and renewed.

- Sabbath. Try taking a real day of rest once a week. Get away from the reminders of work and to-do lists. And don't feel guilty. You're honoring the fourth commandment, after all.
- Reading. Summer reading can take you into your favorite spiritual topics from history to scripture, biographies and even Christian fiction. To propel our church's task forces, borrow a book or two from the new shelf outside the admin office. Need another suggestion? Liz Walker, a former TV news anchor in Boston, has a new book about a model ministry she created for trauma survivors at her church in Dorchester. It's called: No One Left Alone: A Story of How Community Helps Us Heal.
- Worship. Join us for worship on Sundays at 9:30, followed by coffee hour with refreshments. Summer is a great time to relax in our beautiful sanctuary, hear some fine music and feel at peace with God and neighbor.
- Nature. Marvel at God's creation by getting outdoors in the nice weather. Let yourself be in awe of what you observe. Whether you're in a garden, a kayak or a backyard chair, give yourself at least a few moments to be still and take it all in.
- Explore. Indulge your curiosity. Go visit a new location or try an activity just because it piques your interest. See what happens as you let your mind get excited and wander. You might return feeling like you've been away for a month.

Happy summer & hope to see you soon at the Congregational church.

Rev. Jeff

# FELLOWSHIP THRIFT SHOPPE

Welcome to the First Church Fellowship Thrift Shoppe. We have many different items for sale at nominal prices. We have clothing of all types including men's shirts, women's tops, pants, shorts, capris, scrubs, pajamas, winter coats, raincoats, and an array of shoes and boots. Our housewares include sets of china, glassware, mugs, lamps, bedframes, sofas, tables, chairs, and dressers. Appliances include toasters, coffeemakers, waffle-makers, robot vacuums, heaters, fans, and air conditioners. We have an assortment of picture frames, linens, collectables, sports items, plant pots, and lots more things you'll just love to look through. If you haven't come to the Thrift shoppe in a while, you are missing out.

Please join us to browse, shop or just join in the conversations. We have many regular visitors who add to the charm and ambiance of our store. Our volunteer staff will help you find items you are looking for and if you have donations you want to drop-off, we'll be happy to help you bring them into the store. All donations should be in good shape or gently used and please don't leave items outside when we are not open. You would not believe the things we have had to throw out because we could not use them.

We are open on Thursdays from 3 to 6 pm, and on Saturdays from 9 am to 1 pm. All proceeds directly support our church. Volunteers are always appreciated. Please stop by the shop when we are open and talk to one of the crews that are here.

Thank you to the volunteers that show up when we have our seasonal clothing exchange. We could not do this without you. Special thanks to Pam Sanford, Donna Irving, Sharon Emery, Lisa Jesionowski, Rich Jesionowski, Judy Robillard, Mark Behringer, Bill Manning, Ellie Manning, Kay Dalzell, Sheri David, Jerry Schmidt, Eric Fila, Nicole Sirignano, and Eddie; all of whom have helped out in some way in the last year. My apologies to anyone I might have missed – we still love you.

Nicola Pyburn

## HOURS OF OPERATION

THURSDAYS 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM  
SATURDAYS 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM





# Happy Birthday

6/1 Youssef Salib

6/8 Cheryl Watson

6/9 Al Locke

6/10 Mariah McCormick

6/10 Jim Somers, Jr.

