



# Steeple Notes

The First Congregational Church of Rowley  
United Church of Christ  
175 Main Street • P.O. Box 364 • Rowley, MA 01969



Sunday Worship Services  
10am  
Reverend Tom Bentley

Church Worship  
INSIDE the Sanctuary!

Sunday, March 6  
Sunday, March 13  
Sunday, March 20  
Sunday, March 27

## Lenten Series

7PM  
Monday, March 7  
through  
Monday, April 4  
In person or on Zoom  
More information in  
Thursday's email.



## Lenten Series Beyond Resistance

The Holy Spirit is moving among us in mysterious ways. We cannot know what is going to happen. That is why we often tend to spend more time thinking about the past than looking into the future.

A life of faith calls us to go with the flow. During Lent we are invited to come together on the Monday evenings of the Season and reflect on how change is moving us in new unexpected ways. How has Covid changed our lives? What changes are we experiencing together as we strive to live a life of faith - to be part of a church that follows Jesus the Christ?

We read that we are entering a "Post-Covid" time and much will change forever in our community, our nation, and the

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# Is There Ever Really a “Normal”?

At this writing we are only a few days away from our church leaders deciding we return to gathering inside our church building. (We WILL be meeting inside) Lately, I hear in passing conversation that some of us “will be glad to get back to normal”.

My question is two-fold: 1) Is there really a “normal” for our church and what does that look like? And (2) Is there ever really a “normal” in life?



The Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 12: 2- “Do not be conformed to this world- but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

In the spirit of that, our Church Development Coach Rev. Paul Nickerson suggests that as we reenter our buildings we need to “re-vision what this year might look like.” Rather than just trying to re-institute what we used to do, can we take some time to prayerfully discern what we might look like by the end of 2022. Here are a few guidelines to help that discernment:

*What are the strengths we can build on in this year?* It is better to do a few things really effectively, then to try to do many things poorly.

**Simplify:** This is a great time to jettison long-standing practices and activities that no longer work in this Covid era. This may mean a simpler governance structure, changes in worship and activities, or engaging people in new ways. Act the size you are today.



**Strengthen Online ministry:** Online ministry is here to stay.

**Re-examine your mission field:** I am struck by how many churches say “we want to reach new people”, but then have no idea who in the community they want to reach. What’s the next group your church wants to engage? What do they need and can you design activities, worship and mission efforts that meet that group right where they are? Any vision for 2022 needs to include a discernment of the mission field.

Thank you Paul... and thank you God for sending us your Holy Spirit to transform us into something new and meaningful for the world that needs your love so much.

*Grace and Peace to You All*

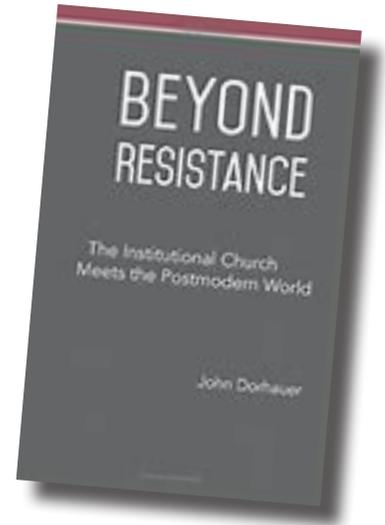
*Rev. Tom*

# Lenten Series continued

world. Scholars also tell us we are living in a “Post-Modern” time when many people no longer believe in “absolute truths”. In our churches we are encountering these forces of change and theologians tell us we now live in a “Post-Christian” age.

Starting on **Monday March 7th at 7:00 PM** we will spend 75 minutes each week in Lent to deepen our understanding and learn how to adapt ancient spiritual practices to our changing lives.

We will be using some of the insights from the book [“Beyond Resistance”](#) authored by John Dorhauer, President of the United Church of Christ. We will also seek the guidance of Father Richard Rohr, Henri Nouwen, and other teachers.



