

*The Messenger*

First Congregational Church

34 Center Street

Fairhaven, MA 02719-2931



09-2024

*Beautiful Asters*



*The  
Messenger*

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First Congregational Church Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Aug-Sept 2024

**First Congregational  
Church of Fairhaven**

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*Pastor*

Rev. Bette McClure  
508-951-1792

*Administrative Assistant*

Barbara Bishop

*Music Director*

David Touchette

*Pianist*

John Rondeau

**Office Hours:**

Tues thru Thurs

10:00 am—2:00 pm



*"Our mission is to provide opportunities to experience God's presence and in humble and caring ways to use all of our resources to welcome, love, challenge, and equip each other for Christ's ministry in our community and the world."*

*Welcome Back Sunday*

*September 8<sup>th</sup>*

*Worship Returns to 10:00 a.m.*

On Sunday, September 8 we will return to our 10:00 worship hour. Making that Sunday a special day, we will celebrate Holy Communion and our choir will sing.

Please plan to come and see folks you have missed this summer and give a rousing welcome to members of the choir.

If that's not enough enticement to attend—we will be enjoying **MAKE YOUR OWN SUNDAES** during coffee hour.



**SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Our church provides a Sunday School program for children from pre-school through grade 6. Older youth are also welcome to attend and help out.

We will be starting the program on September 15<sup>th</sup>. We are still in the process of planning our schedule but, as was our practice last year, classes will be held approximately twice a month.

Join us on Welcome Back Sunday on September 8<sup>th</sup> and find out more about the program. We are excited about welcoming back the children!

*"For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven"*

*Ecclesiastes 3:1*

Dear Ones,

I am writing this column on one of the last days of August. September is right around the corner, many of our children and teachers have returned to school, and the pace of life seems to be changing. Some of us are mourning the passing of summer – the warm sun, time at the beach, restful vacations. Others of us (including me!) are joyfully looking forward to cooler, crisper weather, the more regular, predictable schedules and the beginning of colorful foliage. As the Bible tells us – “for everything (and everyone) there is a season.



I have a question for all of us to ponder during this transition time. What season are we in as a church? A little over a year ago many of us felt that our church was moving into the dark, almost lifeless season of winter and we wondered if we would survive to see another spring. We were tired, our financial assets were dwindling precariously, our energy was sapped and our hope was fading. It was hard for us to believe that spring would come.

And now, many months later, it feels as if we have lived through a resurrection of sorts. Our energy seems to be higher, our finances, while still needing a boost, have at least stabilized a bit. Our partnership with the Shepherd Center for the Performing Arts is strong as they look into the future. Our spirits have been imbued with hope for the future.

God is constantly inviting us into a new season of life – as a church and as individuals. God’s desire for us is to be faith-filled, hope-laden and joyful people. What is God calling us to do and to be as we move into the coming years? Already we do a good job of reaching out to the community – through our thrift shop, Heavenly Treasures, through our Food Pantry, through our alliance with the Shepherd Center. We also readily support those in our church community – through meals for those going through medical treatment, with back-to-school clothing, through prayer and kindness and love and helping hands.

But, again, what is God calling us to do and be in the coming years? What is our vision as a church? How do we better serve the community? How do we become more spiritual ourselves? What is God’s deepest desire for us?

These are some of the questions I hope we will spend time with as we move into the fall season, both individually and as a church. Take these questions to prayer. Discuss them with fellow church folk. Ask others in the community. Listen for God’s invitation.

Blessings

Bette

## Confirmation Program

It has been our church’s practice to offer a Confirmation Program for youth in 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade. While Confirmation is not a sacrament in our tradition, as it is in the Roman Catholic Church, it is an opportunity for youth to affirm for themselves the baptismal vows their parents made for them when they were younger. When young people are confirmed they also become voting members of our church. We have not had a Confirmation Program for a number of years; however, this year we have two teens who are interested in becoming confirmed.

