

April 2026



# THE BEACON



## *First Church Congregational*

*United Church of Christ*

*26 Pleasant Street*

*Methuen, MA 01844-3199*

Telephone: (978) 687-1240

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*Worship on Sundays at 10:00 AM*



## *Minister's Message* *Rev. Dr. Ann Rogers-Brigham*

Dear members and friends,

We enter April at the end of Holy Week and ready ourselves for Easter "alleluias." April has always been the month for me when I feel there's a turning point in life and faith. I look at the world more hopeful and more expectant thinking that change is possible and change can come.

I really believe that the world "can" be better even when bad news sometimes seems to be the only news we hear. I am aided, as you are, with the gift of our lectionary readings telling us of the witness of those who met Jesus after his death and resurrection. The experiences were all a little different but, basically, their lives changed along with their perspectives. Maybe the followers of Jesus wanted to give up but they didn't. They depended on one another to get through those rough days. How desperately they needed hope, reassurance, and confidence that they could carry on the Good

News of Jesus and be witnesses to Christ's life and teachings in the midst of fear, sadness, and confusion.

Is this how we feel sometimes? Does it matter that we nurture a life of faith? Do we wonder if the church is still relevant today? Many people have given up on faith and the church and decided that other interests in life should take priority. The topic of my message to you in this newsletter is about the ways we are "witnesses" to the resurrection and decide we don't give up. "Keeping the faith" is a priority. What motivates us?

First, we remember that we have a mission and calling to be witnesses to Christ's love and justice and reconciliation. The call to be witnesses is established and firmly set out in those first hours after the resurrection. We, in the church, believe it was not just a "first century" call but a "call" that is ours today. It is a call to ask how we see the world and how we are part of a change for goodness, health, wholeness, respect, and high regard for every human person we meet and every path we travel.

How can we be "witnesses" to the Good News of Christ Risen in our daily lives? How can we be a church who lives the message of Easter? Some years ago, I found an answer to these questions that has helped me throughout my ministry and my call to the Christian life. It is a simple answer to the question of whether I am a "pilgrim or tourist" in my daily life.

I was, as you may know, a missionary in Thailand in the 1980s. There I learned about the writings of Kosuke Koyama, a Japanese Protestant Christian theologian. He taught at a Christian seminary in northern Thailand and he was the executive director of the Association of Theological Schools in Southeast Asia. Eventually, he came to the USA where he taught at Union Theological Seminary in NYC. He died on March 25, 2009, in Springfield, MA. Yes, a small world as I think of Dr. Koyama spending his final hours in our state of MA.

Dr Koyama wrote many books but the one that helped me with an answer to my question about being a witness was a book entitled *Pilgrim or Tourist* (1974). He said it mattered how we viewed the world and interacted with people we met along the way. Do we pass through life as a pilgrim on a slow-learning adventure or as a tourist seeing the sights (usually in a hurry) with no interest in engaging with those we meet along the way. Dr. Koyama believed that we should slow down and be in relationships with people, hear their perspectives, take time for conversation, observe all we can to learn about another person's world, their point of view. His theology was centered on a commitment to serve a "broken Christ trying to heal a broken world."

Dr. Koyama's wisdom is found in a quote I like from Buddhist monk and peace activist, Thich Nhat Hanh (*Being Peace*) "For things to reveal themselves to us, we need to be ready to abandon our views about them." For me, being a Christian pilgrim is a daily prayer to open my heart, mind, eyes, and worldview to a new way. Being in the moment means being in a broken world but it also means being with others who, in collective brokenness, want to change the world for the good. It means giving back and, in the spirit of the broken Christ, trying to heal a broken world. I want to take my promise made at baptism with all seriousness and encourage others to do the same as I recommit myself to be a "witness" this Easter season. What about you? Will you join me?

