

FEDERATED COMMUNITY CHURCH
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The Federated Courier

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February 2023

From the Pastor's Desk

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." Matthew 3:16

Greetings of Grace and Peace,

February is full of holidays! We have Ground Hog Day, Valentine's Day, President's Day, World Understanding and Peace Day, [Iwo Jima Day](#), Ash Wednesday and others; all under the umbrella of Black History Month. Wow! One could move from recognition to recognition without really thinking about the true meaning and significance of the why each is given recognition. Our Mindfulness/Centering Prayer class is helping us to slow down and to process what and way we are doing something. This practice will help us to choose intentionally amid so many holiday options.

Valentine's Day is one holiday that almost everyone loves. Unfortunately, it has become so commercialized. For myself, it reminds me of God's love. A day that I remember God loves me. I picture those words spoken to Jesus at his baptism by God, "*This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased,*" being spoken to me. To be honest, I think of those words being spoken to me

many days, not just on Valentine's Day. They remind me that God loves me, just as I am. God's love for me (and you) is not because I have done anything special or significant but given to me because I am a child of God's, made in God's image. When I intentionally come to God and ask God to move within me and help me to align my will to what God asks, I find God waiting there, always ready to journey with me. What a friend! What a gift! What an honor to be God's beloved!

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. (1st John 4:11-12) As Christians, Valentine's Day calls us to love others, even those who are difficult to love or who reject our love. Who will you surprise this year with an unexpected Valentine's Day card or sweet treat? It is the perfect way to remind another that you love them and they are "Beloved by God" What a great message!

For a Spiritual Practice this month I suggest you read and reread daily the fourth (4th) Chapter of 1st John. The chapter reminds us we are loved and calls us to love others. What reading could be more appropriate in the month of February? It is a wonderful primer to fill our hearts with love before entering the wilderness of Lent on February 22, 2023.

Happy Valentine's Day!

You are Loved,

Pastor Pat

From the Deacons' Bench

Greetings:

When winter comes and it's cold and cloudy, I like to sit in a cozy chair with a good book, hot chocolate (with marshmallows, of course) or hot cider, and a snuggly blanket. I do miss watching snowflakes coming down, but then again, I don't have to shovel. I am sorry for those that depend upon snow for a livelihood though.

Now that I'm learning healing and how to meditate, I've been thinking about connections. Connections with your body, God, other people and nature easily come to mind. But how about music, books, entertainment, colors, food, and so much more. We each feel a connection to so much. Can we use them to connect with each other?

I've been watching some programs where archeologists have found settlements of civilizations from 10,000 years ago. They have unearthed sacred sites, ritual burials, pottery, beads, etc. We still have all of those now. Connections.

I made a New Year's prayer/wish that we humans can find the right connections between us to be able to live in harmony. If each of us just starts with family (that can be huge), then friends, then neighbors, and so forth, maybe the ripple effect will spread. Who knows where that will lead.



Just a thought on a winter's day.

Blessings,

Penny Dibble, Deacon



February Birthdays

Birthday Greetings to the following members of our church who celebrate birthdays in February.



Samantha Quill	02/07
Irene Cutting	02/10
Katrina Safford	02/10
Richard Harris	02/12
Clara Kern	02/18
Ashley Richter	02/18
Sarah Willoughby	02/18
Weston Willoughby	02/18
Kathleen Lee	02/19
Mary Black	02/22
Cody Godin	02/23
Joshua Sterling	02/26
David Kruger	02/27

Wedding Anniversaries

Earl & Barbara Schofield	02/04
Elizabeth & Cody Godin	02/14

Congratulations to Joe & Gina Eagan on the birth of their baby boy, **Joseph John** who was born on January 14th. Joey is Linda Hornig's grandson and little brother to Gabi.

Congratulations



Prayer Corner



Bonnie
Phyllis
Evie Meacham
Gail Banning
Jeffrey
Josh G & Family
Lois Pixley
Rollyn Hatch
Kimberly Ayers
Ruth
Doreen
Adam
Nancy
Ellie G.
Lisa
Joyce Brooks
Lorraine
Rick
Beverly

Melinda
Yvette
Ann
Sherry & Family
Denise & family
Naomi
Barbara
Jim
Scott
Ken
Kenain
John
Frank
Dennis
Emerson
Kelsey
Usa
Ellen
Artem

For the people of Ukraine
For those traveling
For those affected by floods and fires
For victims & families of mass shootings
For World Peace
For those battling cancer
For those struggling with addiction or mental illness
For those that grieve the loss of loved ones
For first responders & health care workers
For the people Afghanistan, Iran, Haiti, Russia & Middle East
For the changing climate
For our country
For all world leaders
For shut-ins and those who are isolated
For the homeless
For Asian & Black people & all who are persecuted for simply being
how God created them



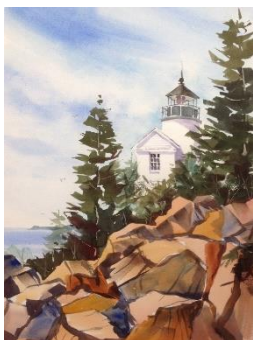
Sympathy to...

