

June 2019

THE BEACON



First Church Congregational United Church of Christ

26 Pleasant Street

Methuen, MA 01844-3199

Telephone: (978) 687-1240

Rev. William D. Ingraham, Senior Pastor

pastor.bill.ingraham@gmail.com

Roberta Jurovich, Office Manager

firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com



www.firstchurchmethuen.com



“GETTING PARSONAL”

Rev. William D. Ingraham

Gratitude is broadly defined as the quality of being thankful; having a readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness. In researching a bit further, I found a study within the academic field of Applied Positive Psychology that demonstrate having an attitude of gratitude has positive influence on our quality of life. Therapist Derrick Carpenter states, “People who regularly practice gratitude by taking time to notice and reflect upon the things they’re thankful for experience more positive emotions, feel more alive, sleep better, express more compassion and kindness, and even have stronger immune systems.”

Life is better lived in a state of gratitude. But it’s not always easy! Bad things happen, struggles arise, and troubles persist, both in personal and community life. Sometimes the difficulties are long-term with no resolution in sight. In these moments especially, I find it helpful to ground myself in small snippets of gratitude. I stop to recognize the gift of a hot cup of coffee or a smile from a stranger, a flowering tree or a song on the radio, a warm breeze or a splash of sunshine. Further, I make myself say out loud: “Thank you!” The words may be spoken to the wind, a person, or are offered to God as a prayer. When the going gets rough and the day is tough, I stop, take a breath, and open my eyes and my heart to discern gratitude. And I give thanks.

Then there are moments when gratitude comes easily, when words and feelings of appreciation flow easily and generously, from our mouths and from our hearts. We’re facing such a moment this

month in the life of our church. After seventeen years as Director of Christian Education, Lori Bennett is retiring. Having coordinated hundreds of Sunday school lessons and Pilgrim Fellowship meetings, dozens of service projects and mission trips, and countless other programs and activities for the children and youth of our church for more than a decade and a half (including more hugs and smiles than could ever be counted!), Lori is ready to leave our staff and step into other roles in the life of our church. Her CE ministry has richly blessed our church, touching the lives of everyone — children and youth, teachers and youth sponsors, pastors and other staff, committees, the Board, church members, visitors and friends of all ages. She has blessed us in more ways than can possibly be named, and we are grateful.

Lori's last official day on staff will be Sunday, June 30. But she won't be here that day! She'll be in New York City with Pilgrim Fellowship on their summer mission trip. So, we have scheduled the celebration of her ministry for the Sunday before, June 23. We'll celebrate her ministry together in worship, and with a special reception in Parish Hall afterward.

Mrs. B has given us *so much* to be thankful for! Please plan to join us in showing our gratitude for her faithful, loving and generous ministry here at First Church Congregational. It's going to be a wonderful day. You don't want to miss it!

See you in church!

- *Bill*

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Save the dates for **Wednesday Worship in July!**

*For July, we will gather for dinner and worship on Wednesday evenings
instead of worshiping Sunday morning.*



MARK YOU CALENDARS!

Congregational Dinner at 6:00 PM; Worship at 6:45 PM



- **Wednesday, July 3rd** – Potluck*
- **Wednesday, July 10th** (no worship on Sunday, July 7th) – Pizza & Salad*
- **Wednesday, July 17th** (no worship on Sunday, July 14th) – Potluck*
- **Wednesday, July 24th** (no worship on Sunday, July 21st) – Sandwich & Salad*
- **Wednesday, July 31st** (no worship on Sunday, July 28th) – Potluck*

**Dinners are subject to change.*

Sunday worship resumes on August 4th!

Breakfast with Bill



"Breakfast with Bill" (dutch treat!), is an informal time for friendship and conversation on any topic. We will next gather on **Wednesday, June 12th at 8:00 AM**, at **Sammy J's**, 146 Main Street in Salem, NH.



Breakfast Group from May

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Burger with Bill

Just like breakfast (dutch treat!), only in the evening!