How grateful I am to be here at First Church with you and to hear the call with you to be witnesses to the resurrection. Truly, In baptism we are given a promise: we are joined to Christ's death and resurrection. That promise does not depend on how strong our faith is or how long we live. It depends on God's faithfulness and our response.

Jesus says in the Gospel of John: "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live." In the promise of Christ's resurrection, we trust that in life and death we

are in God's eternal care. We are to be witnesses to God's amazing love and care for all people, for all the earth. May we be pilgrims on the way of life! May we be Easter people!

Grace and peace,  
Rev. Ann Rogers Brigham  
Interim Pastor

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## A Meal (Breakfast) with Ann

2<sup>ND</sup> Wednesdays at 8:00 AM

at Ellie's Farmhouse Restaurant, 436 Broadway, Methuen

Looking for great conversations with friends from First Church? Join Rev. Ann and friends at Ellie's Farmhouse, 436 Broadway in Methuen, for delicious breakfast and informal conversation! Breakfast with Ann will resume on Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, at 8:00 AM.

If you have never joined us, we extend a special welcome to you. No reservation needed. Join us, even if you are not a breakfast eater, for this fellowship opportunity. We'd love to see you!



Breakfast Group from March

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Our **Lenten End of Life Decision Series** was a well-attended. If you have any questions on what was discussed contact our speakers: Mike Boutin (*Saying Goodbye*), Scott Sanborn (*Financial Planning*), Steve Boyko (*Legal Documents*) and Rev. Ann (*Funeral Planning*). Thank you to Jen Borislow for providing the book, "*If Only I Had Known.*" Extra copies are available for free.



**Postscript to Rev. Ann's Message:** Macrina Wiederkehr in her book, "Seasons of Your Heart" has a short chapter titled, "Tourists or Pilgrims?" Maybe her words will help you voice your words about faith and the spiritual journey:

*I stand on the edge of myself and wonder,  
Where is home?  
Oh, where is the place  
where beauty will last?  
When will I be safe?  
And where?*

*My tourist heart is wearing me out  
I am so tired of seeking  
for treasures that tarnish.  
How much longer, Lord?  
Oh, which way is home?  
My luggage is heavy  
It is weighing me down.  
I am hungry for the holy ground of home.*

*Then suddenly, overpowering me  
with the truth, a voice within me  
gentles me, and says:*

*There is a power in you, a truth in you  
that has not yet been tapped.  
You are blinded  
with a blindness that is deep  
for you've not loved the pilgrim in you yet.*

*There is a road  
that runs straight through your heart.  
Walk on it.*

*To be a pilgrim means  
to be on the move, slowly  
to notice your luggage becoming lighter  
to be seeking for treasures that do not rust  
to be comfortable with your heart's questions  
to be moving toward the holy ground of home  
with empty hands and bare feet.*

*And yet, you cannot reach that home  
until you've loved the pilgrim in you  
One must be comfortable  
with pilgrimhood  
before one's feet can touch the homeland.*

*Do you want to go home?  
There's a road that runs  
straight through your heart.  
Walk on it.*



# Sunday Worship

10:00 AM

*We hope you will join us!*

We like to see you in the congregation on Sunday mornings, but for those who cannot attend in person, worship will be broadcast each Sunday, at 10:00 AM, on YouTube Live ([www.youtube.com/@firstchurchcongregationalm1729](http://www.youtube.com/@firstchurchcongregationalm1729)).

An Order of Worship will be emailed out by the Friday before the service. If you do not receive this email, please let the church office know at [firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com](mailto:firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com).

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## 2026 Lenten Services

*First Church Congregational*

*United Church of Christ*



### Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>:

7:00 PM – *Maundy Thursday* ~ Communion and Reading of Passion with Music Responses.

### Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>:

10:00 AM – *Easter Sunday* ~ A Celebration of the Resurrection with a Service of Word and Sacrament

If you would like to attend a **Good Friday** Service, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church (90 Broadway in Methuen) is having a "Stations of the Cross" service on Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 PM.