6/13 Rev. Lee Ireland

6/14 Abeba Whitmore

6/16 Abigail Confalone

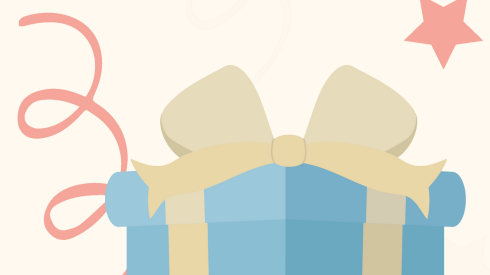
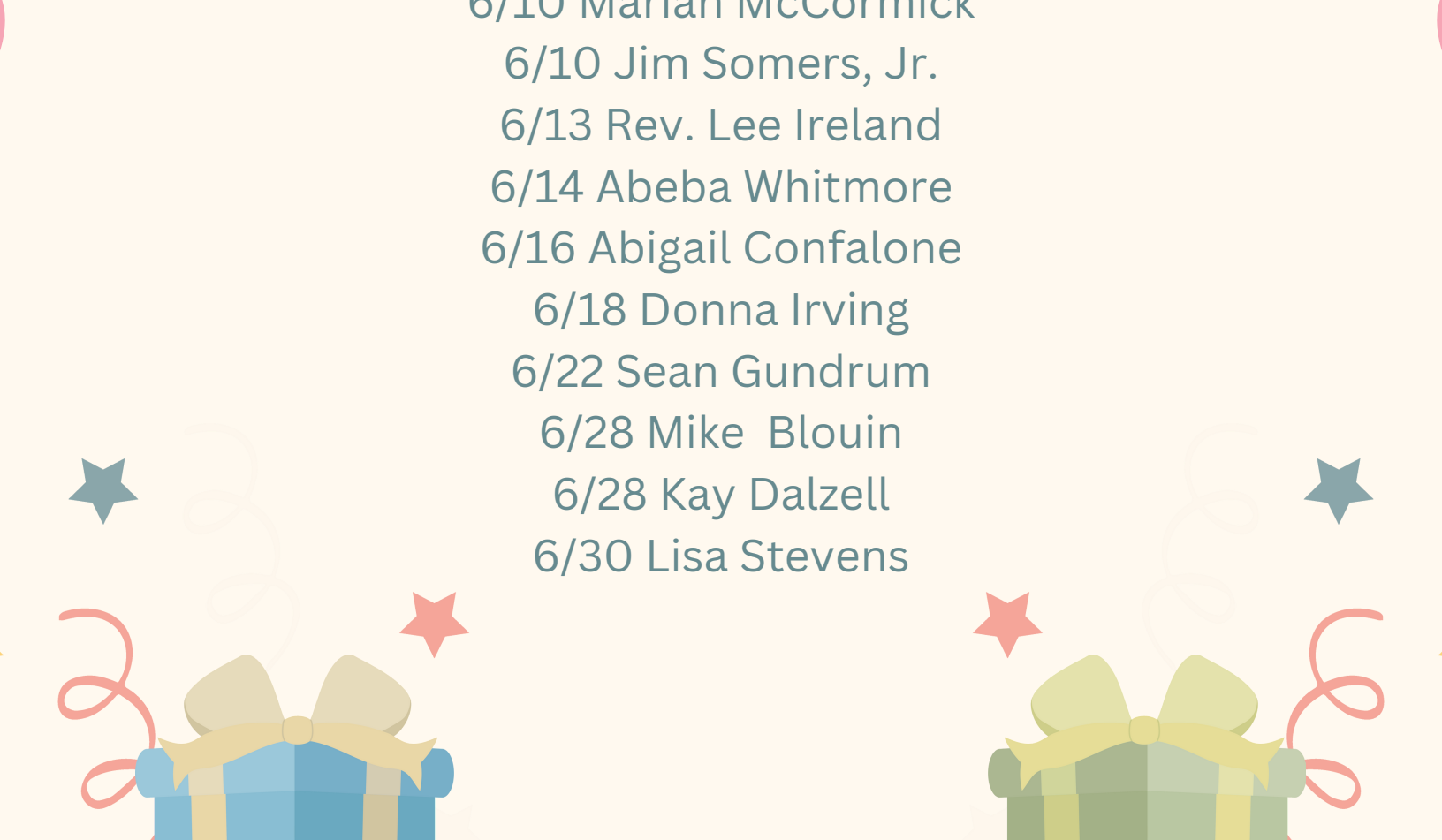
6/18 Donna Irving

6/22 Sean Gundrum

6/28 Mike Blouin

6/28 Kay Dalzell

6/30 Lisa Stevens





# Happy Anniversary

6/7 Jeff Nickless & Louise DiMella

6/10 Ken & Pam Sanford

6/23 Charles & Jennette Loring

6/29 Paul Chang & Holly Ardito





# WHY DO WE NEED A PASTOR TO HAVE COMMUNION

In the United Church of Christ, the Lord's Supper (or Communion) is one of two sacraments, which are signs and seals of God's saving grace. The other one is Baptism. Both are sacred rites that require a leader who's either ordained or licensed in the UCC or in a "full communion" partner denomination.

But why? Why do we need someone who holds a particular status in the church? Aren't all Christians equal before God? Then why can't somebody from the diaconate, choir or board of trustees celebrate the ritual at the Communion Table?

To be clear, it's not about magic powers. One time in another congregation, one of my parishioners referred to Baptism as "hocus pocus." She was mistaken, perhaps confused by what it means to consecrate something. There is no hocus pocus going on either at the baptismal font or at the Communion table.

What we're doing instead is consecrating, or setting apart, ordinary elements for sacred purposes. After that, they will never be returned to ordinary or "profane" use. Any unconsumed Communion bread is fed to the birds. Unconsumed juice is poured prayerfully into the earth. Such practices are observed by churches around the world.

