



# Steeple Notes

The First Congregational Church of Rowley, U.C.C.  
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## May 2020

### Worship Watch

**Sun., May 3**

**Fourth Sunday of Easter**

Acts 2:42-47

Psalm 23

1 Peter 2:19-25

John 10:1-10

**Sun., May 10**

**Fifth Sunday of Easter**

Acts 7:55-60

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

1 Peter 2:2-10

John 14:1-14

**Sun., May 17**

**Sixth Sunday of Easter**

Acts 17:22-31

Psalm 66:8-20

1 Peter 3:13-22

John 14:15-21

**Sun., May 24**

**Seventh Sunday of Easter**

Acts 1:6-14

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

John 17:1-11

**Sun., May 31**

**Day of Pentecost**

Acts 2:1-21 or Numbers 11:24-30

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 or Acts 2:1-21

John 20:19-23 or John 7:37-39

*Deadlines for the June  
Issue of STEEPLENOTES is  
Friday - May 15<sup>th</sup>*



*From the  
Pastor*



## Finding a Focus When Everything Seems Blurred

Every day feels like it's a new world.

Personally, I don't have a clue about a lot of things in the context of all this change. I find it hard to recollect how things once were. I have only a vague sense of what the future will bring.

That really leaves only the "now" wherein I can have a sense of clarity.

This constant readjustment to the immediate moment is actually becoming for me a helpful spiritual discipline. As I've noted in previous messages, the little things of life are becoming more important. I think that's in part because I can only understand those little things right now.

The big picture – the "not yet" – the "So, what's up?" These all confound my thinking. It's the familiar stuff in the moment that speaks most clearly to me as we go through this time of crisis and adjustment.

God's time is always in the here and now. We can celebrate what God did in the past, and we can hope for the future knowing that God's promises will be fulfilled. However, the real spiritual rubber hits the road at this moment of each breath we take in and let out. That is the real world in which we move and find our being. That is the place and space where God's Providence abounds.

Spring is just budding now. April is a tough cold month. May is a lot kinder and warmer. Right now I'm enjoying a tree that is blooming across the way from my window. I think it says it all for what we truly need.

In Scripture this image of the newly blooming tree is offered by a number of prophets as well as Jesus. It is an image that says to us "Get with the plan in the now dudes". God's kingdom is bursting out everywhere as we speak. God is doing a New Thing. Can we see it? Let's check out the small stuff first. It will help us get a focus in these times of a fast-moving blur.

Peace and Fond Blessings,

Rev. Tom



# Missions Committee

Hello to everyone from the Missions Committee. We hope that you are staying well and able to isolate yourselves effectively. Please be well. Continue to care for your sisters and brothers here and around the world.

Remember the less fortunate and live in gratitude for every day. If you can support others in any way please consider a donation to UNHCR at 1310 L Street NW Washington DC 20005, or go to their website and click on "Donate". All the best to you.



It has been brought to our attention that **The Rowley Food Pantry** is short on supplies. If you could make a donation they would be most appreciative. A list of "current pantry needs" can be accessed on their website: <http://rowleyfoodpantry.org/>

You can drive up to the building beside the Baptist Church, go to the rear, there is a door, and beside the door should be a donation box in which to put donations.

The Rowley Food Pantry is open on Tuesdays 10AM-Noon and Thursdays 5:30PM-7PM.

**The "Who We Are" series, brought to you by the Missions Committee will kick off on Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup> @7pm.**

Through this community building project, we will be sharing stories of our ancestors or immediate family members and their immigration journeys. We hope this leads to a greater understanding of immigration, how it benefits our country and how we can be more supportive. Stay tuned for more information. If you'd like to get involved or want to participate in an interview, please contact Danby (please call or email the church if you need her contact information).



# Compassionate Care

The Compassionate Care Network contacted over 35 individuals during this past month. Individuals contacted include members and friends of our congregation. The purpose of this outreach is to check with those who live alone, who are elderly, anyone needing assistance with grocery shopping and/or is feeling a bit isolated during this time of being quarantined to our homes.



Those individuals making calls include:

- Mike Blouin
- Patti Cummings
- Kay Dalzell
- Lori Floodman
- Penny Hurley
- James Kay
- Robin Kay
- Jerry Schmidt
- Nancy Schmidt
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If you want to be contacted by a member of the Compassionate Care Committee, please contact Angie Estevez at the church...

# Sewing Initiative

We'd like to thank those of you who have volunteered to make DIY cloth facemasks. Together, we're helping to mitigate the current shortage of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) for front line workers, medical personnel, individuals and organizations.



Thus far, your donations have gone to:

- Staff at Market Basket - Rowley
- A multi-generational family with several immunocompromised persons in the North Shore
- An individual in Florida that works for Lee Health Systems
- An individual that works at a Cancer Treatment Center in NYC
- Staff and residents at a couple of group homes for disabled persons in the North Shore
- Suenos Basketball - Lawrence, MA
- POSE, Inc. – Haverhill, MA
- The Grace Center – Gloucester, MA

Our mission continues because of your generosity. Thank you.