Our next gathering will be at **Fireside Restaurant**, 171 Pelham Street in Methuen, on **Wednesday, June 26th at 6:00 PM**. Hope you can come join us for good food, cold beer and warm friendship.



Planning a Meeting?



Please help keep the church calendar current. Be sure to let Roberta know of any and all items (meetings, dinners, etc.) that will need to go on the Church calendar. This is the only way the calendar can be kept current and up-to-date. Roberta can be reached at 978-687-1240 or firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

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Need prayer?

If you, or someone you know, is need of prayer or a visit, please contact Rev. Ingraham at pastor.bill.ingraham@gmail.com or 978-687-1240.

To have someone included on the bulletin prayer list, please let Roberta in the Church Office know at firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com or 978-687-1240. No request is too big or too small! Thank you.



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**The first day of summer is
Friday, June 21st!**



Congratulations to our 2019 Confirmands

May 5, 2019

*Abigail Marie Boyko
Alexander Boyko II
Andrew Kenneth Clark-Hodgkins
Hope Elizabeth Coleman-Plourde
Jennifer Grace Dockham*

*Melina Marie Gable
Sarah Rose Lindtveit
Hannah Ann Valcourt
Meredith Danielle Wright*



The Confirmands



Breakfast with Mentors



Communion Wafers baked by Melina Gable



Offertory Music by Sarah Lindtveit



Children's Moment with Abby Boyko & Hannah Valcourt

Stories of the Cross

A source of giving

One parishioner of First Church Congregational has given away a lot of crosses. A whole lot of crosses! He gives them to coworkers, friends at his club, people he just met, ministers he talks with, and friends of friends. Anyone who he thinks would appreciate it, he gives it to them freely.

What surprises the parishioner is the response he gets from people. For the majority, the recipients almost always say “this is great – I’m going to give it to my mother.” ...or friend with cancer. ...or sibling looking for a job. ...or co-worker having marital issues. ...or cousin in recovery. Very few people actually intend to keep it for themselves. Instead, they see the gift, a simple wooden cross, as a way they themselves can give to others. The drive to pay it forward, especially with a symbol of faith, is nearly constant in all who receive faith.

In these cases, he gives them two crosses.



These stories of the cross are documented from true experiences related to a mission of First Church Congregational. We invite you to make your own experience through the simple act of sharing part of our faith through the cross. If you find a moment where they have made an impact on yourself or others, we invite you to share it with us anonymously. Please contact Josh Ferry for more information.

From the Stewardship Ministry Team...

SURVEY OF INTERESTS & TALENTS

We would like to thank all of you who took the time and effort to fill out the Survey of Interests & Talents. It's exciting to see all of the different passions, interests and skills that are represented in the summary of information you have provided. There are so many different possibilities presented from social activities to activities that can make a difference in people's lives.

Over the next several months we will be sharing this information with the church Board, teams and committees. If you haven't already taken the time to review the survey results, they are posted on the Survey Boards in the Parish Hall. As you look at the results, we encourage you to imagine the various opportunities in which you might be interested. For example under the category of "I want to participate in Fellowship," there are 12 people interested in Biking, 14 in Camping, 13 in Fellowship around Movies, 14 in Hiking, 20 in Walking and 20 in a Women's Group.

If one of these opportunities speaks to you, or something else in the survey does, consider talking with those of similar interests to see if there is interest in starting a group. You can talk with Pastor Bill or any member of the Stewardship Team, and we will help you get started. There are so many different opportunities to increase fellowship and shared interests among the congregation.

For those interested in some details from the survey, we had 70 survey responses returned, 59 from adults and 11 from our youth. 49 women responded as did 17 men. As you look at the survey results, you will notice that we separated the adult and youth so each group can more clearly see their group's interests & talents.

There is a lot of information in the surveys to reflect on and to consider how best to use to further our mission of *"Seeking God. Caring for Each Other. Improving our Community."* We ask all to consider how we can personally use this information to further our individual journey embracing our Mission Statement.

