

The Messenger

First Congregational Church

34 Center Street

Fairhaven, MA 02719-2931



Let It Snow...Let It Snow...Let It Snow

(Or....how to know if church is cancelled)



It's that time of year again when snow can be expected—it's inevitable here in New England. While we hope we will not have to cancel any Sunday church services this winter, we need to be prepared. You may wonder how we decide if a service should be cancelled. Our first consideration is the safety of everyone. We weigh things like amount of snow, whether streets have been plowed, ice that can make driving and walking treacherous, and how low the temperature has gone.

There are four ways to find out if church or a church activity has been cancelled on a particular day: (1) If you are on the church's email list you will get an email as soon as we decide to cancel; (2) The cancellation will be posted on the home page of our website (www.firstcongfairhaven.com); (3) There will be a message announcing the cancellation on the church's voice mail (508-993-3368); (4) The cancellation will be on the church's Facebook page (wwwfacebook.com/firstcongfairhaven).

Please remember that, even if church is not cancelled, consider your safety first—we would rather miss you on one Sunday than have you injured.



The Messenger

Volume 73 No. 1

First Congregational Church Fairhaven, Massachusetts

March-April 2025

First Congregational Church of Fairhaven

34 Center Street

Fairhaven, MA

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Pastor

Rev. Bette McClure

508-951-1792

Administrative Assistant

Barbara Bishop

Music Director

David Touchette

Pianist

Position Open

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."

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, March 5

Brief prayers and imposition of ashes – 12:30 in Maddaford Vestry – a brief 10 minute prayer service followed by imposition of ashes available until 1:15 (use William St. entrance).

Soup & Bread and Communion - 5:00 PM in Maddaford Vestry – light supper of soup and bread followed by a brief Communion Service (approximately 30 minutes.) During the service the imposition of ashes will be offered for those who so desire. All are welcome (use William Street entrance).

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Palm Sunday Worship – Sunday, April 13th, 10:00 AM

On Palm Sunday we remember how Jesus entered Jerusalem to the waving of palms and shouts of hosanna. We will celebrate that event while also recognizing that all too soon those shouts of welcome turned into silence as Jesus went to trial and was crucified. The service will lead us into the reflective time of Holy Week, a time for looking inward and realizing what it means to acknowledge Jesus' passion and death.



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Dear Ones,



I know from talking to many of you that as Lent approaches our minds seem to automatically start thinking – what should I give up for Lent? Some of us grew up in traditions where giving up something (often candy when we were children) was pretty much expected. After all, Lent was the time when we focused on Jesus’ journey to the cross. It made sense, then, to somehow enter into the sadness and the sacrifice of that event.

Over the years, I have come to realize that giving up something for Lent doesn’t really work for me, or perhaps for many people. Too often the “giving up” kind of loses its real meaning and feels more like something just to get through – and then gorge on whatever I gave up! A more meaningful practice might be to DO SOMETHING for Lent – something that might help someone else or that might free up time and effort so that I am more open to whatever God might be doing in me.

Here are some ideas for you a new approach to a Lenten practice - they are attributed to the original author. As Brandon Anderson writes: “Lent is not about you. Lent is about you and God and a chance to get your heart ready and right before Easter.”

Some of these might work for you, or you can come up with your own. I’d love to hear what you’ve decided and how it works for you. By the way – Lent starts on March 5th!

- ♦ Read an hour a day. Or a half hour, if an hour feels like too much. Pick a specific time when you’ll do it, so you get into the habit.
- ♦ Add regular exercise into your daily routine. Do it every day for 40 days of Lent. Even if it’s only 15 or 20 minutes, add it to your routine.
- ♦ Practice a Sabbath. It doesn’t have to be Sunday, and you might not have time to do a full-day Sabbath. Start with one afternoon a week, or pick an evening. Try a half-day.
- ♦ Give a dollar a day to something worthwhile.
- ♦ Spend a block of time daily with your significant other or your kids.