We will be meeting at the church building and we will be also hosting the sessions on Zoom. Sign up can be done by contacting Rev. Tom Bentley, calling the office at 978-948-3993, or registering online at [firstchurchrowley.org](http://firstchurchrowley.org)

## Fellowship Thrift Shoppe



Open for Shopping and Donations  
Thursdays 3-6:00pm &  
Saturdays 9am-1:00pm

Donating to our thrift shop is a great way to pass on those items with a good feeling that

they are being loved and used by someone else in the community. (And it's tax deductible.)

Dishes, pots and pans, silverware, serving dishes, glasses, mugs, art, lamps, chairs, tables, book shelves, are among some of the items folks are looking for when they thrift shop. If you're looking through your closet and see something you haven't worn all winter, maybe it's time to let someone else put it to good use.

Please no toys, stuffed animals or electronics.  
Contact Paul Chang 857-206-0792 about donations.

Ginny Merry	3/2
Don Thurston	3/4
Madison Butler	3/6
Barbara Friend	3/8
Heidi Somers	3/15
Chard Stevens	3/15
Phebe Bragg-Kennedy	3/21
Donna Warren	3/22
Deb Flate	3/23
Jessica Nickless	3/25
David Irving	3/27
Kirsten Merry	3/28
Janice Goss	3/29
Jeff Nickless	3/31

# March Office Hours

Monday, Wednesday  
& Thursday  
10am-3pm

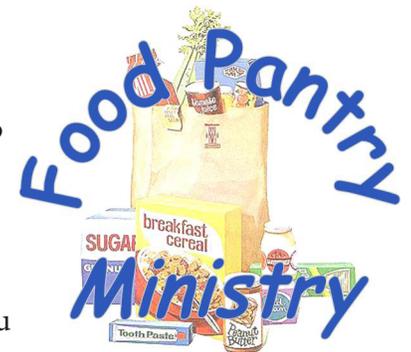
email:  
FirstChurchRowley@gmail.com

Facebook and Instagram:  
@FirstChurchRowley  
#FCRowleyCares



The Mission's committee continues to work to find ways to complete stewardship and missionary education within our community.

We will continue to collect items for the Rowley Food Pantry. They can be dropped off on Saturdays from 9-1 at the thrift shop or during church on Sundays.

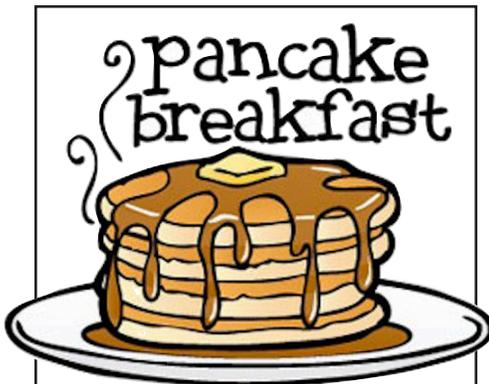


The Council on Aging is looking for volunteers to assist homebound clients with snow removal and grocery shopping. If you can help please contact [marty.blanchard@townofrowley.org](mailto:marty.blanchard@townofrowley.org) for more information.

We look forward to having a follow-up discussion to our prior climate discussion.

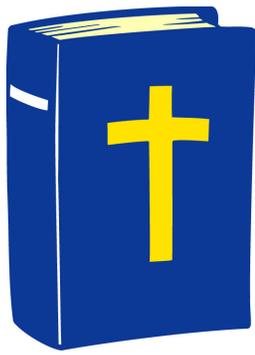
Another fellowship walk will be planned in March. difference.