Thank you again for helping us to gather this data.

The Stewardship Ministry Team

Pastor Bill Ingraham, Ken Peck, Robyn Sliney, Glenn Sprague, Kim Valcourt and Marilyn Peck, Team Leader



OUTREACH TEAM

NIN Methuen Tuesday Evening Food Pantry

- As the year has progressed, attendance at the NIN Methuen Tuesday Evening Food Pantry has increased. We are now serving an average of 120 families each week.
- Each Tuesday we have 13 to 17 volunteers who help set up the food, serve it and clean up afterward. Our volunteers come from First Church as well as the community at large. If you are interested volunteering, please call Ken Peck at 978-375-4348.
- There is a NIN Food Bin in the Parish Hall. We are grateful for the people who regularly contribute food to the bin.
- We needed a new refrigerator at the Food Pantry. Ken Peck asked Pastor Bill to help us raise money for this project. Pastor Bill successfully solicited funds from the local and national Exchange Clubs. These funds were combined with money Outreach had in its budget last year to enable us to purchase the new refrigerator.

Stride into the Light 5K Walk/Run – May 4, 2019

- Eight members of the Outreach Team volunteered to join the Stride into the Light Planning Committee for this year's 5K Walk/Run. We did things like distribute posters in the local community, solicit sponsors and raffle items, write letters to and telephone local mental health organizations, churches and Methuen politicians, paperwork to obtain raffle permit, and day of the event activities.
- Since so many of our members volunteered to work on Stride this year, our May meeting was used to do a Stride debriefing for all the Stride Committee. We talked about all the things that went well this year as well as the things on which we can improve next year.

Community Activities

- One of our goals this year is to explore possibilities of new partnerships with community organizations with whom we already partner. To further this exploration, we invited Laura Gomez, Community Outreach Coordinator/Assistant, from the Methuen Arlington Neighborhood Association Inc. (MAN, Inc.) to our March meeting. We talked with her about possible other ways we can partner with MAN besides the Back to School Program with which we have partnered with them for the past eight years.
- Laura came to our meeting with a dozen different ideas for us to consider. Her enthusiasm, energy and excitement in talking about the opportunities to partner with MAN have given us much to talk and think about.

The Outreach Team

Cindy Bateson, Lori Bennett, Ray Benedix, Carolyn Casey, Cynthia Causbie, Pastor Bill Ingraham, Deb MaueSprague, Stacey Murray, Ken Peck, Sherry Patrakis, Becky Smith, and Marilyn Peck, Team Leader





*"Mental illness is not a personal failure.
In fact, if there is failure, it is to be found in the way we
have responded to people with mental and brain disorders."*

On Saturday, May 4, 2019 our Church and community came together to host the 5th Annual Stride Into the Light 5k Walk-Run! Year after year, I have been overjoyed to see the progress we have made. And this year was no different, as our committee jumped over hurdle after hurdle, to make sure we once again exceeded our goal!

From the sea of volunteers, to the amazing jump in overall numbers, we have made great strides this year, not only for the race, but for our voice in the community. With that voice, we had a total of 135 attendees take to the streets as either runners or walkers! Add in our Volunteers, and we had over 150 attendees supporting this cause, and showing great pride in this event right outside our Church doors!

Our committee was pivotal this year in making our numbers such a great success. The team reached out to over 50 potential sponsors in the community, bringing back donations and support from over 30 of those locations! We reached out to over 14 Mental Health organizations and contacted 18 local churches to join our support and help grow our numbers. An amazing accomplishment!