The program will run from September through December and the youth, if they choose, will be confirmed at a worship service in January. Pete Braley, one of our Deacons, and Rev. Bette will facilitate the program. The curriculum is being developed and will be designed to help the youth ponder their beliefs and learn more about Jesus, Christianity, World Religions and our own denomination, the United Church of Christ, among other topics.

The youth in the program may be approaching members of the church to talk about faith – why they go to church, what they believe, etc. Please welcome their inquiries with honesty and openness – we can all learn much through this process.



*Thank You - Thank You - Thank You!!*

*to*

*Gloria and Chris Perperas*

As some of you know, we began flying a welcoming Pride flag at the beginning of June on the church lawn. In mid-August it went missing. We weren’t sure if the wind had taken away but then found out that apparently someone removed it and left the pole lying on the ground. When Chris and Gloria Perperas (Gloria is the owner of Gloria and Co. Salon which until recently was located here in town) found out what had happened they immediately offered to buy us a new one. Other folks in the community including our neighbors at the Unitarian Church reached out to support us. So...many, many thanks to Gloria and Chris for their support and generosity.

## Blessing of the Pets

Saturday, October 5 at 11:30 p.m.  
 On the lawn in front of Trinity Lutheran Church  
 16 Temple Place, Fairhaven

Our church, Trinity Lutheran, and St. Joseph's will join together to bless all your beloved pets. Feel free to bring cats and dogs (on lease or in carrier), rabbits, gerbils, snakes, mice and rats ... whatever pet is nearest and dearest to your heart. If you have a pet that has passed on, please feel free to bring a picture.

We will offer a few prayers and scripture readings and will individually bless each animal; and, you will receive a certificate of blessing. Other churches and individuals in town will be

## Church Membership

While everyone – member, visitor, friend, whomever – is always warmly welcome to worship with us and take part in church activities, we do invite folks to consider becoming members of our church. If this is something that is of interest to you, please feel free to talk with Rev. Bette both about what being a member means and about the process for doing so.

## Sanctuary Flowers

On April 28, flowers were given by Rev. Bette in remembrance of what would have been her parents' 84<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and in celebration of her great-niece Hannah's 27<sup>th</sup> birthday.

On May 12 flowers were given by Marian Purington in memory of Harold Purington on what would have been their 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary

On June 23, the Burr family gave flowers in celebration of Sue's mother Marian's 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

On July 14, Peter Sowden gave flowers in memory of his wife Lorraine.

## Prayer List

Please keep the following people who are dealing with health concerns, in your prayers.

The Johansens	The Bobolas	Peter Sowden
Sandy Orr	Jimmy Fitz	Sandy Henriques
Laurie Noel	John Ross	Russ Chamberlain



## Graduations & Scholarships

Campbell Costa, daughter of Andrea and Kyle Costa, graduated from Fairhaven High in June.



Andrew Scott, son of Jennifer and David Scott, and grandson of Jim and Carole Mahaney, graduated from Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical High School, in Automotive Technology.

Congratulations to Campbell and Andrew.

Scholarships for youth of our church are available thanks to a bequest from the Joyce Howland Estate. If you have a son or daughter who has graduated from high school and is heading off to college please let the office know and we will send an application.



## An Invitation to be Part of a Worship Planning Group

Rev. Bette is looking for folks who might be interested in working with her to do some worship planning. This would involve meeting once a month for about an hour or hour and a half. Together we will look at the readings from the Revised Common Lectionary and/or develop worship themes. Sometimes Rev. Bette purchases a sermon series package and we might work with that to adapt it to our setting.

If you are interested in being part of this new initiative please talk with Rev. Bette.

## Action for Christ News

**Homecoming Fair** was a success again this year. The church netted \$526 in income. Action for Christ would like to thank everyone who helped with the Hot Dog Stand. So, whether you helped set up, cook, serve, or anything in between, this would not be possible without each and every one of you!

