



# Steeple Notes

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ROWLEY, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
 175 MAIN STREET, PO BOX 364  
 WWW.FIRSTCHURCHROWLEY.ORG - 978-948-3993

## Reverend Tom - Following the Ancient Wisdom into the Future.

The donkeys wait as we walk down the ferry's gang plank with our luggage. We are at the island of Hydra, (pronounced hee-drah in Greek).

There are no cars on the island so everything must be transported by animals. Visiting here is tumbling back thousands of years into the past.

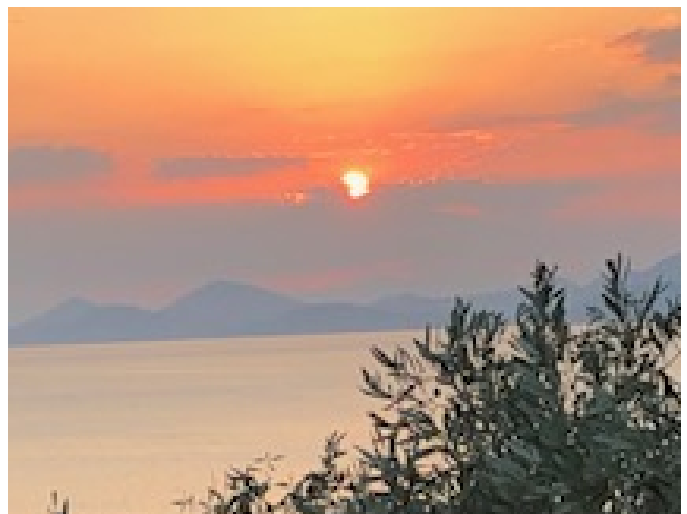
This is the hottest summer on record, and our long walk to our lodging is slow and exhausting. There is no shade nor any breeze. Hydra is positioned in the Peloponnesian archipelagoes so that the Attica peninsula shields the wind.

The pace is slow not only because of the heat. The steep incline up the hillside is arduous in any weather.

I'm in good shape, but I'm not a young guy. On the way up I note even the children are walking slowly.

After a number of days as a guest, I begin to understand the flow of life here is not only because of the weather. It is because of the deep vision that instructs all who come to visit this amazing culture.

Hydra attracted many American ex-pats. The most noted is Leonard Cohen, who made this his second home. You can feel in his songs and poetry the abiding wisdom of this sacred place. In his most famous song "Suzanne" he sings



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 A voice of hope serving the community

*And Jesus was a sailor when he walked upon the water  
And he spent a long time watching from his lonely wooden tower*

I look up at the high points of the island's steep hills and there are lookout towers once used to sight the ships of invading tyrants.

Athens is the next stop in my journey. I leave the quiet of Hydra and tumble into a vibrant metropolis of millions of people. Yet, right in its center, high up, is another sacred promontory from where all can look out for many miles.

This is the Acropolis - an astounding temple complex. This place is more than a bunch of ruins. It is the spiritual and intellectual center of democracy.

Here this experiment in governance was born. For about 200 years, the Athenians held political control in the region, but this declined, and for the subsequent twenty centuries this place was conquered, humiliated, sacked, and sometimes enslaved- but the conquerors never destroyed the Acropolis until a miss-placed cannonball in 1687 blew it to pieces. Yet even after that it was partially rebuilt. The restoration continues to this day.

So does the restoration of our democracy. America is a newborn child compared to our ancient parents. We need to be up on the high places watching for the invasion of the tyrants. We need to slow down and feel the ancient pace of truth. Only then can we preserve this precious inheritance.



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## Summer Giving Letter

A couple of weeks ago, our 2023 summer giving letter, went out. It was written by Jerry and Nancy Schmidt.

Between Angie, Judy and Eric they were able to prepare the mailing and sent out over 200 letters.