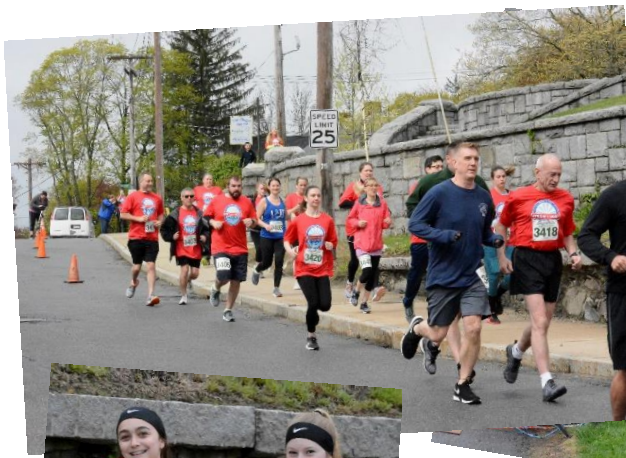
This year, we made some great changes and improvements. Over the past four years, we have proudly supported two non-profits, McLean Hospital and Level Ground, MMA. But to truly make a meaningful impact in our area, we teamed up with Family Services' Samaritans of Merrimack Valley, located in Lawrence! Their partnership already spoke volumes as we welcomed Guest Speakers, Debbie and Ellie, to kick start our event this year! With their support, we will reach hundreds of advocates in the mental health community and will continue to help our efforts grow!

Striding toward our goal had a slow start, but a big finish! Did I mention we had official timing this year to track our runners with our partnership with Bay State Race Timing? This was a great draw in the local community to get support from some local run clubs, such as the Whirlaway Sports Team and the Merrimack Valley Striders! And believe me, they can run!

With each helping hand and voice, the 2019 event raised \$10,921, and counting! Overall, the Stride Into the Light 5k has donated over \$47,500.00 to our causes! Truly remarkable and a blessing!

We look forward to the future of this event, as it continues to help those that need to be heard.

With Stride,
Kerri Bedard (Bennett)
StrideIntoTheLight@yahoo.com
(978) 764-8131





Family Youth Interests -

CE Directors Report May 2019

Things continue to be busy.

Common Cathedral was a very good mission for the HS youth. We spent Saturday the 13th making and preparing the food, and then Sunday we went into Boston and served the meal. We fed over 125 people on the Common across from St. Paul's. The youth were very engaging and had a very good experience. You will hear more about it on Children's Day.

Confirmation is the May 5th. I hope you will all be there to support them. They are a wonderful group of young adults.

Plans for the HS Mission Trip are in place, with 8 youth planning to attend, and 4 adults.

Blessings and joy,
Lori Bennett
Christian Education Director

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June 2019

- **June 2nd** – 10:00 AM – Children's Day Rehearsal, Music Sunday, Communion. Children will join their families for Communion. A Nursery Classroom will be open for those wishing to have their children stay in class.
- **June 9th** – 10:00 AM – **Children's Day.**
- **June 16th** – 10:00 AM – One Room Sunday School Class Lesson.
- **June 23rd** – 10:00 AM – One Room Sunday School Class Lesson.
- **June 28th – 30th** – High School Mission Trip to NYC
- **June 30th** – 10:00 AM – One Room Sunday School Class Lesson.

* * * * *

2019 High School Graduates!

Congratulations to our High School Graduates:

Melina Gable, Sarah Lindtveit & Anastasia Yarid



What's the REACH Ministry?



Do you know of someone facing surgery, recovering from surgery or living with a long-term illness? Do you know someone who has recently lost their job or could use financial support? Do you know someone who suffers from depression or is often down in the dumps around the holidays?

Maybe this person is you?

If so, we can help. Our new REACH Ministry wants to make sure that members of our community have a place to turn for support in their time of need. The term REACH stands for -- Reliable, Engaging, Able, Caring and Heartfelt support.

Contact Judi Boyko or Pat King for more information.

* * * * *

Financial Assistance

If you, or another member of First Church you know, is in need of some temporary financial assistance, please contact Rev. Ingraham at pastor.bill.ingraham@gmail.com or 978-687-1240.

Due to the generosity of Thomas Longworth, through his estate plan, there are some funds available for short term financial assistance of our members.

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Prayer Shawl Ministry

Now Every Wednesday!

We invite anyone who is interested to join us, in the parlor, on Wednesdays from 1:30 - 3:30 PM.



