

THE CHURCH BELL

FEBRUARY 2018

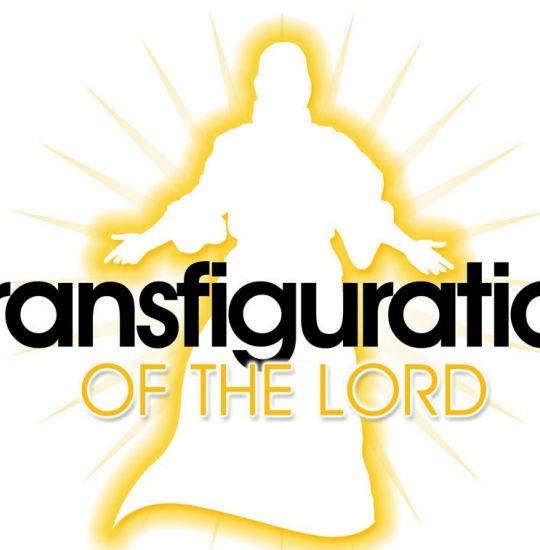
The First Congregational Church Newsletter

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ
At 26 Central Street in West Boylston
online at www.fccwb.com

*The Lord has yet more light and truth to break forth
from his holy Word."*

- John Robinson, pastor to the Pilgrims

Transfiguration OF THE LORD



*Happy are those who hear the joyful call to worship, for they will walk
in the light of your presence, Lord," - Psalm 89:15 NLT*

FEBRUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Worship and Church School at 10:15 a.m.
Childcare is provided for every Sunday service.
Our pastors will be preaching.

February 4 ~ The Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

The Sacrament of Holy Communion
Chancel Choir

February 11 ~ Transfiguration Sunday

Chancel Choir

February 14 ~ The Beginning of Lent ~ Ash Wednesday

7:00 p.m. Ecumenical Service at First Congregational Church
The Sacrament of Holy Communion
The Imposition of Ashes ~ optional

February 18 ~ The First Sunday in Lent

Chancel Ringers

February 25 ~ The Second Sunday in Lent

Chancel Choir

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Hurd in the Halls.....2

Board of Church Life
Thank you
Church Register.....3

Christian Outreach
Inclement Weather
WB Food Pantry Needs
Mardi Gras Madness.....4

Adult Discussion Group
Church School News
Prayer and Praise
Notices.....5

Crossroads Schedule.....6

"Bull in a China Shop".....7

Birthdays
Church Staff /Address....Back Page



Hurd in the Halls.....

At our Annual Meeting on January 28th, Pastor Small announced that his recovery from spinal fusion surgery has not progressed well enough for him to return to his full-time position. It was hard to hear those words from someone who we love so much, and whose leadership, service, and discipleship we have cherished for 24 years. And, it was hard for Pastor Small to say them as well. Just as we have loved him for his faithfulness and his dedication, he has loved this congregation and all of you for the gifts and the spirit that you have brought to bear in your witness to Christ and for Christ.

Pastor Small has been a mentor, a friend, and a colleague for me these past six years. Without him, I find it difficult to believe I would be where I am today and who I am today. His kindness, thoughtfulness, and encouragement – those traits that make him a fine example of a Christian pastor – were extended to me in generous amounts, and I am grateful that I had the opportunity to learn and serve alongside him here at First Congregational. I am blessed that I was able to grow under his guidance, and that partly through his faith in my abilities, you came to believe that I could stand in his place for a time while he recovered.

When I took on the role of Acting Senior Pastor, I made a promise to the Church Council and the congregation: that I would stay in this position until Pastor Small returned or, if he could not, until we found an interim minister who could walk with this congregation on its next journey. As Pastor Small said on Sunday, “24 years is a long time.” I believe that it is best for First Congregational to begin thinking about its future and planning its next journey with the guidance of an intentional interim minister. These ministers are specifically and uniquely prepared to take on this task, have invaluable experience and insight, and will work and serve with you in love and discipleship.

For the last six months, I have been engaged in the Search and Call process and I continue to explore new opportunities for ministry within the UCC. This decision was not made lightly, nor entirely in my own self-interest. First Congregational Church needs and deserves the pastor who can best navigate this transitional time and help you set the course to which God is calling you. While I have not received or accepted a call to another setting at this time, I also wanted to ensure that I was as open and honest about my future here as Steven was about his on Sunday.