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## Prayer Requests/List

We print a Prayer List in the Sunday worship bulletin. To have someone included on the bulletin prayer list, please let Roberta, in the Church Office, know at 978-687-1240 or [firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com](mailto:firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com). No request is too big or too small! Thank you.



If you, or someone you know, is in need of a pastoral visit, please contact Rev. Ann at [amrogersbrigham@gmail.com](mailto:amrogersbrigham@gmail.com) or 978-687-1240.

# *Easter Poem*

by Joyce Rupp

*Sturdy, deep green tulip shoots.  
How did they know  
it was time to push up through the long-wintered soil?  
How did they know  
it was the moment to resurrect,  
while thick layers of stubborn ice  
still pressed the bleak ground flat?  
But the tulips knew.  
They came, rising strongly,  
a day after the ice died.  
There's a hope-filled place in me  
that also knows when to rise,  
that waits for the last layer of ice  
to melt into obscurity.  
It is urged by the strong sun  
warming my wintered heart.  
It is nudged by the Secret One,  
calling, calling, calling:  
"Arise, my love, and come."  
My heart stirs like dormant tulips  
and hope comes dancing forth.  
Not unlike the Holy One  
kissing the morning sun,  
waving a final farewell  
to a tomb emptied of its treasure.*

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## Updated Directory

It's finally here! The First Church Directory has been updated. Printed copies are available on the table outside Roberta's office. If you would like an electronic copy, please email Roberta at [firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com](mailto:firstchurch.roberta@gmail.com)



# From the Chair of the Church Board...

Hosanna – He has risen!! He has risen indeed!! At least... soon enough... Easter is here! Spring is here! Flowers are coming! The promise of rebirth is all around! So exciting to be around such hope and joy. Of course, there is always a lot of energy at First Church. I know that many of our church committees are working on these special elements, events, and programs as well for celebration of our savior's birth, so it will be a wonderful season ahead!

As always, we have plenty more going on, including:

- As I write this, Easter hasn't quite happened yet, but I know there have been truly special services to celebrate the season of Lent. There was a wonderful children's play – Thanks Rev. Ann and the CE committee! There was a spectacular cantata, filled with voices and bells – thanks Mike & the choirs!! With Easter upon us, I know the Diaconate and Rev. Ann will create a wonderful service to celebrate the resurrection. See you there!
- The search process for our next settled pastor is continuing. Interviews are happening, but it is a very thought and prayer filled process. The committee is meeting virtually and physically, and they are working at a rapid pace to build our future. If you would like to see the final profile, it will be available in the office after worship.
- Our Outreach group is hard at work with numerous efforts. I sincerely thank you all for time, talent, and treasure given for those less fortunate. Last month, the diaper drive kicked off to collect desperately needed supplies for area children – thank you to all who helped! Next month is mental health awareness month, so stay tuned for a special service recognizing that issue. More is being planned and there are a ton of other ways to give for the upcoming season, so please read further to find out how you can help. Between all these focused projects and our continuing food pantry, helping so many in our community, there are numerous ways to make an impact.
- The Chapel School is having a great year! The teachers and children are busy in the classrooms and playground, and it is wonderful to hear the joy throughout the church. However, enrollment is still active for the 2025-2026 school year, and are enrolling for the 2026-27 school year, so if there is a family that may need our services, I invite you to connect them with Gina or Roberta. Tours are happening regularly.
- The Finance Committee is getting close to finalizing next year's budget. If there is something you may be interested in pursuing or helping out with, please contact Scott Sanborn. He would love to talk about options, funding, or grants to help our church grow.
- Our Membership Development & Communications team is hard at work planning fun events throughout the coming year. They are investigating lots of activities and fellowship times, so stay tuned. If you're interested in their work or helping out, please reach out to Carol Sanborn for more information.
- ...and so much more!