The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets year-round and always welcomes anyone who wishes to be part of this ministry. Knitting or crocheting experience is not a prerequisite to becoming a member. Come for the fellowship and someone will be glad to help you if needed.

Please contact or Anne Benedix at 978-682-3496 (annerayben@comcast.net) or Carol Gray at 603-898-0934 (cagg14@comcast.net) for more information.



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Original Artwork by Emily Jurovich

The Chapel School



The Art Show was a huge success. Parents and children walked thru the creative artwork on display in the Parish Hall. Every child had two pieces on display. I don't know who was more excited to see the displays, the children or the parents or grandparents. There were lots of "ooos" and "ahhhs", picture taking and signing of the guest book. A great family together time!!!

As we wind down to the last month of school, we have been busy watching caterpillars turn into butterflies, potting flowers for Mother's Day and so much more. Our curriculum unit on Bugs has been a big hit and we will continue with two weeks of Farming and ending with the Ocean and Sea Life.

Our last two days of school are Thursday, June 13th for the two day children and Friday, June 14th for the 3 Day and 5 Day children. We will be celebrating with an Ice Cream Sundae buffet with lots of topping choices. Parents are always invited to come in and help. We will be sending home the children's portfolios and final report cards along with artwork, their colorful placemats they made in September for snack and lots of hugs.

We will miss them all. We look forward to those who will be returning in September and it warms our hearts to see those who will move on to Kindergarten leave Chapel happy, confident, independent and socially and emotionally ready to attend the "Big" school.

Happy Summer to Everyone

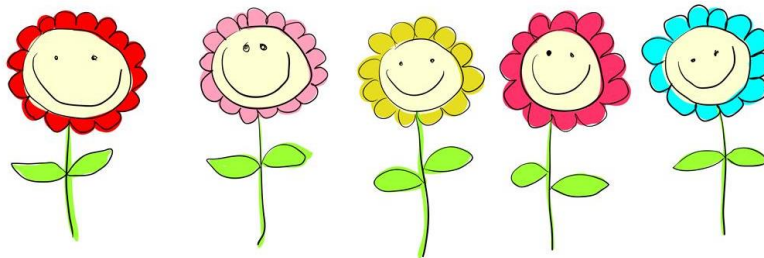
Cindy Mazella
Director



If I Had My Child to Raise Over Again

by Diane Loomans

If I had my child to raise all over again,
I'd build self-esteem first, and the house later.
I'd fingerpaint more, and point the finger less.
I would do less correcting and more connecting.
I'd take my eyes off my watch, and watch with my eyes.
I would care to know less and know to care more.
I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.
I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play.
I would run through more fields and gaze at more stars.
I'd do more hugging and less tugging.
I'd see the oak tree in the acorn more often.
I would be firm less often, and affirm much more.
I'd model less about the love of power,
And more about the power of love.



Pentecost Banners

The Deacons are making special banners to adorn the walls of the sanctuary on Pentecost, with falls on June 9th this year.

From the second chapter of the Book of Acts:

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Make sure you're present on Pentecost to see the final results! The day will also be Children's Sunday, AND we'll have a baptism. It's going to be a remarkable day that you don't want to miss!



The Neighbors in Need Tuesday Evening Food Pantry is currently averaging 120 Families a week and is in need of the following items:

- 18 oz jars or larger cans of any brand or style of peanut butter
- 15 oz or larger cans of any brand of white chicken
- 5 oz or larger cans of any brand of Tuna
- 15.25 oz or higher cans of any kind of fruit

(Examples)



You can help by bringing the items to First Church and placing them in the yellow Neighbors in Need collection bin usually found either in Parish Hall.
Thank You!



Patricia MHS, Marilyn, Carolyn and Ray



Ana and Sue who handle registrations



Ray



Bob, Ann, Paul, Patricia (MHS) Ray, and Marilyn

In April 2019, we served 580 bags of food to families consisting of a total of 1891 individuals.