A major reason for sanctioned leaders to be involved in sacraments is so that the elements are administered with integrity and pastoral sensitivity to build up the community of Jesus' followers.

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But let's dig further. What exactly does an ordained or licensed minister bring to the administration of the sacrament? Is it about pronouncing Biblical words properly... or moving hands and wrists in a special way at the Communion Table... or saying silent prayers that make it all legit in the eyes of God?

Alas, no. It's not about that. It's about making meaningful decisions that impact how powerful symbols are managed, how the faithful are taught to share in the sacramental life and how the elements are shared. It's about framing experiences so that the Savior Jesus Christ is perceived, received and lifted up as Lord of our lives.

The work of administering sacraments involves many judgement calls. What's needed to prepare for baptism? Who can receive Communion? Is it OK to take extra sacrament for a tough week ahead? Which drink should be used to represent the blood of Jesus? Is it ever OK to baptize in the backyard? And so forth.

With each decision comes an opportunity to open hearts and minds to what's represented in the sacrament. Pastors are trained to read the ever-changing social landscape and use the sacraments creatively, faithfully and purposefully while honoring the parameters that define sacred rituals.

If handling the sacraments were simply a matter of reading and waiving hands over water, food and drink, then we would not need an authorized minister to do it. Likewise, if it involved no meaningful decision-making, just following tradition and heeding instructions, then once again an authorized minister would be unneeded.

But the sacraments are powerful agents of encounter with the holy. By calling ordained and licensed people to serve as pastors, congregations empower them to make dynamic decisions that impact who has such encounters, how they happen and under what conditions. Our hope is that scores of lives will be changed for the better as a function of pastoral decisions shaping our sacramental life.

~ Rev. Jeff

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# FELLOWSHIP WALK

SUNDAY, JUNE 8<sup>TH</sup> AT 1:00PM

ROWLEY ROUGH MEADOWS

*-WEATHER PERMITTING-*



# SUMMER 2025

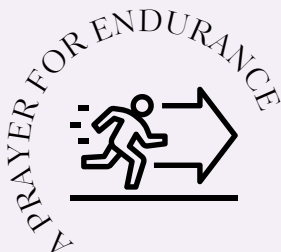
As we enter summer and take a chance to enjoy the sunshine, we wish you blessings every day! Although we will not be publishing a July or August Steeple Notes, we want to be sure that you know that we are here for you, to reach out if needed, and support you. Please continue to join us on Sundays. Below you'll find suggested prayers to use over the summer to stay connected with us.

All-powerful God, Help me and bring me hope when I feel powerless. When I feel like there is no way out I will pray to you, and ask people around me for help. I will try to follow Jesus' example, and notice those who need support, those who are alone, hungry or hurt. When I have the power to help others, give me the opportunity and courage to do this. I can listen to them, learn from them, and stand alongside them when they need a friend. Amen



Dear Lord, Some days like this feel fragile We sorrow for all those we have lost All that is absent in our present life. Across your world we see so much unraveling. So many more questions than answers We pray for your still voice of calm. Help us trust in you and your power to heal Hold us, mold us, shape us Make us your vessels of peace May we show love in the midst of hate And be your light even in the darkness Show us how to embrace your Kingdom In a world that needs to know you A world that needs Jesus May He be our peace Amen

Dear God, I am seeking your guidance and wisdom as I navigate the challenges and opportunities before me. Help me to discern your will and make choices that align with your love and purpose. Show me the path you have for me and grant me the strength and courage to follow it



Lord, I am weary and don't know when this "race" will end in my life. I feel like I've been running forever, trying to outrun this trial. Help me to stop trying to outrun my pain but rather run with endurance the race you have set before me. I know that because of you I am ultimately a victor over the trials in my life. I know that nothing in this world can separate me from your steadfast love. Please give me a measure of your love today; give me the strength to endure this trial. Thank you for your love for me that never ends! And thank you for the crown of joy that awaits me forever in your Kingdom!



# **CABINET** *Meeting*



Monday  
September 8<sup>th</sup> 2025  
at 6:30 PM





*Many Hands make light work*

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## **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/August – N/A  
September – Missions  
October – Finance/Trustees  
November - Diaconate  
December – Music Committee and Inspirational Singers.

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## **Steeple Notes Entry Schedule**

January - Compassionate Care Network  
February - Missions  
March - Deacons (including Christian Ed.) and PRC  
April - Finance/Trustees  
May - Music Committee  
June - The Thrift Shop  
July/August - N/A  
September - Golf Tournament & Flower Committee  
October - Old Tyme Country Fair  
November - Getting to Know You  
December - Pancake Breakfast and Community Dinner Team

*Welcoming additional entries as needed!*