**If you're interested in joining this initiative, please let Angie in the office know.**

# Things To Look Forward To While Quarantining

Book Exchange - **The Rowley Public Library** is not circulating books at this time, however, they have **donated 60+ LARGE PRINT** books to our congregation. We just picked them up on Thursday. After cataloguing them, they will be made available to you. If you've run out of large print books and want to participate in the book exchange, please call Angie in the church office.



We've been trying to mix up the content on our **Facebook page** hoping to gauge what might be of most interest to our visitors, especially during this time of quarantining. Recently, a church member sent us a couple of contemporary Christian music videos which we proceeded to schedule for viewing on our Facebook page. After posting the first video, it led to the idea for: **Music Tuesdays**.

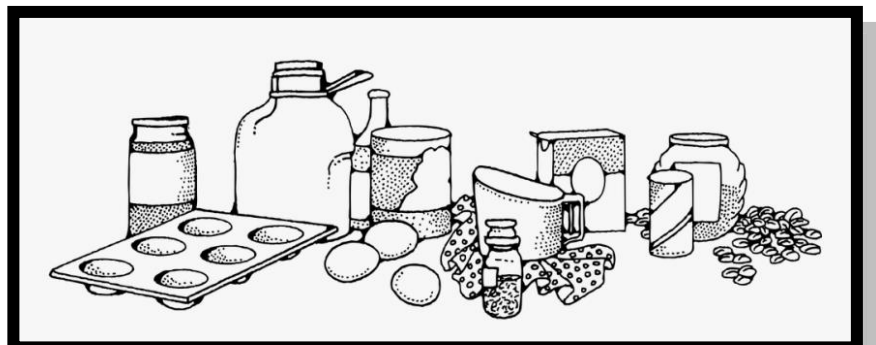
Every Tuesday, on **Facebook**, a hymn or classic church song will post in the morning and a contemporary Christian praise/worship song in the afternoon. If there's enough interest, we'll share same via email too.

Mike Blouin and the Schmauch family have already volunteered to help provide some music suggestions as well as accompanying historical data, links, etc... If you have a favorite you'd like us to feature or if there's a song you want to know more about, drop us an email and we'll see what we can come up with.



## Quarantine Cooking - Recipe Exchange

We still don't know what the next few months have in store for us regarding social distancing guidelines. In the event that stay at home orders are extended throughout the summer or even if they are dropped but enforced again in the fall – would any of you be interested in participating in a recipe exchange? There are a number of ways in which we can do this - via email, social media, snail mail or even by video chat. If you're interested in participating, please message Angie at the office.



# Music Notes

We see that Gov. Baker extended the stay-at-home advisory at least through May 18, so it is not possible to hold the Plant Sale on May 16. I reached out to the members of the Music Committee, and it looks like we will have to do something else for fundraising later in the year. What that will be, we are unsure. We'll see how things progress and we'll keep you updated.

If you plan to purchase plants this spring, please consider supporting Country Gardens, a local Rowley business that has been extremely generous to our church over the years.

I'm also writing this on Earth Day and a lovely hymn popped into my mind:

"For the Beauty of the Earth." The folks at Hymnary had this to say about

the hymn's origins: *"In 1863, Follitt S. Pierpoint was wandering through the English countryside around the winding Avon River.*

*As he looked on the peaceful beauty surrounding him, he was inspired to reflect on God's gifts to his people in creation and in the church. Above all, Pierpoint thought of the sacrifice of Christ, in the greatest of sacrifices, that of his life in return for ours."*



It seems to me that during this time of great uncertainty, reflecting on these lyrics can bring some joy to our hearts.

*1 For the beauty of the earth,  
for the glory of the skies,  
for the love which from our birth  
over and around us lies.  
Christ, our Lord, to you we raise  
this, our hymn of grateful praise.*

1 As I think of this verse on Earth Day, I am reminded of all of the beauty around us. A beautiful sunrise, the shining blue sky, a rainbow after a storm. There is so much to be thankful for on our beautiful Earth!

*2 For the wonder of each hour  
of the day and of the night,  
hill and vale and tree and flower,  
sun and moon and stars of light,  
Christ, our Lord, to you we raise  
this, our hymn of grateful praise.*

2 During our stay-at-home advisory, there have been times that I have been frustrated with being at home. Every hour, though, can bring wonder, from the beginning of a new day to the stars twinkling in the skies.

*3 For the joy of human love,  
brother, sister, parent, child,  
friends on earth, and friends above,  
for all gentle thoughts and mild,  
Christ, our Lord, to you we raise  
this, our hymn of grateful praise.*

3 I miss being able to see family and friends on a regular basis. However, I've been trying to think of different ways to connect with people: a card a letter, a phone call, a text. Thinking about the people that we've had the chance to know and love, even if they are not with us right now, has been a blessing.