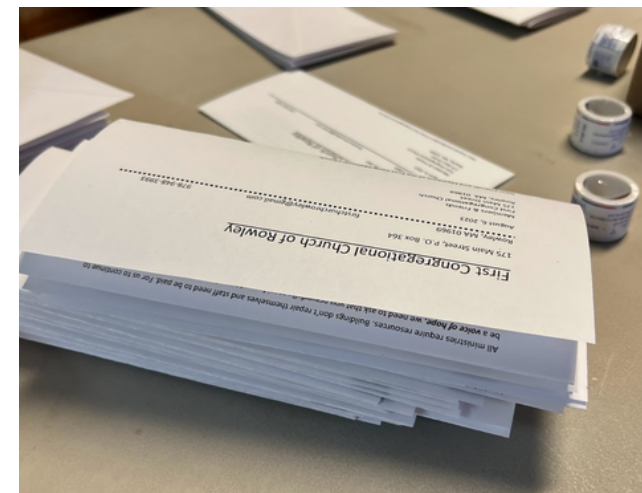
The letter was well written and depicted clearly how First Church Rowley has been living up to its new mission statement.

From the letter:

**"...A voice of hope serving the community...**What does that mean, exactly? It means faithfully walking together, celebrating life's gifts, being together in prayer, and supporting one another during challenging times. It means prayerfully searching and seeking guidance for how to live our lives individually and together as a faith community. Let's face it, sometimes we are confused, scared, lonely. A voice of hope says: "You are not alone; I am with you; I am praying for you, I will call to check on you, I will bring you a meal, I will give you a ride, I will take you to your doctor's appointment, I will visit you in the hospital; I will walk with you as you heal." Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:40"

The letter, in its entirety can be read on the following page.

If you have not already, please consider making a donation to First Church Rowley today. Your support IS also an example of a voice of hope, serving the community. We thank you!



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## First Congregational Church of Rowley

175 Main Street, P.O. Box 364

Rowley, MA 01969

firstchurchrowley@gmail.com

978-948-3993

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August 6, 2023

Members & Friends  
First Congregational Church  
175 Main Street  
Rowley, MA 01969

Dear Friends and Members of the First Congregational Church,

We are thankful for your engagement this past year in helping with the creation of a strategic plan to revitalize and reenergize our church experience. As this process unfolded, it became clear that the Holy Spirit was leading us to "move church into the community." Together, we created our mission statement, "***We are a church that lives by faith, is known by love.....a voice of hope serving the community.***"

A "voice of hope serving the community."

What does that mean, exactly? It means faithfully walking together, celebrating life's gifts, being together in prayer, and supporting one another during challenging times. It means prayerfully searching and seeking guidance for how to live our lives individually and together as a faith community. Let's face it, sometimes we are confused, scared, lonely. A voice of hope says: "***You are not alone; I am with you; I am praying for you, I will call to check on you, I will bring you a meal, I will give you a ride, I will take you to your doctor's appointment, I will visit you in the hospital; I will walk with you as you heal.***" Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:40

In this past year, our voice of hope reached out to the community, offering free dinners, game nights, Friday night movies with ice cream, community cafes, The Bookworm Café, bake sales and workshops, in addition to our annual golf tournament and holiday fair. We donated funds to support local food pantries and our brothers and sisters in the Ukraine. All of these efforts have been possible through the generosity of your commitment of time and dedication.

All ministries require resources. Buildings don't repair themselves and staff need to be paid. For us to continue to be a ***voice of hope***, we need to ask that you prayerfully consider making a financial offering to our church as a part of your summer giving. We've enclosed a self-addressed return envelope for your convenience, or you may donate online using a debit/credit card on our website: [www.firstchurchrowley.org/give](http://www.firstchurchrowley.org/give). Through your generosity, our voice of hope will remain vibrant, and we will continue to serve our community with care and compassion.

With Gratitude and in God's Love,

Nancy and Jerry Schmidt  
Senior Deacons

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# Wear Your Green T-shirt to Church Day August 13, 2023



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## Missions Committee

We held 4 Family Movie Nights during the summer and had so much fun that we've decided to continue monthly throughout the year! We dished up Olde Town Ice Cream and only had a couple of technical glitches... Come join us on the 2nd Friday of each month, beginning September 8th. Movie is to be determined (we welcome requests).

Our next **Missions Walk** will be **September 7th** at Appleton Farm at 1pm. The walks are brief and not strenuous, and it's a great way to connect with nature and each other.

**Back by popular demand - The Bookworm Café!**

Planning is underway for 2 Cafes this year - October 21st and March 16th. As usual, we will have appearances from local authors and will be selling used books and yummy food. If you know of an author who may want to participate, please let us know.

The Community Café is also back, beginning September 27th and repeating on the last Wednesday of each month, from 8:30 - 10am.

The coffee is outstanding - thanks to generous support from Rowley's own gourmet coffee roaster Burwell Beans. The baked goods are all home made and everything is free!



