



First Congregational Church

A Friendly Church in the Heart of the City

FCC Friday Link



Published Friday, January 1, 2021

Weekly Inspirational Words
Faith is the evidence of things unseen.



Have you given up hope?

I hope not. A new year is starting and the vaccines are arriving. When I was in the hospital a short while ago, I talked to the nurses about the vaccine. They were all excited that they would be receiving it that week. They had all held out the hope of getting the vaccine soon, and kept on working long, hard hours, helping others.

This brought to my mind scripture from Hebrews: "Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful." Hebrews 11:11. My hope for the new year, of course, is for the end of COVID, and peace and understanding in the world. I know that is asking a lot, but along with hope I have faith that God is here with us, and that is all I need to know. I will do what I can to make my world a better place as I know you are all doing.



I will pray for everyone and please know that God is with us and we should cling to our faith and hope. Nothing is impossible with God.

-Barbara Papagian-



REOPENING UPDATE

Dear Members and Friends of FCC,

The Reopening Task Force has been meeting regularly, keeping apprised of the overall health of our church, its people, and its programs. Excitement, vitality, and connectivity abound! Stewardship has moved forward, the dedicated staff continues to keep its fingers on the pulse of the day-to-day goings-on, kind volunteers reach out to the homebound with warm words and delicious treats, and the many inspiring worship opportunities keep us all connected to one another and to our faith. The Sunday worship service has become

a true highlight of the week, meaningful, engaging, and faith affirming. We truly have much for which to be grateful.

Yet as our community continues to feel the impact of the Corona virus, we at First Church have watched closely the statistics in our community. While the state as a whole has seen a marked increase in positivity rate to nearly 10%, (well over 1000 new cases daily), in Manchester the numbers are even more significant. In December alone several daily new cases hovered around the 200 mark. This is, indeed, a worrisome trend. The vaccine, while shining a light in the midst of all of this, is far from being widely enough circulated in the next few months to offer any significant hope of obliterating the virus soon.

After careful consideration of all the above, and with the New Hampshire Conference of the UCC's strong recommendation, the Reopening Task Force has voted to recommend to Council that we continue as we are, halting on-site meetings and extending virtual worship, all through the end of March. This will, of course, necessitate that the Annual Meeting in March be held virtually, though more information about that will be forthcoming. Meanwhile, the Task Force will continue to meet and, should any significant changes occur, we will keep you informed. Meanwhile, do know that we continue to look ahead and plan for all options, knowing that God keeps us in the palm of his hand.

With hope for a joyous and pandemic-free New Year,
First Congregational Church Council



Food Pantry at FCC

Thank you to all those who participated in the "Reverse Advent Calendar" and brought their food donations to our community food pantry.

And thank you to all who have donated and continue to donate to our pantry throughout the year. We appreciate your generosity!



Congratulations!

Seen here with a special award to honor his dedication, we congratulate Richard Jarvis for his 55 years of service to the Boys and Girls Club Organization!



***Join us for Weekly Trivia*
with Pip Adams!**

This week's Questions

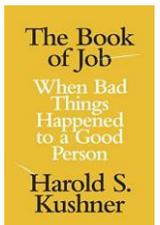
1. What well-known Christmas Carol was the first song ever broadcast from space in 1965?
2. What common eleven letter word is always spelled incorrectly?
3. In what modern-day country was Saint Nicholas born?

Answers from Last Week . . .

1. Why did the banker quit his job? . . . **He lost interest.**
2. What country did bagels come from? . . . **Poland**
3. What does a Scoville unit measure? . . . **Spiciness**

Book Club Returns Next Friday!

I am going to start book/Bible study on Friday, January 8th at 9:30 am. It will go for 8 weeks, ending on February 26th. The book is *The Book of Job, When Bad Things Happened to a Good Person*, by Rabbi Harold S. Kushner. It will be via Zoom so please reach out to me by email at BPapagian@fccmanchesternh.org or call the office at 625-5093 and I will give you the special Zoom link to join in!



Our FCC Open and Affirming Committee invites you to the Open and Affirming Zoom Gathering on January 20th, 2021 from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm. The online conference is sponsored by the ONA Concerns Mission Group of the NH Conference of the UCC.