So, if you're looking for some way to help our church and our community, there's plenty of options. Also, there's always the prayer shawl ministry, other outreach projects, singing or ringing in one of our outstanding choirs, or just joining the walking group to help yourself. There are so many new opportunities available through our historic congregation, so feel free to seek out what you would like and help our neighbors & neighborhood at the same time.

As always, all are welcome to chat anytime with me. I love to hear your ideas and suggestions. We also have a lot of other activities and missions scheduled, so I would love your input. I know you all work so hard to make our church a blessing to our families and neighbors, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Let's keep the energy and drive rolling, continuing to seek God, care for each other, and improve our community.

God bless.

*Josh Ferry*

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## Update from the Search Committee



The Search Committee has had a busy few months. Since our last update, we received two additional profiles and invited both candidates to interview with us. In total, we have screened eight candidates, and invited five to interview. One dropped out for personal reasons. The interview team met the remaining four candidates by ZOOM and invited three candidates to meet with additional members of the Search Committee for a second interview. Interviews are ongoing.

We had a meeting as a full committee on March 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss next steps.

Our committee members are Steve Boyko, Christine Bane, Lori Bennett, Mike Boutin, Jen Dockham, Stacey Murray, Sue Newton, Sue Riedel, Carol Silva, John Silva, Becky Smith and Josh Ferry (ex-officio).

Please speak to any one of us if you have any questions about the search process.

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## A Note from the Finance Chair

Hi folks, I've gotten some questions recently about when the automatic withdrawals are happening for special events through e-tithing, so I figured it wouldn't hurt to remind everyone. The next two special dates are the Easter Giving on April 15<sup>th</sup> and the one-time UCC donation on May 15<sup>th</sup>. Outside of that, the Thanksgiving Giving will come out on November 15<sup>th</sup>, and the Christmas Giving will come out of your accounts on December 15<sup>th</sup>.

Feel free to reach out if you have any questions. Thank you for including the church in your annual giving!

*~ Scott Sanborn*



## Special Worship Opportunities in April

- **April 2<sup>nd</sup> – Maundy Thursday**
  - Lessons: Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19; Matthew 27:1-66
- **April 5<sup>th</sup> – Easter Sunday, Communion**
  - Lessons: Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 28:1-10
- **April 12<sup>th</sup> – Second Sunday of Easter**
  - Lessons: Psalm 16, Acts 2:14a, 22-32; John 20:19-31
- **April 19<sup>th</sup> – Third Sunday of Easter**
  - Lessons: Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Luke 24:13-35
- **April 26<sup>th</sup> – Fourth Sunday of Easter, Good Shepherd Sunday**
  - Lessons: Psalm 23, Acts 2:42-47; John 10:1-10

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## Christian Education

We continue to tell the stories of the Bible using Spark. We also have been teaching education lessons on Lent and Holy Week.

We will introduce some Heifer Curriculum in May, as our Youth want to buy a Heifer this year. They will be doing a special coffee hour to help raise the money needed for the Heifer project.

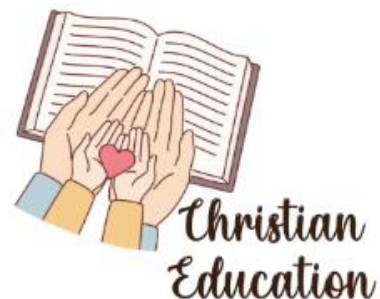
We are in the process of putting together an outreach opportunity for the youth to take part in. One of them will be the **Common Cathedral in Boston**. We have participated in this program for over 20 years working with St. Paul's Cathedral to feed the homeless and worship with them on Boston Common. Once we speak to the parents, we will book the date.

We have CORI'd more adults to help assist weekly in the Sunday School program. This is wonderful as more adults will get to know and work with the youth in our church.