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## **DRAFT List of Upcoming Missions Events**

### **Monthly Movies - 1x per month, on the 2nd Friday**

- 9/8/23
- 10/13/23
- 11/10/23
- 12/8/23
- 1/13/24
- 2/10/24
- 3/9/24
- 4/13/24
- 5/11/24
- 6/8/24



### **Community Cafe Resumes in September and continues on the last Wednesday of every month**

- 9/27/23
- 10/25/23
- 11/29/23
- (skip December)
- 1/31/24
- 2/28/24
- 3/27/24
- 4/24/24
- 5/29/24



### **Bookworm Cafe**

- 10/21/23
- 3/16/24

### **Food Drive**

- Info and date pending

### **Missions Walks**

- Continue monthly missions walks. the next one is Sept 17 at Appleton Farm.

### **Refuge Crisis**

- We are also working on finding a guest speaker to talk about the ongoing refugee crisis

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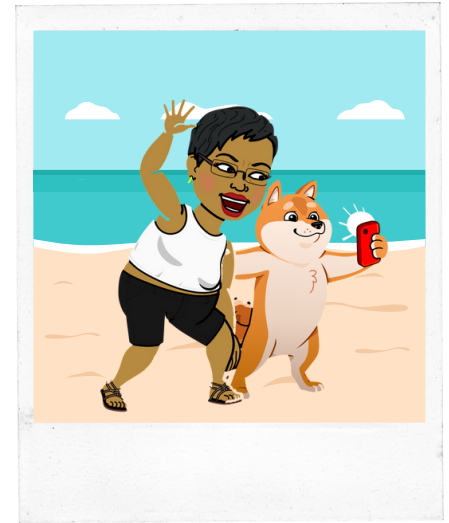


## End of Summer Video Presentation

There's still time! I am finalizing the end of summer presentation video. It's a compilation of all of the pictures you have sent me thus far.

You still have one more week to submit any pictures you'd like to include if you haven't sent yours already.

Please send me (Angie) vacation, getaway or summer happening pictures of yours that we can include - it will be fun!



## Golf! Golf! Golf!

The Ezekiel Rogers Annual Golf Tournament is an all church event! Volunteers are needed on the course for contest, silent auction baskets, sponsorships and golfers. All church event!



## Flowers



If you are interested in dedicating a flower arrangement, please contact the office and/or Debbie Confalone: [dconfalone@comcast.net](mailto:dconfalone@comcast.net)

## Back To School

For September's Steeple Notes, we had asked you to share back to school memories, traditions or preparations your family took part in each year. While we didn't receive enough entries, to support a 'Back to School' theme, here is the single entry submitted:

**From the Butler Family** - *The best way to end the first day of school is by enjoying homemade chocolate chip cookies with milk while talking about the best and worst part of the day! It continues to be a tradition even though there are only two of us with a first day now...Stone and Neil get to enjoy the cookies:~)!  
Liz*



**Prayers and blessings for those embarking upon a new school year!**

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# 14TH ANNUAL EZEKIEL ROGERS GOLF TOURNAMENT

HOSTED BY  
THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH OF ROWLEY

SEPTEMBER 23RD

FAR CORNER GOLF COURSE, BOXFORD, MA

8AM - REGISTRATION, 9AM TEE TIME  
AFTER TOURNAMENT EVENT W LUNCH BEGINS AT 2PM.

- \$165 PER PERSON INCLUDES GOLF AND LUNCHEON
- \$35 LUNCHEON
- \$150 CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP
- \$75 FAMILY SPONSORSHIP
- \$500 LUNCH SPONSORSHIP

SPONSORSHIP INCLUDES A TEE SIGN AND RECOGNITION  
AT THE "AFTER THE TOURNAMENT" EVENT.



For more info:

[www.firstchurchrowley.org](http://www.firstchurchrowley.org)

Debbie Confalone: [dconfalone@comcast.net](mailto:dconfalone@comcast.net), 781-290-6502

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## Blue Bird Performance Venue

A performance venue hosting seldom heard instruments, varied music and spoken word.



### Saturdays:

- September 30th
- November 4th

We are pleased to be the host site for these exciting events!

Cost: \$10.00 per person  
Performances begin at 7:00 PM

For more information, please visit Bluebird Performance on Facebook.