*Family & friends of **Fran Brown** who passed away on January 8th.*

*Family & friends of
Yvonne “Winne” Godek, (Linda Hornig’s mother)
who passed away on January 16th.*

A Celebration of Life for Yvonne will be held at the church on Saturday, February 11th at 11:00 AM. A repast will follow in Libby Hall. Linda is asking the church community to provide desserts. Please let the office or Janet Libby know regarding desserts or help in the kitchen.

Watercolor Classes at FCC



For those suffering from the winter cerulean blues, you might consider signing up for watercolor classes on 6 consecutive Saturday afternoons from 12:30pm to 3:30pm, starting February 18th through March 25th. They will be held in the Isham Room which can accommodate about 12 participants.

There will be some instruction if desired, but all will benefit from our shared learning experiences. The cost is \$10 per session with checks made out to the Church.

Because space is limited, book early by contacting me via email @ spencer.moreisless@gmail.com

Wishing you all cadmium red blessings.....

Dave Spencer

Ash Wednesday Services

February 22nd

12:30 PM or 5:30 PM



The Lenten Season begins on February 22nd, six and a half weeks before Easter. The palms we received last year are burned and used to mark our foreheads or hand with the sign of the cross. The palms welcomed Jesus as he came to Jerusalem as the King, the expected Messiah. Four days later Jesus would be arrested and then crucified on the fifth day. Whether we have had the best or the worst year, we surrender completely to God. As symbolized in the burning, Ash Wednesday calls us to repent, remember our mortality, and surrender as we enter a period of journeying in the wilderness with Jesus, fasting, praying, and listening for what God asks of this year.

Wednesday's Wonderful Worship

Wednesday's Wonderful Worship is cancelled in February. We will resume next month, March 15th at 12:30 PM.

Dot Painting with Rose Sullivan

Saturday, February 25th at 11:00 AM .

This class is free. Please call the office to sign up.

Family Game Night

Join us on Friday, March 3rd from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM for Family Game Night.

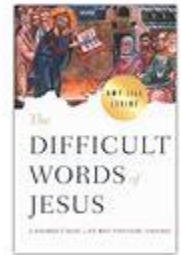
Bible Study

Wednesdays 10:30AM – Noon

We are studying another book by Amy Jill Levine, entitled, “*The Difficult Words of Jesus*.” Professor Levine points out that the word Israel means “*to wrestle*.” When God is speaking to Israel or to the followers through the Bible and calls to Israel, God is speaking to us and perhaps inviting us to wrestle with what God is saying to us. Each week is a session unto itself. You can come to one or more.

Professor Levine invites us and gives up permission to wrestle with some of the words Jesus says. Some of them are very hard and confusing. Have you wondered what was meant when Jesus called us to be a “*Slave of All*”?

(Mark 10:32-45) She points out that translations have made the words easier by translating the word *slave* to *servant*. Changing makes it more palatable, but not really what Jesus said. Did Jesus mean for us to be a slave? Pretty difficult, isn't it? No one wants to be called a slave, with our history of what the word means, except someone who is totally free. What do you think. Or what do you do with the verses regarding hating your mother and father, wife, children, brothers and sisters? If you cannot hate them, Jesus says you cannot be his disciple. Isn't that a contradiction as in his words to love one another, Honor your Mother and Father, etc. You don't have to have an answer or even an idea, but come and join in as we learn TOGETHER.





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FRENCH MEAT PIE SUPPER



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AT
FEDERATED COMMUNITY CHURCH

**Saturday, February 18th
@ 5:00 PM**

Menu

French Meat Pies

Tossed Salad

Mashed Potatoes & Gravy/ Vegetables

Dessert

Beverages

Adults--\$12

Children under 12--\$6

(Takeout option available after 5:30pm)

Please Sign up in Libby Hall or call Church
Office @ 413-566-3711 by February 15th for
reservations.



Pre-Lenten Mardi Gras Celebration

Saturday February 18th

at

Federated Community Church

Mardi Gras is French for "Fat Tuesday", reflecting the practice of the last night of eating rich, fatty foods before the ritual **Lenten sacrifices** and **fasting** of the **Lenten** season.

Night of Fun, Food, Festivities, and Fellowship before we head into Lent

5:00 PM French Meat Pie Dinner (optional)

Menu

French Meat Pies, Tossed Salad, Mashed Potatoes & Gravy/ Vegetables, Dessert, Beverages

Adults--\$12

Children under 12--\$6

Reservations needed for dinner, please call 413- 566-3711

5:30 PM Dinner and Dancing Music begins

6:00 PM Public Welcome for Festivities

Invited to dress in Mardi Gras Attire

Bring your family for some festivities.

Crafts, snacks, music, and dancing, and fun



590 Main Street Hampden, MA. 413-566-3711

Handicapped accessible. Entrance in back or side door