Danby, Missions Chair



**Pancake Breakfasts  
will be back on  
April 9th  
and  
May 14th  
(Fingers crossed)**

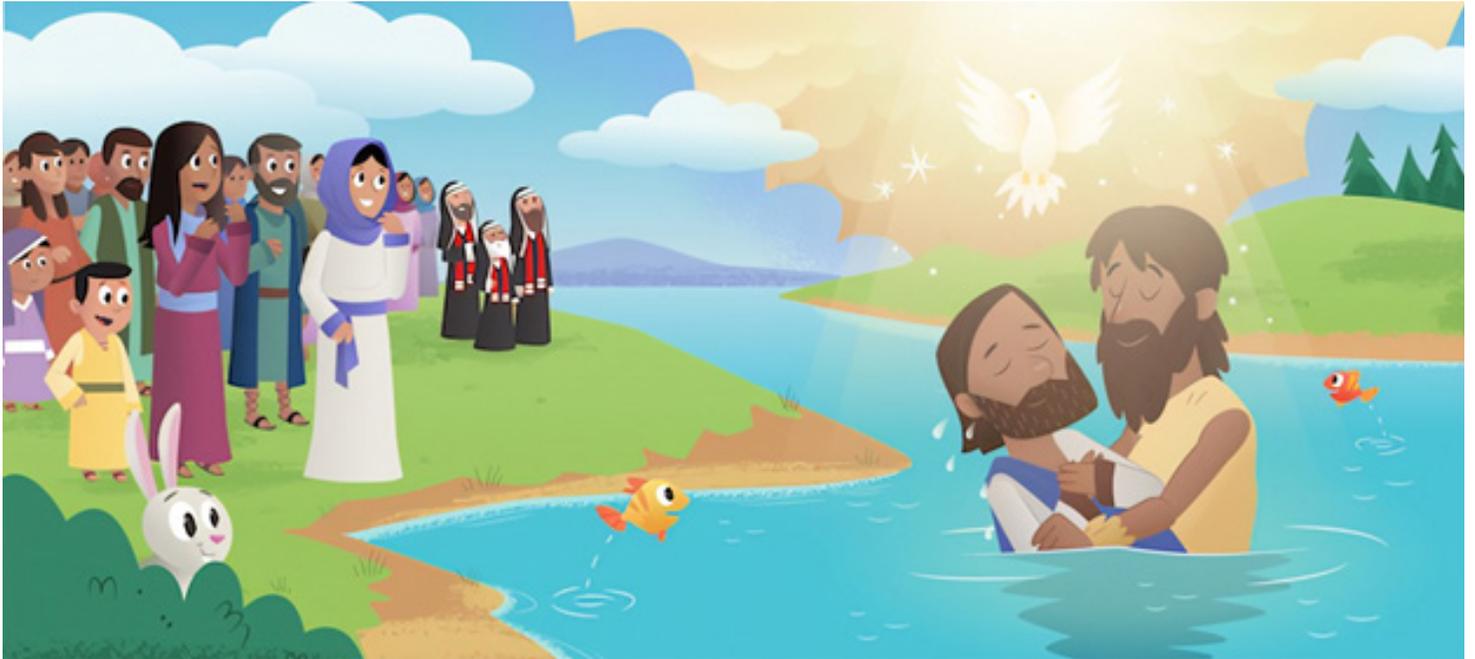
**Happy Anniversary  
Les and Donna Warren  
March 16**



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



We hope you all had a wonderful February vacation. We hope you have enjoyed the videos we've sent to keep up with our winter curriculum. We look forward to being together soon. Below you will find our lesson on Jesus's baptism. See you soon at the church!



## Jesus's Baptism

Luke 3:1-22

John the Baptizer was standing in the river. He said, "come into the water and be baptized". Many people came to be baptized and listen to John teach about God.

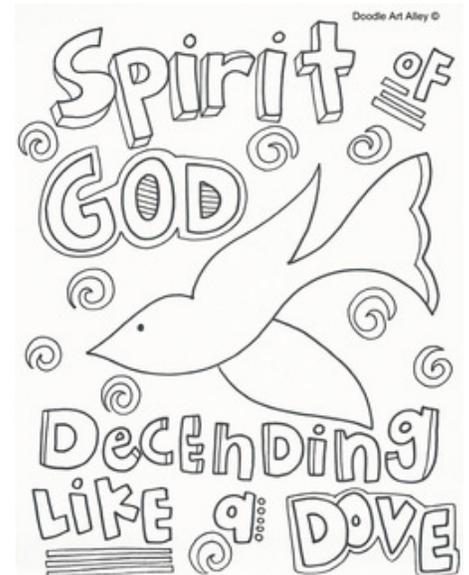
"Change your hearts and lives," said John. "Show everyone that you want to live the way God wants you to live."