But this is not “Goodbye” and we are still walking together. It is a joy and a blessing to minister with you, and I look forward to continuing that ministry over the next few months, experiencing that joy, and knowing those blessings. I am grateful for each and every one of you, for what you have done to support Steven, the church, and me. Your love and care will make this place a vibrant and hopeful place for years to come. God is with you, and God will be with you. As I tried to say in my ordination benediction: the presence of God in this place, because the love of Christ is shared in this place, because the Holy Spirit dwells so deeply in all of you.

Blessings,
Chip

News from the Board of Church Life



Carol Fisher-Crosby is our volunteer coordinator for Sunday services in February. If you are willing to give of your time in some way on a Sunday morning by serving as a Greeter, an Usher, a Lay Reader, or a Coffee Server, please visit our bulletin board in Fellowship Hall and sign up on our monthly schedule posted there. Or you can contact Carol at her email address: cfishercrosby@gmail.com

Our Board of Church Life wants to thank each one of you for answering our requests for help each month (actually, each week!) during the past year in support of our Sunday services. Your willingness to serve our church enables our board members to meet our responsibilities each month and helps to make our work a little easier. We appreciate all that you do!

At the same time, I want to express our thanks and appreciation to each of our fellow members of the Board of Church Life for all that you have done for our church during the year.

As you all know, the Advent and Christmas season are a very busy time for our board. Since Advent began in November, our board performed both many unseen tasks preparing the church for Christmas and several visible preparations as well. Small groups decorated the sanctuary with candles and greens, attended to the crèche weekly, set up and arranged the poinsettias at the altar and chancel, and placed numerous crèches in Fellowship Hall, the parlor, the front entry, and the side door hall. Then, after Christmas, we took down all the decorations and packed them away for next year.

Behind the scenes, other small teams filled the candle holders and set them up in baskets for the two services on Christmas Eve, Allison planned and coordinated Christmas Caroling with over 20 people for our shut-ins and those in nursing homes on December 10th. The BOCL coordinated the annual Christmas Cookie Table (with your help!) on December 17th for all our young people. We also delivered over 28 of the poinsettias to our shut-ins, members in nursing homes, and those who had recently lost a loved one.

While none of these numerous tasks and responsibilities takes a lot of time out of our daily schedules to complete, each one does require a certain level of commitment.

Thanks to you all for a job well done! We appreciate all that you do for our church!

Blessings
Matt Rogers
mmrogers232@gmail.com
508-963-0275

*Thank
You*

Dear Church Friends:

My family and I truly appreciate your prayers, many expressions of caring and thoughtful acts of kindness during my daughter Debbie's illness and passing. Thank you also for the beautiful altar flowers and poinsettia. You have touched our hearts deeply. How blessed I am to be part of such a wonderful church family.

With sincere gratitude and love,
~Nancy Thomson

The Church Register

Baptisms

*Chase Robert Oikle
January 7*

Deaths

*Janice Bartlett Malcolmson
December 29*

*The March Bell Deadline is
Thursday, February 15.*

Send address changes to administrator@fccwb.com

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY THRU FRIDAY 9:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

TELEPHONE: 508-835-4462 FAX: 508-835-4463

OFFICE EMAIL: administrator@fccwb.com

WEBSITE: www.fccwb.com

Messages may be left on the church phone system for the staff at any time.

Acting Senior Pastor **Wallace "Chip" Hurd** (ext. 101).

Administrative Assistant-**Lisa Fisher** (ext. 100)

Financial office (ext. 103)

Staff Email addresses are:

Chip: whurd@fccwb.com

George: gvogel@charter.net

Financial Office: financial@fccwb.com

Christian Ed Office: pjmduon@msn.com

Community Nursery School: cnswb@fccwb.com



CHRISTIAN OUTREACH BOARD NEWS

Upcoming Events...

JOHN STREET SOUP KITCHEN

Our next opportunity to volunteer at the **John Street Soup Kitchen** will be:

Saturday, March 3rd

We need:

- 30 lbs. of mashed potatoes in 5lb increments
- Desserts: 4 dozen squares or cookies
- **Deliver to our church kitchen by 8:30 a.m. on Saturday morning, March 3rd.**
- People to help serve



Please contact Dave O'Brien at 508-835-8929 or dnbobrien@gmail.com for more information.

HOPE for HOUSING

PURCHASE GROCERY CARDS

CVS Stop & Shop Big Y Shaw's Hannaford

Build a Habit...Save a Home

Together, we can end family homelessness!
Food Cards are available for purchase each Sunday following worship.