On right, pictures from the August 26th performance, which was held in the sanctuary. Photo courtesy of Jerry Schmidt.



## Christian Ed

Christian Ed is putting together a CE Program for next year, which will be based on attendance and participation. We are also working with the Butlers, Blouins and Lisa Stevens to put together a Kickoff Community BBQ (see attached flyer), for October 1st.

Further updates will be communicated via church bulletin and slideshow.



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# CHRISTIAN ED

2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR

## BBQ

PROGRAM KICKOFF EVENT

FUN FOR THE WHOLE  
FAMILY!

ALL INVITED!

### First Church Rowley

175 Main Street

Rowley, MA

[WWW.FirstChurchRowley.Org](http://WWW.FirstChurchRowley.Org)

For more information, contact: [firstchurchrowley@gmail.com](mailto:firstchurchrowley@gmail.com), 978-948-3993

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## Prayer Ministry

### Thursday Nights at 7:00 PM Weekly

Welcoming anyone who wants to pray for others, themselves, or simply be among those who pray. All are welcome to participate and/or submit a prayer request.

Sponsored by the Compassionate Care Network  
Facilitators: Angie Estevez, Patti Cummings,  
Nancy Schmidt



## Prayer List

The church is updating the way that the prayer list is administered.

When making a request, please include the following information:

- The name and contact info of the person making the request.
- We also need to know whether or not the person/family requires follow up from Reverend Tom, the CCN or Diaconate.

As of September 1st, requests will be listed for approximately 30 days and then automatically removed, unless you indicate that you'd like the prayer request listed until a specific date or an undetermined amount of time.

Please extend your grace, as we work on streamlining this process. We might inadvertently remove a name or request accidentally. If this happens to your noted name/request, please feel free to reach out and we'll gladly place your name/request on the list.



## **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.

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## **Community Pancake Breakfast Returns September 9, 2023 - 8-9:30am**

2nd Saturday in September through  
April 2024

\$10.00 - Under 12 free!

Looking Forward to Seeing you!



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# HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Sylvia Wood	9/1
Claudia Umanita	9/3
Sally Mc Rae	9/4
Jessica Savage	9/4
Dyann Angeloni	9/5
Joanne (Harrington) Reis	9/8
Sharon Emery	9/10
Eilene Chadbourne	9/12
Glenn Pyburn	9/15
Abigail Dixon	9/20
Shawn Pinette	9/21
Ellie Manning	9/23
Debbie Confalone	9/25



# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Adam & Amy Hanson	9/7
Dennis & Rhonda Ward	9/9
Glenn & Nicola Pyburn	9/27



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# Rowley Public Library

RPL YOUTH SERVICES



**DID YOU KNOW?**

if your child is going into grades K-6, they're eligible to earn a Topsfield Fair Prize Package if they complete our Summer Reading Challenge!

In partnership with the Topsfield Fair

RPL YOUTH SERVICES

## EVENTS FOR THIS WEEK:

Please see our website for more details!



### AGES 0-3

- WED. SEP 6TH @ 9:30 AM  
Bouncing Babies Story Time
- WED. SEP 6TH @ 11:00 AM  
Family Story Time & Craft

### AGES 4-12

- WED. SEP 6TH @ 11:00 AM  
Family Story Time & Craft
- SAT. SEP 9TH @ 11:00 AM  
Roll for Initiative (11+)

### AGES 13-18

- SAT. SEP 9TH @ 11:00 AM  
Roll for Initiative


# SEPT. 4th- 9th



## SNEUCC

## Changing Justice from the Ground Up

*Addressing Urban Violence and its Root Causes Using the Principles and Values of Restorative Justice*

Valleria Miranda-Ferrick  
Unity Circles

Tha Thia  
Roca Boston

Free webinar on Monday, September 18, 6-7:30 pm  
Presented by Valleria Miranda-Ferrick, founder of Unity Circles, and Tha Thia, Assistant Director of Roca Boston.  
A program of the Restorative Justice Task Team.

Southern New England Conference  
United Church of Christ  
Living the Love & Justice of Jesus

Southern New England Conference  
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Together We THRIVE

## Money & Beyond: Practical Ideas for Stewardship in 2023

with Grace Pomroy

Saturday, September 16  
10 am til noon

Stories, data, and practical tips for year round stewardship



[www.togetherwethrivegrant.org/special-events](http://www.togetherwethrivegrant.org/special-events)

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