

FEDERATED COMMUNITY CHURCH
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The Federated Courier

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April 2023

From the Pastor's Desk

Read Psalm 55

Lord, confuse the wicked, confound their words, for I see violence and strife in the city. Day and night they prowl about on its walls; malice and abuse are within it. Destructive forces are at work in the city; threats and lies never leave its streets.

Psalm 55: 9-11

Greetings!

I wish I could start this letter in my normal greeting of “*Grace and Peace to you.*” But I am upset! I am angry! I am sad! I hope you are as well.

Let me explain. By now, I am sure you have heard that there was another shooting in a school in Nashville, Tennessee. This is the 89th school shooting as of March 27th, 2023, and the 130th mass shooting in the USA as of the same date. A mass shooting is defined as, where at least four people are shot and injured or killed, not including the person who fired the gun. The six people killed in Nashville included three in their 60’s and three students, one is eight years old and two are nine. I have children that are eight and nine! I cannot imagine the pain, the anger, the despair! School is a place to learn, to make and be with friends, to develop trusting relationships beyond their parents. Parents, students,

teachers, town officials, community members assume this will be a safe setting. However, with 89 school shootings as of March 27th, that is about 1.5 school shooting per day. Enough already, ENOUGH!

This is not the first time I am upset about a school shooting with innocent folks being killed. It is not that I am unaware of the constitution guaranteeing the right to bear arms. I am aware that mental health issues are behind most shootings. But this morning, was the first time I heard a thorough explanation provided by Dr. John “Jay” Wellons, III, M.D., M.S.P.H., professor of neurosurgery and pediatrics, chief of pediatric neurosurgery, and vice chair for clinical research for the Section of Surgical Sciences at Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt about the extent of the damage done by AK 12 and AK 15 rifles. He shared that as the information came to the hospital on Monday about the Nashville School shooting, he took his position in the emergency room, prepared to assist as he is educated and trained. Unfortunately, the results of being shot with an AK 12 or AK 15, destroy such a large portion of the body, as the large and fast-moving bullet expands as it goes through the body, leaving very little to work with. He was unable to save lives.

As he described the extent of damage, my anger began to rise. Questions and thoughts came: *Why are we allowing sales of AK 12 and AK 15 to those outside of the military? Hunting with one of these does not seem like it is a sport or a hunt for food, but more of complete destruction, a display of violence and anger. Where is the money in the budget for those with mental illness? Why is the church not more vocal about this?*

Then, I thought of a note I re-discovered as I was beginning to pack up my office pending my upcoming retirement. The note had indicated I shouldn’t speak about social justice issues. The author didn’t want to hear about world or social issues as they had enough problems at home. Christian faith calls us to be concerned about others! To love others as ourselves. Those children shot in the school could be ours. The teacher, janitor, principal, or police could be one of us. The shooter could be one of our children and needs to know where they can find help. We are the church and need to be aware and engaged in the world. Jesus modeled being inclusive (ex. Luke 13:10-17), and he sent out his disciples (us!) in pairs for ministry (**Luke 10:1-24**). **We are mandated by Jesus to go**

into the World. (John 20:21) How will we know who needs our extra coat (Luke 3:11) or support if we never look out beyond ourselves?

I wonder what we might do. I wonder if someone in our congregation is already engaged in this issue and might inform us and bring some of us along? Could we get information from *Sandy Hook Promise* and post the signs of 10 Critical Warning Signs of Violence around the church? Could we host suicide prevention awareness programs such as *Soul Shop* for the community? What are your thoughts? While we can't do everything, we all can do something.

I close with a poem written attributed to "Martin Niemöller (1892-1984), Lutheran Minister and early Nazi supporter who was later imprisoned for opposing Hitler's regime.

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak
out—
Because I was not a Socialist.
Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not
speak out—
Because I was not a Trade Unionist.
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me—
and there was no one left to speak for me.