Blessings,  
Lori and Sarah

### **Sunday School Lessons for April:**

- April 5<sup>th</sup> – **Easter Sunday – No Sunday School**
- April 12<sup>th</sup> – **Empty Tomb**
- April 19<sup>th</sup> – **Doubting Thomas**
- April 26<sup>th</sup> – **The Great Commission**



# From the Stewardship Ministry Team...

Stewardship is defined as taking care of something such as an organization or property, doing as well as giving. You can be a steward as a member of one of the First Church teams.

**Our Deacons** are responsible for the spiritual welfare of our church. You can help by working with our pastor to provide creative and dynamic worship services, by visiting those in need of spiritual care, especially in times of illness or grief, ensuring that our marriage and baptism policies are followed, and encouraging and supporting our music program.

**Our Finance Team** is responsible for all First Church and Chapel School financial matters and the First Church Endowment Fund. You can help provide monthly financial reporting to the church board for First Church and Chapel School and propose their Annual Operating Budgets. You can help review annually the Endowment Fund performance and advise the Board of the amount that is distributed to the annual budget.

**Our Outreach Team** provides outreach opportunities for members and friends of First Church that will make a positive difference within the local and wider community. Your ideas are welcome.

**Our Christian Ed Team** provides opportunities to learn about the Bible and grow in faith through Sunday School, Bible Study and discussion groups. You can lead a Sunday School class or adult study group or ensure that all programs follow the Safe Church Policy.

**Our Trustees Team** is responsible for the care and maintenance of First Church property and ensures that the property conforms to various building and use codes. They also oversee the use of the facility for activities other than worship. You can help by ensuring that the church is clean and locked up after Sunday services or be available to open and close the church for any outside use of the facility.

**Our MDCC Team** promotes First Church throughout the community to increase participation in the ministry of the church. Help to communicate to the wider community the various activities that First Church participates in or help run the AV system which broadcasts our Sunday services.

As we search for a new settled minister, we need to fully staff each of our Board teams. If you are able to serve the church on any of these teams or would like additional information about the team, please speak with a member of the stewardship team or chairperson of the team as listed in the Sunday bulletin.

Stewardship Ministry Team:

*Kathy Romano* – Chairperson

*Rev. Ann Rogers-Brigham, Irene Maggio, Marilyn Peck, Robyn Slaney*

## Living the Vision Together



*Seeking God*



*Caring for Each Other*



*Improving Our Community*

Your Pledge Makes It All Happen

# *Musical Musings*

Christ is risen! He is truly risen! Alleluia! Or as Ministers of Music are inclined to say: Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter are over, alleluia! They are truly over, Alleluia!

Lent, Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter are such wonderful celebrations with so much great music, but they are a lot of work! Planning, extra rehearsals, coordinating with guest musicians like cello and oboe and trumpet, working with our choirs: our Children's choir, our Chancel Choir, and our Schola. My favorite thing to do on Easter day is take a long nap....

I am so grateful for the hard work and commitment of all those who contribute to the success of our Music Program. Our choir rehearses each Sunday morning, beginning at 8:30am, and when getting ready for special times like our Cantatas, also come in for Tuesday evening rehearsals. Many churches no longer have a choir that sings in 3 or 4 part harmony the way that ours does, and rarely do choirs still sing weekly! We are indeed blessed.

We also have a smaller Schola that sings at our big musical events: 8-10 singers who learn the music themselves, and typically sing more challenging music, often in foreign languages. For Palm Sunday, our Schola sang the Lacrimosa from Mozart's Requiem, and the Ave Verum by Byrd, both quite difficult music to perform. It is a real joy and privilege to work with them around these big celebrations!

Additionally, this year for Palm Sunday and again for Easter, our children's choir will be singing....we hope our children's choir continues to grow. Your kids are always welcome!

Our handbells graced us with their ringing for Palm Sunday and Easter as well, all under the very gifted leadership of Paul Delabruere. We are so filled with joy when we get to hear the bells ring out!