One by one, people walked into the river. They felt the cool water flowing around them. When John baptized them with the water, they felt God's love.

One day Jesus came to the river. John baptized Jesus in the water of the river.

As Jesus was baptized, a dove came flying down from the sky. Jesus saw the dove and heard God's voice saying, "You are my son. I love you dearly."

Wonder Question: How do you think John felt when he baptized Jesus?



Contact Amy Hanson if you would like to register for Sunday School or Youth Group.

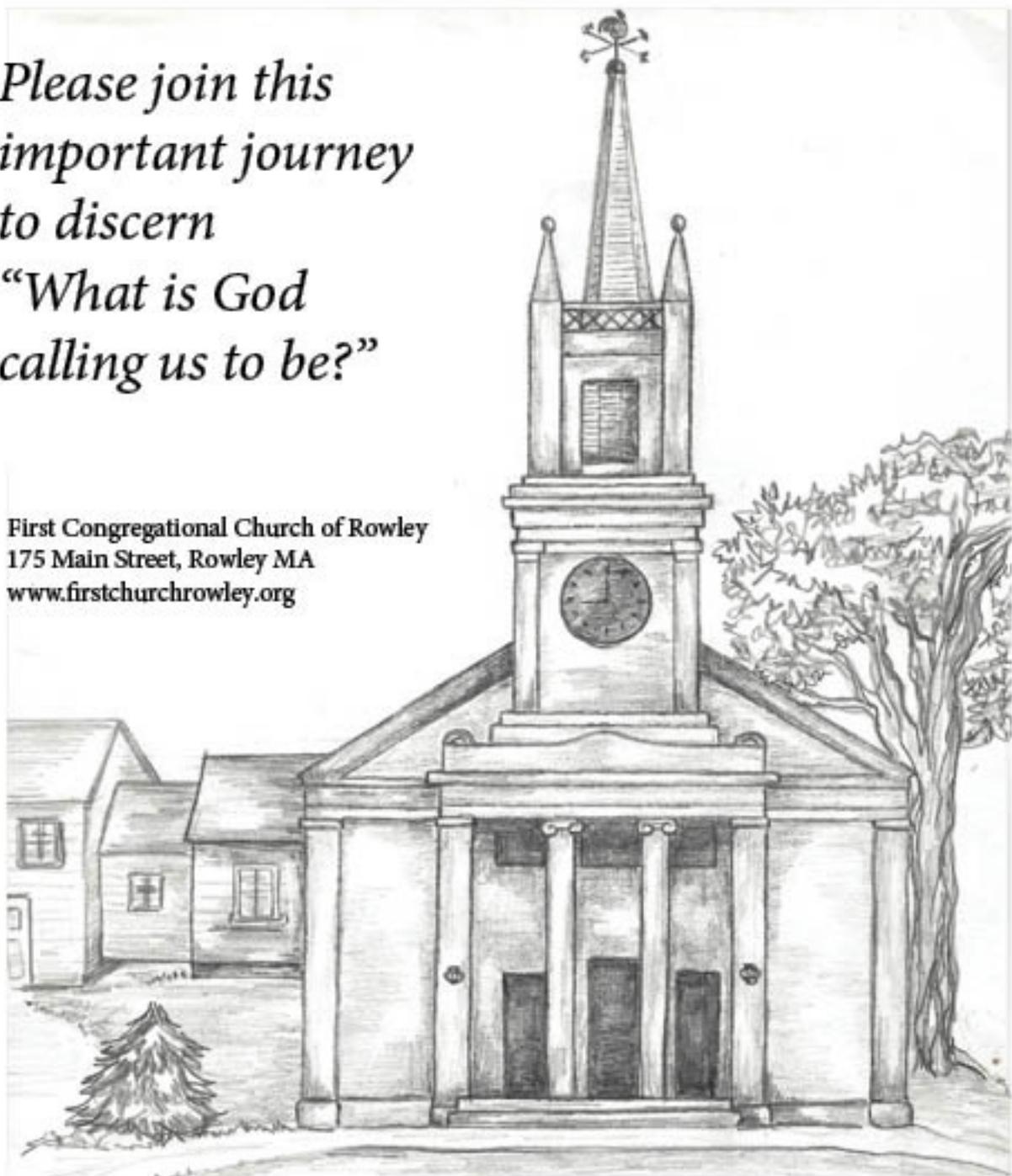
@aleehanson@hotmail.com

# All Church Meeting

**Sunday, March 27**  
following worship service

*Please join this  
important journey  
to discern  
“What is God  
calling us to be?”*

First Congregational Church of Rowley  
175 Main Street, Rowley MA  
[www.firstchurchrowley.org](http://www.firstchurchrowley.org)





Whenever there is a need for spiritual support, you are encouraged to call anyone on the Prayer Chain with your concerns and they will inform the others so that our prayers of love and support can be with you immediately.

*The Prayer Chain members are as follows:*

- Patti Cummings .....(978) 948-8176.....Patti.Cummings@livanova.com
- Kay Dalzell .....(978) 948-2674 .....kdalzell@comcast.net
- David & Donna Irving .....(978) 948-7020 .....dvdirving@aol.com
- Nicola Pyburn .....(978) 948-2598..... nicola.pyburn@gmail.com