These are our children, our brothers and sisters who are being shot in our streets, schools, and community. Let us speak out as our faith instructs us. God didn't allow the crucifixion of Jesus to have the last word, but turned that act upside down and gives new life to those who believe. As God empowered the first disciples to share the resurrection news, giving hope and changing the world for the better, may we be empowered with the Holy Spirit to find solutions to keep our communities safe. Let us be angry enough to move, to stand for justice, and work for the common good of all.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7

With Resurrection Hope,

Pastor Pat

From the Deacons' Bench

IN THE BULB THERE IS A FLOWER"

The promise of a spring rebirth revealed itself today. I noticed tips of tulips breaking through cracks in winter's crust and the fat, reddish-green nubs of rhubarb pushing aside the leaves from last fall. It's life anew once again....a refreshing promise for new growth, new commitments, new adjustments, new insights and new visions for the future.

Several months ago we sang in Church a beautiful hymn of death and rebirth and hope and spring and Easter too....the "Hymn of Promise". Words and music are by Natalie Sleeth, a talented 20th century song writer and musician and incidentally a graduate of Wellesley College in Massachusetts. It goes like this:

*"In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree.
In cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold of snow and winter there's spring that waits to be,
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see."*

*"There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody.
There's a dawn in every darkness bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery,
Unrevealed until it's season, something God alone can see."*


*"In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity.
In our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity.
In our death, a resurrection; at last, a victory,
Unrevealed until it's season, something God alone can see."*

Blessings of Rebirth.....Dave Spencer, Deacon



April Birthdays

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



Elizabeth Nelson	04/02
Steven Elliot	04/02
Judith Hatch	04/04
Matthew Fisher	04/06
Richard Patullo	04/07
Abigail Tulloch	04/08
Gretchen Warner	04/10
Joyce Burt	04/12
Benjamin Blain	04/16
Jane Wyman	04/16
Richard Regnier	04/17
David Quill	04/18
Maurice Dezan	04/19
Matthew Doyle	04/19
Brittany Fisher	04/19
Karen Leger	04/19
David Anable	04/20
Marcia Willey	04/22
Melanie Bliss	04/23
Sarah Blain	04/25
Jeanne Westcott	04/27
Kim Cummins	04/28
Alice Wilcox	04/28
Mason Kennedy	04/28
Annabelle Tulloch	04/29
Anne Collins	04/30

Wedding Anniversaries

John & Barbara Panek	04/11
Mitch & Mary Drozdowski	04/21
Matt & Diane Fisher	04/21



Prayer Corner



Jack Jeffrey Godin
Schoolcraft family
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
John
Emma
Beverly Burnell
Melinda
Yvette
Ann
Sherry & Family
Denise & family
Naomi
Barbara
Jim

Scott
Ken
Kenain
John
Frank
Dennis
Emerson
Kelsey
Usa
Ellen
Artem
Cheryl
Evan
Matthew
Howie
William

For those affected by earthquakes in Turkey & Syria
For the people of Ukraine
For those traveling
For those affected by hurricanes in Florida
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 those impacted by weather disasters
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
For transitions within our church

Holy Week Schedule

Sunday, April 2nd @ 10:00 AM

Palm & Passion Service in the Sanctuary

Thursday, April 6th @ 6:00 PM

Maundy Thursday Service in the Sanctuary

Friday April 7th @ 6:00 PM

Good Friday Candlelight Service in the Sanctuary

Sunday April 9th @ 6:15 AM

Old Cemetery/ Chapin Road

Easter Sunrise Service

Pancake Breakfast to follow at Church Fellowship Hall

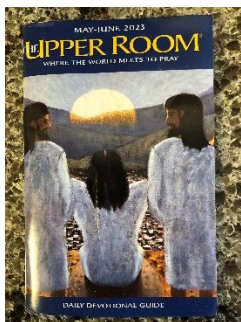
Sunday April 9th @ 10:00 AM

Easter Worship Celebration in the Sanctuary

Bible Study

No Bible Study on April 19th. Pastor Pat will be on vacation. If you need pastoral assistance, please call Linda Hornig and she will arrange pastoral coverage.





Upper Room Copies Available

We have copies of the May/June 2023 issues of the Upper Room available at the church if you would like to pick one up.

If you are unable pick one up please call us at the office (566-3711) and we will get one to you.

Scholarships/Camperships Available

Camperships: If you are interested in attending camps this summer, please speak with Linda Hornig or Pastor Pat. Partial **Camperships** are available for those attending a Christian camp. Applications are available from the office.