Finally, I'm grateful for the ability to hire guest musicians to enhance our program: for Palm Sunday this year, we hired a tenor to help fill out the choir, and we hired a cello and oboe. I hope you enjoyed listening to them as much as I did. On Easter, we hired Adam Vidal, our trumpeter, again, who always really elevates the musical experience.

The ability to do all these things is in large part, due to the willingness and the commitment of the congregation to fund good music. As we approach that time of the year when we prepare to pass our budget, I continue to be deeply grateful and humbled by your willingness to fund a music program that hopefully helps us all to grow in faith and community, and which, weekly, brings us joy and nourishes our weary spirits. Alleluia!

Peace and all good things,

*Mike Boutin*



## *From the Outreach Ministry Team*

### “Pampered with Luvs” Diaper Drive

- Outreach successfully concluded its 2026 Diaper Drive on Sunday, March 22. Team Leader, Becky Smith reports you donated 2,728 diaper wipes, 2,582 diapers from newborns to size 6.
- You also donated \$475.00 which will be used by Communities Together to purchase more diapers. We thank you for all your donations. The diapers will be a big help to needy families.
- Communities Together, Inc. is a collaborative group of churches in the Merrimack Valley. The diapers collected and purchased will be distributed to various social agencies, including Neighbors in Need, Lazarus House and Bread and Roses.



### Mental Health Awareness Sundays

- We are excited to tell you we have a speaker for Mental Health Sunday on May 17, which is also our Annual Meeting.
- He is Tom Donovan, Director of PATH Methuen – Front-Line Community Services. PATH is a partnership with the City of Methuen and its Police Department.
- PATH provides access to mental-health services ranging from crises intervention, along side the Methuen Police Department, to access to short-term therapy.
- The PATH Community Resource Team is currently hosting office hours at the Methuen Senior Center for *anyone* who has questions in regard to mental health, is seeking access to resources or just wants to chat. This is a FREE resource. For information call 978-983-8825.
- The PATH therapy service program is located at Sanborn Hall, 90 Hampshire Street, Methuen. They offer in-person and tele-therapy options. All are welcome regardless of insurance or ability to pay. Call 978-208-5158 to schedule a consult, in person or on line.



### Future Outreach Activities

- Back to School Project, July and August, Team Leader: Lisa Ferry.
- Fall Book Drive for Special Needs Kids, preschool. Ages 3 – 5. Team Leader: Cindy Bateson.
- Fall Clothing Drive for YMCA Kids Closet: Team Leaders John and Carole Silva.

### Outreach Ministry Team

*Marilyn Peck, Team Leader, Cindy Bateson, Lori Bennett, Jo Crosby, Barbara Donaghue, Ken Peck, Marie Rubino, Carole Silva, John Silval, and Becky Smith*



# Walking Group for Fitness and Fellowship

## Tuesdays in April

Come enjoy signs of spring along the Merrimack River! Our Tuesday walking group will be switching back to our regular walking location starting in April. We will be walking at the Raymond J. Martin Riverside Park at 971 Riverside Drive in Methuen. The park has an easy, level paved loop overlooking the river. We will meet at 10:00 AM on the following Tuesdays in April: 4/7, 4/14, 4/21 and 4/28. We hope you can join us.



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## Children's Moments

March 15<sup>th</sup> & March 22<sup>nd</sup>



# Prayer Shawl Ministry

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 Bobbi Barlow for more information.

We invite you to join us on **Wednesdays from 1:00 - 3:00 PM**,  
in the parlor of First Church Congregational.



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## Blessing of the Prayer Shawls

On Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, Rev. Ann blessed a new batch of prayer shawls and lab robes, freshly knitted and crocheted by our talented Prayer Shawl Ministry. These will be given to people in need of added prayer and comfort.

If you know of someone who may like a prayer shawl or lab robe, please contact Rev. Ann or Bobbi Barlow.