A recent comment from one of those we serve:

"I can't begin to tell you how much my family appreciate being able to come to this pantry. We have struggled to find ways to get to pantries in the past as both my husband and I work during the day when most are open. One of my sons has serious medical issues and the medicines he needs to take daily keep costing more each year. Your pantry treats us like family which is not the same in many of the pantries we have gone to in the past. We really want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for being here for us."

Daily Lectionary Scripture References

June 2019 (Year C)

Sat., June 1

Psalm 97
Exodus 33:18-23
John 1:14-18

Sun., June 2

Seventh Sunday of Easter
Acts 16:16-34
Psalm 97
Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21
John 17:20-26

Mon., June 3

Psalm 29
Exodus 40:16-38
Acts 16:35-40

Tues., June 4

Psalm 29
2 Chronicles 5:2-14
Acts 26:19-29

Wed., June 5

Psalm 29
Ezekiel 3:12-21
Luke 9:18-27

Thurs., June 6

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
Isaiah 32:11-17
Galatians 5:16-25

Fri., June 7

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
Isaiah 44:1-4
Galatians 6:7-10

Sat., June 8

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
2 Kings 2:1-15a
Luke 1:5-17

Sun., June 9

Day of Pentecost
Acts 2:1-21 or Genesis 11:1-9
Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
Romans 8:14-17 or Acts 2:1-21
John 14:8-17 [25-27]

Mon., June 10

Psalm 48
Joel 2:18-29
1 Corinthians 2:1-1

Tues., June 11

Psalm 48
Ezekiel 11:14-25
1 Corinthians 2:12-16

Wed., June 12

Psalm 48
Numbers 24:1-14
Luke 1:26-38

Thurs., June 13

Psalm 8
Proverbs 3:13-18
Ephesians 1:17-19

Fri., June 14

Psalm 8
Proverbs 3:19-26
Ephesians 4:1-6

Sat., June 15

Psalm 8
Proverbs 4:1-9
Luke 2:41-52

Sun., June 16

Trinity Sunday
Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31
Psalm 8
Romans 5:1-5
John 16:12-15

Mon., June 17

Psalm 124
Proverbs 7:1-4
Ephesians 4:7-16

Tues., June 18

Psalm 124
Proverbs 8:4-21
Ephesians 5:15-20

Wed., June 19

Psalm 124
Daniel 1:1-21
Luke 1:46b-55

Thurs., June 20

Psalm 42 and 43
Genesis 24:1-21
Romans 2:17-29

Fri., June 21

Psalm 42 and 43
Job 6:14-30
Galatians 3:15-22

Sat., June 22

Psalm 42 and 43
Proverbs 11:3-13
Matthew 9:27-34

Sun., June 23

Second Sunday after Pentecost
1 Kings 19:1-4 [5-7] 8-15a
Psalm 42 and 43
Galatians 3:23-29
Luke 8:26-39

Mon., June 24

Psalm 59
2 Kings 9:1-13
1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Tues., June 25

Psalm 59
2 Kings 9:14-26
Ephesians 2:11-22

Wed., June 26

Psalm 59
2 Kings 9:30-37
Luke 9:37-43a

Thurs., June 27

Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20
1 Kings 22:29-40, 51-53
2 Corinthians 13:5-10

Fri., June 28

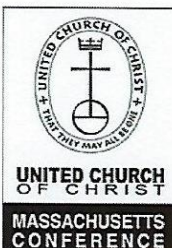
Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20
2 Kings 1:1-12
Galatians 4:8-20

Sat., June 29

Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20
2 Kings 1:13-18; 2:3-5
Luke 9:21-27

Sun., June 30

Third Sunday after Pentecost
2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14
Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20
Galatians 5:1, 13-25
Luke 9:51-62