- Ken Sanford .....(978) 948-2847 .....kcsanford1@gmail.com
- Jerry & Nancy Schmidt (978) 388-1417 .....schmidtnancy36@gmail.com,  
jschmidt22@comcast.net
- Les Warren .....(978) 352-7551 .....leswarren3@gmail.com

- Kim Cyr**
- Beverley Phillips**
- Helen S. Dobbins**
- Janet Brown**
- Al Locke**
- Helen Downing**
- Millie and Nat Dummer**
- Sally McRae**
- Pat and Steve True**

**Merle Phipps**  
1927-2022

# March 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27	28	1 <b>First Day of</b> Women's History Month	2 GTKU Getting To Know US 10am-Noon	3 Alanon 7pm	4 Boy Scouts 5:30pm	5 Fellowship Thrift Shop 9am-1pm  AA 7pm
6 Worship 10am	7 COA Exercise 1pm-2pm	8	9 GTKU Getting To Know US 10am-Noon	10 Alanon 7pm	11 Boy Scouts 5:30pm	12 Fellowship Thrift Shop 9am-1pm  AA 7pm
13 <b>Daylight</b> Savings Clocks Forward  Worship 10am	14 COA Exercise 1pm-2pm	15	16 GTKU Getting To Know US 10am-Noon  Diaconate Meeting 7pm	17 <b>St. Patrick's</b> St. Pat's Lun- cheon COA 12-2pm  Alanon 7pm	18 Boy Scouts 5:30pm	19 Fellowship Thrift Shop 9am-1pm  AA 7pm
20 Worship 10am	21 COA Exercise 1pm-2pm	22 Compas- sionate Care Network 6:30pm	23 GTKU Getting To Know US 10am-Noon  Trustees Meeting 6:30 pm	24 Alanon 7pm	25 Boy Scouts 5:30pm	26 Fellowship Thrift Shop 9am-1pm  AA 7pm
27 Worship 10am	28 COA Exercise 1pm-2pm	29	30 GTKU Getting To Know US 10am-Noon	31 Alanon 7pm	1 Boy Scouts 5:30pm	2 Fellowship Thrift Shop 9am-1pm  AA 7pm