Checks are accepted for payment

- You purchase food cards- value from \$10 - \$100
- You receive the full face value of the card you purchase.
- What you don't spend remains on your card for later use.
- The store donates 5% of what you spend to prevent family homelessness.



In the event of inclement weather please listen to
WSRS 96.1 FM or **WTAG 580 AM**

radio stations for church cancellations.

Or call the church answering machine that morning
for any cancellations!



If the Weather Outside is
Frightful

WB FOOD PANTRY

First Congregational Church partners with Oakdale United Methodist, Christ Lutheran and Our Lady of Good Council churches in West Boylston to host a Food Pantry.

It is open from 1-4 p.m. on the 3rd Tuesday of every month.

Donations of food and money are always welcome.



Current Pantry Needs include:

Canned soups and stews

Coffee and tea. No Kcups please.

Please check all items for expiration dates as we have to discard any items that have expired.

Donations may be left in the blue bins in the ramp entrance. Thanks so much for your generosity.

This project was funded in part by a grant from the Greater Worcester Community Foundation.

Mardi Gras Madness



Our Chancel Ringers will be hosting a "Mardi Gras Madness" event in the fellowship hall on Saturday, March 24th from 2-4 PM. Unlike years past, the theme for this third annual fundraiser will be quite different from an "afternoon tea" as the ensemble will transform the hall into a New Orleans-styled Mardi Gras festival with theme-appropriate food, music, and decor, as well as a silent auction. Tickets for the event are \$10 each and may be purchased from any member of our handbell choir or by contacting Kristjon: (978) 235-6761 or kristjon.imperio@gmail.com



Greetings from the Adult Discussion Group! Despite being at the mercy of some early winter weather cancellations our

Wednesday night group continues.

As discussed in the January Bell article, our group is studying the series from Adam Hamilton entitled, "Half Truths," Many of us have heard the saying, "God helps those who help themselves", or "It is part of God's plan". Our group will be discussing what the bible really says and means about these commonly used, but not always helpful, statements.

From the book's introduction Hamilton contends that the scriptures must be interpreted. Sometimes their meanings seem to conflict, or a particular message given in one context appears to be contradicted in another context. It is important to read any scripture in the light of its context and the Bible's broader message and themes. It is not enough to find a passage or two or six to support a particular view. We must learn to interpret scripture in the light of Jesus' life and teachings, as well as with the help of the Spirit's witness, the wisdom of scholars, and our intellect and life experience.

Again, please accept our invitation to join us on Wednesday evenings at 7.00 PM in the Chapel.

Blessings, George

Christian Education updates

This year for Lent in our classrooms we will have Jan Sioui lead us in the lesson of the pretzel, she will be making salt dough pretzels with the church school classes on Sunday, February 11th.

Ash Wednesday is February 14th this year. Ash Wednesday Services will be at our church, please attend if you are able.

Happy Valentine's Day!!!!



Pam Doonan on behalf of the CE board

Prayer and Praise

All those with health concerns:

Jim Bronwell
 Carol Rotti
 Cayleigh Lynne Gilroy-granddaughter of Carol Ann Hamilton's friend
 Lynne Pierce-Arlette and Bill Peterson's friend
 Steven Small
 Sophia Landeo
 Ron Newman, Dan Newman's father
 Bernadette White—one of our faithful
 Second Chance Thrift Shop stewards
 Lyle Smith
 Paula Leftwich-Heidi Leftwich's mother-in-law
 Tony-Sharon Seale's brother-in-law
 David Holmes-Amie Dehner's step-father
 Carol (Baker) Poladian-friend of Heather and Paul Krasnov
 Scott Holt
 Debbie Thomas-Carol Rotti's cousin
 Bob Akins-Marsha Saunder's brother
 Andrew Brewer-Marie Lane's nephew
 Valerie-friend of the Poland family
 Lori Rotti
 A friend of Jodie Howard
 Danielle Akins-Marsha Saunders' niece
 Philip Helle-Ursula's husband
 Beverly Goodale
 Bailey Doonan



In sympathy:

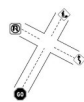
Lue Hawley and family

Wider concerns:

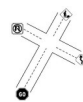
Thanksgiving for all who come through our doors.
 Our service men and women around the world and their families.
 Those who are unemployed among us and around the country.

Do you have any Mardi Gras-type beaded necklaces you no longer need and would be will to donate to the Bell Choir? If so, please pass them along to any Bell Choir member. Thank you!