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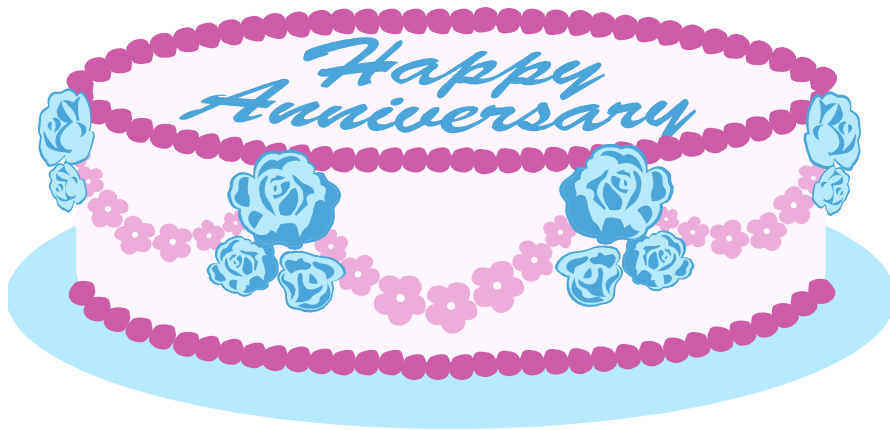
JUNE BIRTHDAYS

03 Stephen Boyko, June Clark
04 Frank Michaels
05 Donna Zacharias
06 Cindy Bateson
08 Lori Bennett
10 Donna Griffin
12 Michael Borislow, Quinton Lang
13 Pat Moss-Newbury
14 Gary Gable
16 Paul Barbagallo
17 Thomas Shea
18 Michael Causbie
21 Glenda Schubert
22 David Williamson
25 Melissa Hodgkins, Patrick Wright, Rachel Yarid
27 Nicole Adams, Peri DiPietro, Janet Silva, Donald Towler

JULY BIRTHDAYS

01 Kristen Bateson
06 Jill Suarez






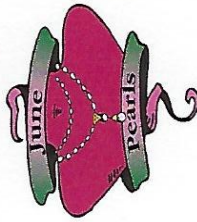
JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

6/15	Rick & Beth Buck	Married 23 years
6/21	Donald & Janet Towler	Married 61 years

JULY ANNIVERSARIES

7/1	Mary & George Simonian	Married 57 years
7/2	Neil & Cindy Bateson	Married 31 years
7/4	Frank & Susan Michaels	Married 38 years



June 2019						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Worship Service & Sunday School: Sundays at 10:00 AM Chancel Choir Rehearsal Sundays 8:00 AM						1 9:30 AM Drop-in Yoga
2 Communion Music Appreciation	3 1:00 PM Historical 3:00 PM Sewing Group 4:00 PM Chapel Staff 6:30 PM Finance	4	5 1:30 PM Prayer Shawl 6:30 PM Church Board	6 6:30 PM FC Bells	7 Methuen High Graduation	8 9:30 AM Drop-in Yoga
9 Children's Day	10 3:00 PM Sewing Group 6:30 PM Outreach	11	12 Last Day of School in Methuen 8:00 AM Breakfast with Bill at Sammy J's 1:30 PM Prayer Shawl 7:00 PM Diaconate	13 6:30 PM FC Bells	14 Last Day of School for The Chapel School	15 9:30 AM Drop-in Yoga
16 Father's Day	17 1:00 PM Cook for B&R 3:00 PM Sewing Group 6:30 PM Stewardship	18	19 <i>July/August</i> BEACON deadline 1:30 PM Prayer Shawl 6:30 PM MDCC	20 6:00 PM CE Meeting 6:30 PM FC Bells 6:30 PM Stride 5K 2020	21 First Day of Summer	22 9:30 AM Drop-in Yoga
23	24 3:00 PM Sewing Group	25 6:30 PM Trustees	26 1:30 PM Prayer Shawl 6:00 PM Burger with Bill	27	28 PF Mission Trip	29 9:30 AM Drop-in Yoga
30 PF Mission Trip Last Sunday Worship til 8/4						PF Mission Trip

Dates and times are subject to change

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Methuen, MA 01844-3199

Address Service Requested