Hats off to Bette, Beverly, Bob, Carole, Cindy, Donna, Ethan, Gabe, Hadley, Jim, Joann, John, Kraig, LeeAnn, Lydia, Marty, Pete, and Steve!!!!

### Pantry News

A very big THANK YOU to Ryan Perry who donated the wonderful shelves for the pantry.

There is a bit of bad news about the pantry: all the dry goods (cereal, pasta, rice, beans, crackers, cake/muffin mixes, and so on) were attacked by Pantry Moths and all had to be thrown away! Currently, we are stocking only canned or jarred items.

If you are thinking of donating items to the Pantry, canned goods (especially soup), peanut butter, Jam/Jelly, and so forth, are we welcome as we work out a solution to the problem. The recommendation is to NOT restock immediately.

Personal items are always welcome.

## Safe Church Plan

Our church needs to be a safe place for everyone – members, visitors, anyone who enters our building or who takes part in our programs. As we are reminded by our denomination:

*It is important to create safe spaces which are bound by covenant and demonstrate our core Christian values in every congregation. The problem of sexual abuse of children is not someone else's problem. Providing a safe place for all vulnerable populations of children, youth, and those who are elderly or developmentally vulnerable, and the church leaders who supervise them - is a core value of our mission and ministry.*  
(from the Southern New England Conference of the UCC website)

Our Church Council is currently developing a Safe Church policy which will delineate policies and procedures to be implemented to keep all vulnerable populations safe. The Policy will also address best practices for the ways we handle our money and offerings.

## Baptisms

Congratulations to the following people on the baptism of their children:

- \* Brandon Lamb and Krystal Lee DeMello, June 23, their son Hayden,
- \* Scott Michael Viera and Haley Jane Landolfi, June 30, son Jaxton
- \* Gredy Elena Asprilla and Geraldo Rivera, July 14, sons Ja'drian Jareliz, and Jeraselys
- \* Kalya McGough and Justin Silveira, July 21, daughter Lenna,
- \* Jenny Lynn Kane and Frank Joseph Kane, August 25, son Zachary.



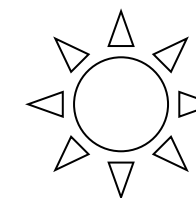
**Your generosity** has allow us to donate \$340 to One Great Hour of Sharing, and \$333 for Strengthen the Church.

As always, your generosity is very much appreciated.

### Welcome Back to Our Choir!

Our choir will be returning this Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>! We are delighted they will be back under the faithful leadership of David Touchette again this year, lending a spiritual uplift to all our services.

New voices are always welcome. If you are interested, speak with David.



**Shepherd Center for the Performing Arts** will reopen on September 28 with a concert given by Charlie Zahm. Zahm is an American singer and player of Celtic, maritime and traditional American music. He sings baritone, and plays guitar, tin whistle, and the bodhran, among other instruments. Tickets are \$20.

Dori Rubbico will be appearing again on a date TBD.

### Coffee Can Club

Do you ever find your spare change – nickels, dimes, quarters, piling up in pockets or around the house? If so, we have a place where you can get rid of it all!

A number of years ago, Al Jones, of beloved memory, instituted a simple fund raising program. He painted a large can bright blue, with the words "Coffee Can Club" on it and invited everyone to toss in their spare change. While it doesn't bring in millions of dollars, every little bit helps keep the church afloat.

The can is at the front of the church, under the side table on the Town Hall side. Let's see if we can start filling it up again in Al's memory.

### JOIN US FOR ANOTHER DELICIOUS POT-LUCK SUPPER!

Wednesday, September 11 at 6:00 PM

Everyone loves a hearty plate of comfort food! So, for this pot-luck supper let's focus on **COMFORT FOOD**. Comfort foods are traditional and often provide a nostalgic feeling to the diners. Fried chicken, green bean casserole, baked beans, mashed potatoes, mac 'n' cheese, and dinner rolls are some that come to mind. Don't forget apple pie (or ice cream) for dessert. We will provide beverages. And, if you wish, bring a friend — the more the merrier.