Brandon Anderson at Medium.com

- ♦ Do one act of kindness every day.
- ♦ Pick one of your strengths and find a way to use it every day. A friend of mine likes photography and at one point she set a goal to take one good picture every day.
- ♦ Contact a friend or loved one every day - someone you haven’t heard from in a while.
- ♦ Find time to meditate every day. Ten to 15 minutes counts.

Dr. Beth Cabrera at <https://cabrerainsights.com/?p=1445>

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Report from the Annual Meeting

The following officers and committee members were elected at the January 21 annual meeting:

Chair of Church Council	Bill Vining
Vice Chair of Church Council	LeeAnn Wood
Clerk	Jim Cochran
Treasurer	Sharon Dorian
Assistant Treasurer	Martha Rogers
Moderator	Cindy LeBlanc
Members-at-Large	Sandy Henriques Pam Kuechler
Action for Christ	Donna Perry Carol Mahaney Peg Rogers LeeAnn Wood
Christian Education	Nancy Wood Open position
Diaconate	Peter Braley Jim Cochran Joanne Bobola Phyllis Goodwin Laurie Noel Beth Wilding
Property Committee Chair	Gil Cardona-Erazo
Delegate to Old Colony Association	Sue Burr
Delegate to Southern New England Conference UCC	Nancy Wood
Delegate to Inter-Church Council	Nancy Wood

Action for Christ Report

Action for Christ had a very productive 2024! Details can be found in the Annual Report; here are some highlights.

- * The year started off in February with the Lenten Project, to collect food for the pantry.
- * 11 Easter Baskets were delivered in March.
- * In June AFC ran the hot Dog stand for homecoming.
- * Sock-to-ber in October, delivering 230 pairs of socks to Gifts to Give.
- * 16 Thanksgiving baskets in November.
- * Mitten Tree was loaded with gifts, delivered to Gifts to Give and Sister Rose's.
- * Holiday Hope drive was able to support two families.

In July, disaster struck! The pantry was invaded by Pantry Moths and all of the cereal and other dry foods had to be destroyed. In September, after thorough cleaning, AFC held a food drive to replenish the pantry. Later in the fall, volunteers brought donations from the South Coast YMCA/Full Plate Project, which gets food from the Boston Foodbank, so the pantry was fully stocked. Another visit is happening as The Messenger is being written! The pantry served 120 people 2024.

Thank you to all who donated blankets for persons living in the cold. Over 50 blankets were donated and delivered in February to the Inter Church Council for distribution. Your generosity is most appreciated

The Shepherd Center for the Performing Arts is presenting a Mardi Gras Celebration featuring the Southcoast Brass Band on Saturday, March 1, at 7 PM. Donation \$25 and doors open at 6:30.

Church Directory

Do you have a new address, email, or phone number? If so, please let the office know.

ECUMENICAL POTLUCK AND BRIEF PRAYER SERVICE

Saturday, March 8, 5:30 PM
Trinity Lutheran Church, 16 Temple Place,
Fairhaven

We will join with our friends from Trinity Lutheran Church and St. Joseph's Parish in honor of World Day of Prayer. Bring food to share and enjoy an opportunity to get better acquainted with our friends in faith. All ages welcome!

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- ♦ Start a gratitude or prayer journal.
- ♦ Throw away (or donate) 40 things for 40 days. (And remember Heavenly Treasures!)
- ♦ Compliment someone every day.
- ♦ Make something and give it away. Some cookies, or knit item, whatever else you are gifted at making.
- ♦ Bring someone a meal.

Rebecca at <https://outuponthewaters.com/meaningful-things-to-do-for-lent/>

Blessings

Bette

Holy Week Services



Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service – Thursday April 17th, 5:45 PM

On this most solemn of nights, we will gather in Maddaford Vestry for a simple meal of soup and bread at 5:45. The meal will be followed by a service designed to give worshipers a chance to practice sitting with and protesting our own and others' pain. The service will include Communion and prayer, meditative Taizé songs and conversation, imaginative monologues and an embodied expression of grief.