Event activities include:

- A worship service led by Rev. Carlos Jauhola-Straight
- A keynote webinar with Andy Lang, Executive Director, UCC ONA Coalition

- A panel discussion with Andy Lang, Carol Soucy, Rev. Michael Denney & Rev. Gordon Rankin
- A special poetry reading by award winning poet, James Crews

Registration is free and it's an easy process. Click on the NHCUCC link <https://www.nhcucc.org/weekly-news>

Then click "News Link" and you'll see the conference information and link to registration. All that's needed for registration is your name, email address, and add "FCC Manchester" for "Company Name." We hope you'll join in this special event.

- **The NH Council of Churches has posted two informative online presentations. A December 3rd Session "Faith-Based Conversation about Race in NH" is available through YouTube. Speakers include Rabbi Beth Davidson, Rev. Jason Wells, Robert Dunn, and James McKim.**



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIT2tDqu6G8&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1hr19szUHTkjaivz2VHnICBaZzOg6k2wF2MIU13hyY4bVmarhgF_bCZqU

- **An upcoming session on January 7th, 2021 features "A NH Faith-Based Conversation on Covid-19 and Race." You may access the January 7th session via Zoom, Facebook, or phone. See NH Council of Churches website <https://nhchurches.org/faithcovidrace/>**



Sending Cards to Members and Friends

Please send Sympathy cards to Pat McCarrick on the death of her grandson, Joshua.

Pat McCarrick, 95 West Clarke Street, Apt. #3, Manchester, NH 03104

Please send Healing Prayers to Sue Clement for her mother, Ann, as she is currently recovering from surgery after falling and breaking her hip. She is doing well and is now up and walking.

Sue Clement, 25 Hosley Street, 2nd Floor, Manchester, NH 03104

Please send Sympathy cards to Kelda York and the York Family on the passing of Kelda's grandmother on Tuesday afternoon. She died peacefully, surrounded by her loving family.

Kelda York & Family, 200 Campbell Road, Bedford, NH 03110

**The 2021 Offering Envelopes are now available to pick up at the church office!
Office hours are Monday thru Friday from 9AM to 2PM. Please call us before you come by at 625-5093.**

**News and Events at First Congregational Church
Announcements by
Barbara Papagian**

This Week's Happenings

- Rev. Kevin Pleas will lead worship this Sunday, January 3rd and his sermon is titled, "A House Divided". Lisa Allen will be our Scripture Reader.
- Rev. Kevin continues to host the "9:10 Morning Watch" each Monday thru Thursday morning on Facebook Live at 9:10 AM.
- On Monday, January 4th there will be a Deacons' Meeting at 6:30 PM on Zoom, and the Membership Committee will meet on Zoom Tuesday, January 5th at 6:30 PM.
- I will be starting a book/Bible study on Friday, January 8th at 9:30am. We will meet weekly for eight weeks. The book we will be using is *The Book of Job, When Bad Things Happened to a Good Person*, by Rabbi

Harold S. Kushner. We will meet via Zoom, so if you are interested in attending email or call me to let me know so I can send you the Zoom invitation. Hope to see you on the 8th.

***Future and Ongoing Happenings**

- Friday Night Mini Concerts with Adam Peithmann will now be one evening per month, tentatively planned for the last Friday of the month, January 29th being the next! Tune into Facebook 1/29 at 6PM to catch the next performance.
- The FCC Outreach Committee announces that there WILL BE an annual "Souper Bowl" Food Drive this year despite the pandemic. More details to come soon!
- The Church Office will be closed for the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday on Monday, January 18th. The Office is normally open M-F from 9AM to 2PM but we are closed on major holidays and also for poor weather conditions. Please call ahead when you want to stop by to be sure we are here to welcome you (625-5093).
- The Women's Connection will be hosting a special Zoom Gathering on Wednesday, January 20th at 6:30 PM. It will be a fun "game night" you won't want to miss! Please reach out to Pam or Denise if you would like to join. Pam: blanclp@comcast.net or Denise: beau.de@comcast.net.

Barbara Papagian, Director of Parish Care bpapagian@fccmanchesternh.org

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." Hebrews 11:6

"Friday Funnies"

Little Boy's Prayer

"Dear God, please take care of my daddy and my mommy, and my sister, and my brother, and my doggy and my cat and me. Oh, please take care of yourself, God. If anything happens to you, we're gonna be in a big mess."



**You are always welcome to join us for online worship at
First Congregational Church of Manchester!**



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Photo: Pam LeBlanc and Terri Pattee (not shown) of the FCC Altar Design Team decorate for the Christmas Eve Worship Service, December 16th, 2020