Scholarships: Are you a member of the church? Attending college? We have **College Scholarships** available. **Please note that you must be present in worship On June 11th to receive your scholarship.** Ask for an application from the church office and see if you qualify.



The deadline to apply is May 15th.

Wonderful Wednesday Worship

April 12th at 12:30 PM

Due to the pastor vacation, we will move the Wonderful Wednesday Worship to the second Wednesday of the month. All are invited to attend. We share in a simple meal, followed by a short informal worship service. Hope you will join us!

New Inclusive Statement

We are pleased to share we voted on an inclusive statement at our December All Church Meeting. The statement is as follows:

We, the Members of the Federated Church of Hampden, Massachusetts, declare that as followers of Jesus, we love and embrace all children of God, welcoming and affirming people of every age, race, color, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, physical and mental ability, level of education, and family structure, and of every economic, immigration, marital and social status, and so much more. We celebrate God's gift of diversity and value the wholeness made possible in community which is equally shared and shepherded by all.

The vote was unanimous.

The Board is in discussion as to how to let the community know we are striving to live up to our statement and welcoming all. How can you be more hospitable in welcoming others to our church? If a new person or family comes into the sanctuary, do you greet them, make sure they have a bulletin, share where they might find a rest room in case one is needed, invite them to attend coffee hour with you, ask them their names and share that we have visitors (say their name(s)) joining us as a joy during Joys and Concerns? Have you shared with your neighbors, friends, social groups that we have free healing sessions on Wednesday evenings? Invite them to attend a Bible study or Wonderful, Wednesday Worship with you? How can we be more extravagant in our hospitality? Share your thoughts and ideas with one another.

Welcome New Members

We are pleased to have three new members join our church. The official service will be April 2nd at 10:00 AM. I hope you will be there to welcome, encourage and support them. They are Sheila Hess, Laura Lillibridge, and Meredith Sullivan.

Coffee and Fellowship Time- Hosts are Needed

Please sign up to host Fellowship Hour for a Sunday or two. The sign-up sheet is in the kitchen. Ask a friend to share the responsibility with you. Working together deepens friendships and helps us to know one another better. Many hands make the work lighter for all.





Missions

For the month of April we will be collecting throw blankets to donate to the Community Survival Center as well as the Springfield Rescue Mission. Many store will have these on sale at this time of year, such as Ocean State Job Lot and Big Lots. You are also welcome to donate blankets that you have knit or crochet.

There will be a Missions Committee Meeting on Sunday, April 16 following worship.

Also- don't forget – we collect food items for the Community Survival Center on an ongoing year long basis- so please donate non perishable items to this Mission!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 10:00 AM Worship 	3 10:30 AM Line Dancing	4 10:00 AM Line Dancing 6:00 PM Bells 6:00 PM AA	5 10:30 AM Bible Study 7:00 PM Spiritual Healing Touch	6 6:00 PM Maundy Thursday Service	7 6:00 PM Good Friday Service 7:30 PM AA	8 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast
9 6:15 AM Sunrise Service followed by Pancake Breakfast 10:00 AM Easter Worship	10 10:30 AM Line Dancing	11 10:00 AM Line Dancing 6:00 PM Bells 6:00 PM AA 7:00 PM Finance	12 10:30 AM Bible Study 12:30 PM Worship/Lunch 1:00 PM Knit, Stitch, Pray 7:00 PM Spiritual Healing Touch	13 	14 7:30 PM AA	15
16 10:00 AM Worship Missions Meeting after Worship	17 10:30 AM Line Dancing	18 10:00 AM Line Dancing 6:00 PM Bells 6:00 PM AA 7:00 PM BOD	19 10:30 AM NO Bible Study 7:00 PM Spiritual Healing Touch	20	21 7:30 PM AA	22 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast
23 10:00 AM Worship	24 10:30 AM Line Dancing	25 10:00 AM Line Dancing 6:00 PM Bells 6:00 PM AA	26 10:30 AM Bible Study 7:00 PM Spiritual Healing Touch	27	28 7:30 PM AA	29
30 10:00 AM Worship						