In the Clerk's Annual Report for 2017 James Adams and Janice Bartlett Malcolmson were omitted because there was not a memorial or funeral service for them during 2017. We regret the omission.



Crossroads



Youth Group Schedule - Spring 2018

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Snack</u>
January 28	Sunday	6:00 - 8:00 PM	Meeting	Tyler
February 11	Sunday	6:00 - 8:00 PM	Meeting	Sarah
March 2	Friday	TBD	NOOP	EVERYONE
March 11	Sunday	6:00 - 8:00 PM	Meeting	Jocelyn & Tamara
March 25	Sunday	7:00 - 9:30 AM	Pancake Breakfast	
April 8	Sunday	6:00 - 8:00 PM	Meeting	Rachelle & Lindsey
April 13	Friday	6:00 - 8:00 PM	Bistro Set-up	
April 14	Saturday	4:00 - 9:00 PM	BISTRO	
April 29	Sunday	6:00 - 8:00 PM	Meeting	Nate & Kelsey
May 20	Sunday	6:00 - 8:00 PM	Meeting	Ben
June 3	Sunday	6:00 - 8:00 PM	Meeting	Bailey
END OF YEAR BARBECUE - DATE TBD				



John Leslie's J.E.M.S Theatre of West Boylston will present the murder-suspense comedy **"Bull in a China Shop"** by G.B. Gilford. The play is directed by Derek Sylvester, and will be performed at W.B. First Congregational Church in their Fellowship Hall.

Dates are Fri. Feb. 9 at 7:30pm, Sat. Feb. 10 at 2:00pm and Sun. Feb. 11 at 2:00pm. Tickets are \$15.00 each for General Admission, and \$12.00 for Senior Citizens and Students. Tickets will be available at the door on performance days, and may be paid for with cash or a check.

This play is a delightfully funny "Whodunit." Can you guess the murderer? Or, was it a suicide? Here's what happens: When a houseful of sweet little old ladies discover that a handsome bachelor lives across the street, they are delighted. When they learn that he is a Homicide Detective, they are faced with the problem of how to attract his attention. The answer is simplicity itself: a nice, "genteel" homicide with a cup of tea as the murder weapon.

The six sweet little old ladies who live in the "boarding house for ancient females" are played by West Boylston actresses Grace Leslie & Diane McGuire, with Andrea Goodman & Pam Sutton of Worcester, Robin Forsberg of Auburn and Betty Kristan of Westborough. Detective O'Finn will be played by WB resident Sean Kelley, and the police Fingerprints Expert will be played by WB resident and dentist Dr. Michael S. Casey. There are two Stretcher Bearers, and they will be played by WB resident Paul Bourque and Boylston resident-Algonquin HS student Lucas Guerra. The young woman reporter will be played by Meg Norton and Asst. Detective Kramer will be played by local actor Gary Swanson.

For more information, please contact JEMS Producer John Leslie at 774-261-0977.



"Detective," Sean Kelley, from WB

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
26 CENTRAL STREET, WEST BOYLSTON, MA 01583-1600

The Reverend Wallace A. Hurd IV, Acting Senior Pastor
The Reverend George E. Vogel, Associate Pastor Emeritus
William E. Nierintz, Ch.M., Minister of Music Emeritus
Heidi Pisano, Community Nursery School Director

Kristjon Imperio, Minister of Music
Lisa A. Fisher, Administrative Assistant, Editor
Kendrik Imperio, Custodian

The Reverend Steven A. Small, Senior Pastor is on medical leave.

PHONE: 508-835-4462

FAX: 508-835-4463

EMAIL: administrator@fccwb.com

WEBSITE: www.fccwb.com



January

01 Susan Walker

February

03 Opal Morse

05 Paige Allain

05 Glenda Auciello

06 Crew Bates

06 Timothy MacDonald

07 Erika Smith

07 Nancy Thomson

10 Rory Hoey

11 Megan Beaupre

12 Donna Raymond

12 Phyllis Webster

13 Marilyn Pendleton

15 Merin MacDonald

16 Linda Gray

16 Cindy Scott

17 Dr. Robert Franger

18 Jonathan Minville

19 Patricia Richardson

20 Sawyer Smith

20 Jeremy Zendzian

21 Matthew Colangelo

22 Abigail Colangelo

24 Sarah O'Connor

24 Rick Poland

26 Haley MacDonald

27 Susan Coviello

28 James Hall