# The Chapel School

*Spring has sprung!!!!*



We have turned the corner to longer daylight time, later sunsets, and more time to be outside and hopefully warmer weather. The sun is our best friend, especially this time of year. Even though there may still be a chill in the air, sunshine always warms us up. We are eagerly awaiting the melting snow. We cannot wait to get back outside. I love to see how much energy the children have in general, but watching them run, climb and slide down the slides is like watching the amazing race. Fresh air and exercise is always a good thing.

We had another successful fundraiser this year. Lots of yummy goods were purchased and all the proceeds are going towards school improvements! We are very excited about this!

Registration continues with new inquiries for September enrollment. We are always happy to show off the school to new families. The children enjoy welcoming new friends when we tour them around the school. We already have received registrations both in house and from new families. We receive inquiries every day. People are coming in with registration forms already printed off the website and ready to enroll by the end of the tour.

We are looking forward to our Annual Art Show. We will have the Art Show in the Parish Hall again this year, and hope you all can see it. The children work hard and love to show off the amazing work they have done.

We will be on April vacation the week of April 20<sup>th</sup>. The kids and staff are excited to get out and enjoy the spring air!

*Gina Colarusso*  
Director



*Chapel School Classroom Board Decorated by Leslie Buresh, PreK Teacher*

**HELP SPREAD THE WORD!!**



# The Chapel School

*Where a Lifetime of Learning Begins*

**Register Now for our 2026-27 School Year**



- **For Children 2.9 - 5 Years Old**
  - 2, 3 or 5 Day Preschool Programs
  - Customizable Days to Fit your Needs
- **Half Day Classes (8:30 - 11:30 AM)**
  - Lunch Bunch (until 2:00 PM)
  - Extended Day (7:30 AM - 4:00 PM)

## *Fun Learning Environment!*

- **School Year Program** (September - June)
  - Affordable Rates
  - Non-Denominational
- **Over 60 Years in Methuen!**



**Contact us for more information or to schedule a tour:**

**978-689-8414**

**[chapelschoolmethuen@gmail.com](mailto:chapelschoolmethuen@gmail.com)**



**[www.chapelschoolmethuen.com](http://www.chapelschoolmethuen.com)**



Located at:

*First Church Congregational  
26 Pleasant Street, Methuen*



# Methuen 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Kickoff Luncheon

March 6, 2026

Rev Ann & Mike Boutin attended the Methuen 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Kickoff Luncheon. Rev. Ann gave the opening prayer (below) and Mike played the music.

## Opening Prayer *(Written by Rev. Ann Rogers Brigham, Interim Pastor with help/edits from Steve Boyko)*

Creator God, be present among us today, we pray, as we gather to mark an anniversary of our town, Methuen, Massachusetts, which we call home. This is a historic anniversary for us, the 300th, so whether we may live here, or work here, or just visit here, we are glad for our ancestors of long ago and of recent times who have cared enough to make us proud of our heritage. As we share current memories or memories of long ago, may we gather together with hopes and dreams to create a community where safety, freedom, respect, and human caring are at the root of who we are and who we intend to be. Thank you for those who are here today to lead our celebration, those who are our elected leaders of government, those who are in public service, those who are part of our faith communities, those who are part of our business communities, and all residents, young and old, who call Methuen home. As we join in a meal of celebration, allow us to look around and be resolved to live out your call to be people of your reconciliation, freedom and peace. May we be a people shaped in both values and words by our commitment to unity and the good of all. This is our prayer, O Holy One; may we know your blessing today and always. Amen.



# 2026 "Pampered with Luvs" Diaper Drive

**Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!**

Communities Together has been holding its diaper drive for children in the Greater Lawrence area during the Lenten season since 1998. And First Church has been participating in this drive for several years. Some of the agencies that the diapers and wipes will be distributed to include: Lazarus House, Horizons for Children Family Shelter and Pregnancy Care Center. Just to name a few.