*4 For yourself, best gift divine,  
to the world so freely given,  
agent of God's grand design:  
peace on earth and joy in heaven.  
Christ, our Lord, to you we raise  
this, our hymn of grateful praise.*

4 Amen!

# Christian Ed Sunday School

We have missed seeing everyone at church for Sunday School, but are hopeful that our classes have enjoyed our remote learning! We have been offering weekly SS lessons for both K-5 and 6-12 using video stories,

YouTube links, etc. We even have a guest teacher, Alexandra Flodman whose talent has helped make learning fun for the younger grades! In the older class this week a challenge was presented to each student to reach out to someone who may need a kind word or a little support during the quarantine. Next Sunday is National Prayer Day and our lesson will be on prayer. We are open to ideas from the students and parents such as a Zoom SS class with the older kids or to “just to check in.” Please let us know what thoughts you may have for our last three classes this school year. We have also begun to brainstorm ideas for some summer interactions as well as next year and would love suggestions! Feel free to email Angie or call the church office or anyone of us on CE. Please also let us know how your children are enjoying the remote classes. Unfortunately we will not have our normal Children’s Day celebration, but we look forward to an exciting new session in the fall. Who knows, we may have a summer celebration with “preview of next year!”

We also want to take this time to congratulate our high school graduates! We wish we could honor them in person and they were able to enjoy all the celebrations of their accomplishments they deserve! You are in our prayers and we wish you a wonderful college experience! Congratulations, Katie Blouin, Luke Confalone and Will Gundrum. We will keep you in our thoughts and prayers. Please let us know if I have missed anyone.

Lastly, we would like to thank Lisa Stevens for her commitment to the youth of our church for 25 years as Youth Group Leader and as a SS teacher for 13. Thank you Lisa for guiding and helping to mold our children into the wonderful adults they have become and most importantly, thank you for loving them. You will always be their Maaaaa!

Stay safe and have a wonderful summer!



# Youth News

Hello everyone, I just wanted you to know I'm here for all of you and though some are excited with no school, others have missed out on so much. No sports, proms, class trips and graduations.

I have gone through all kinds of emotions daily and get it and want you to know I'm here if you need to vent, I am sad that this is how my time after 25 years involved with Youth Group ends.

I have enjoyed teaching Sunday school for 13yrs ( I won't mention names but if you're asked to help out for 1 week run!) I have been lucky to watch most of you grow up from babies to parents with children of your own, I am proud to have so many youth group grandbabies! I am proud to say I have nurses, mechanics, secret agents (hehe), artists, chefs, teachers and even a rock-climbing mad scientist as my "children"!

I have started a wish box with Jaylynn and every time she asks to do something we write it down and put it in the box, we will do everything when this is over, try it!

You are my heart and I'm always here for you! We WILL have a church party when this is over!

Much love - Mama lisa, maaaa (May 2020)





# Special Days in May



## Anniversaries

Bryan & Karen	Barry	5/6
Craig & Lisa	Stevens	5/8
Shawn & Lisa	Nestor	5/10
Jim & Heidi	Somers	5/10
Charles & Susan	Hazen	5/12
Al & Carolyn	Locke	5/16
Anderw & Robin	Kay	5/19
Bill & Danielle	Faircloth	5/24
Dick & Patti	Cummings	5/28



## Birthdays

Charles	Hazen	5/1
Ashley	Laudenslager	5/2
Dennis	Ward	5/2
Amelia	Tracy	5/3
G. Robert	Merry	5/5
Lauren	Sanford	5/6
Dick	Cummings	5/9
Susan	Hazen	5/10
Pat	Lees	5/10
Morgan	Conrad	5/13
Teddy	Fryberg	5/13
Roger	Merry	5/13
Robert	MacRae	5/16
Ray	Hill	5/17
Megan	McCormick	5/19
Ryan	Gebow	5/21
Michael	Mulkern	5/22
Karlene	Merry	5/23
Nat	Dummer	5/24
Jordan	Ward	5/24
	(Hazen)	
Elizabeth	Morris	5/25
Madeleine	Schmuck	5/27
Neil	Laudenslager	5/28
Emerson	Fryberg	5/31

## Historical Moment the Month of May

- The first United States Postal Card was issued - May 1, 1873
- The Empire State Building opened - May 1, 1931
- Elvis Presley married Priscilla Beaulieu in Las Vegas - May 1, 1967
- The opera "The Marriage of Figaro," by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, premiered in Vienna - May 1, 1786
- The Golden Gate Bridge was opened to the public – May 27, 1937
- Joan of Arc was burned at the stake in France – May 30, 1431
- The last Ford Model T automobile was made – May 31, 1927

## Famous Birthdays in May

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • <i>Bing Crosby, May 3, 1903</i>           | • <i>Meg Foster, May 14, 1948</i>        |
| • <i>Audrey Hepburn, May 4, 1929</i>        | • <i>Debra Winger, May 16, 1955</i>      |
| • <i>Orson Welles, May 6, 1915</i>          | • <i>Lorraine Hansbury, May 19, 1930</i> |
| • <i>Florence Nightingale, May 12, 1820</i> | • <i>Sally Ride, May 26, 1951</i>        |
| • <i>Stevie Wonder, May 13, 1950</i>        | • <i>Bob Hope, May 29, 1903</i>          |