Good Friday – Sanctuary open for personal prayer/meditation Noon-3:00 PM

Good Friday, or Holy Friday as most of the rest of the world calls it in their languages, proclaims God's purpose of loving and redeeming the world even in the face of human rejection and cruelty through the cross of, Jesus Christ. It is a day that is holy and makes us holy because God was drawing the world to God's self in Christ.

Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service at Fort Phoenix – Sunday, April 20th — 5:56 AM

The well-loved, traditional Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service led by representatives from the Inter-Church Council of Greater New Bedford and clergy from Fairhaven will be held once again this year at Fort Phoenix, rain or shine. Please plan to join others from near and far as we watch the sun rise and celebrate the miracle of the resurrection.

Easter Sunday Service – Sunday, April 20st – in our Sanctuary

Our 10:00 AM service will be filled with music and joy as we move from the grief of Christ's passion to the celebration of the resurrection. Hope will abound in a sanctuary filled with flowers and signs of new life.

Lenten Series

Once again this year, Rev. Bette will be using a worship series for Lent. The series is entitled “Everything [in] Between and is produced by a group called A Sanctified Art, a team of artists in ministry who create multimedia resources for worshipping communities of all shapes and sizes. A Sanctified Art provides thematic materials including prayers and suggestions for music as well as background material for the chosen scripture passages. The sermons are not provided, so Rev. Bette will still be hard at work!

This year, the Gospel of Luke will be the focus and will include familiar stories from the Bible - the Good Samaritan, Mary and Martha, the fruitless fig tree, the Lost Sheep, Zacchaeus, and more.

The authors of the series write: “As we studied these scriptures, we were struck by how Jesus’ ministry disrupted the established social, political, and religious divides of his time. Jesus intentionally pointed out cultural and political extremes to emphasize the radical, inclusive, and surprising love of God.”

The theme, “Everything[in]Between,” is meant to have us think about to the polarities in our lives with more faith, intention, and openness to be transformed. Each weekly theme explores two supposed binaries, like “faith & works” or “rest & growth,” or “grief & hope.” As the authors point out “we often consider these ideas to be opposing. However, as we explore these concepts within the scriptures, we find nuance and complexity. We find that these dichotomies are false. We might begin to see a full spectrum instead of black and white. We might find that God is present in between.”

Hopefully, this series will help us see “in between” those things that too often divide us – hopefully we will begin to see the grey areas of so much of life, rather than just the black and white.

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# Church Membership

Have you ever wondered about what being a member of our church entails? Have you thought about joining officially but have questions you would like to ask? While everyone is always welcome to worship with us and join in church activities we also welcome those who would like a more formal relationship with the church.

If you are interested please feel free to speak with Rev. Bette or with one of the Deacons – Pete Braley, Joanne Bobola, Jim Cochran, Phyllis Goodwin, Laurie Noel, or Beth Wilding.

# One Great Hour of Sharing

March 30, 2025

One Great Hour of Sharing is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten Offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ within Wider Church Ministries. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, we are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS we engage in development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women’s empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing can be put to use in the right place and at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable.

We will receive this special offering on Sunday, March 30.



Please keep in your prayers ...

## Those with health concerns

- \* Sandy Henriques
- \* Dave Simmons
- \* Rev. Russ Chamberlain
- \* Priscilla Braley
- \* Mike Vining
- \* Janet Desrochers
- \* Leslie Ribeiro
- \* Beth Trull

## Those grieving the death of a loved one

- \* Matty Orr, the Lane Family

## Those on our ongoing prayer list

- \* Pat, Laurie, Mike, Mark, Andy, Jimmy, Jude, Bruce, Steve, Ron, Bev, Aurora, Bill