Many families make significant sacrifices just to afford diapers for their babies. Diaper needs remains a common and hidden problem of poverty. Families spend \$75 or more a month to diaper one child. On average, a child uses around 8-12 diapers per day, depending upon the child's age, weight, diet, etc. This equates to roughly 240 - 360 diapers in a month.

Although diapers are essential for babies, they are not systematically covered by safety-net policies like WIC or food stamps.

As you can see from the picture, our *Pampered with Luvs* diaper drive was very successful this year. We've collected:

- 2,728 diaper wipes
- 2,582 diapers (from sizes 2 to 7)
  - \$475 cash



On behalf of the Outreach team, Communities Together and more importantly the families that will receive these donations THANK YOU!!



# Youth Lenten Play

## *“I Saw Him”*

Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>

Our youth lead the sermon time with a Lenten play *“I Saw Him”* by Emily Pardue. In this play, places and objects tell what they saw and felt during the events leading up to the Crucifixion. Listen for words from these places/objects in this order: Cup, Garden of Gethsemane, Caiaphas’ House, Whip, Robe, Crown of Thorns, Stove Pavement, Golgotha, Tomb.

### **Cast of Characters**

*CUP – Mackenzie Murray*

*GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE – Nicolette Jurovich*

*CAIAPHAS’ HOUSE – Alexis Murray*

*WHIP – Andrew Pavlenkov*

*ROBE – Carolyn Colby’*

*CROWN OF THORNS – Henry Sanborn*

*STONE PAVEMENT – Alanaa Hines*

*GOLGOTHA – Daniel Pavlenlov*

*CROSS – Isabella Bane*

*TOMB – Haleigh Sanborn*



# Palm Sunday Music Cantata



*Thank you to all our choirs and musicians for the beautiful music!*



# 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 -- **R**eliable, **E**ngaging, **A**ble, **C**aring and **H**earfelt support.

Contact Judi Boyko or Pat King for more information, or speak to our Pastor.

\* \* \* \* \*

***Would you like to make an electronic donation to the church?***

Use your smart phone or tablet by scanning this QR code!



Or visit our website at [www.firstchurchmethuen.com](http://www.firstchurchmethuen.com) and click the **“Donate”** button.

*Thank you for your support.*

# Happy Birthday!

## APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 08 Anne Benedix
- 16 Josh Ferry
- 25 Audrey Lang
- 26 Diane Alaimo, Jennifer Borislow
- 30 Janet Tashjian



## MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 02 Susan Newton
- 05 Robyn Sliney

\* \* \* \* \*




## APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

- |      |                           |                  |
|------|---------------------------|------------------|
| 4/12 | Dennis & Brenda Michaud   | Married 23 years |
| 4/22 | Thomas & Roberta Jurovich | Married 31 years |



# April 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Worship Service</b> Sundays at 10:00 AM <i>In-Person &amp; on YouTube Live</i> <a href="http://www.youtube.com/firstchurchmethuen1729">www.youtube.com/firstchurchmethuen1729</a>	 <b>6</b> 4:00 PM Chapel Staff	<b>7</b> 10:00 AM Walking Group (Riverside Park) 4:30 PM Food Pantry	<b>1 ALL Committee Annual Reports Due</b> 1:00 PM Prayer Shaul 6:30 PM Church Board	<b>2 Maundy Thursday</b> 7:00 PM Maundy Thursday Service	<b>3 Good Friday</b> Chapel School and Church Office Closed	<b>4</b>
<b>5 Easter Sunday Communion</b> 8:30 AM Chancel Choir Rehearsal 11:15 AM Fellowship	<b>6</b> 4:00 PM Chapel Staff	<b>7</b> 10:00 AM Walking Group (Riverside Park) 4:30 PM Food Pantry	<b>8</b> 8:00 AM Breakfast w/ Ann (Ellie's Farmhouse) 1:00 PM Prayer Shaul 7:00 PM Diaconate	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 10:00 AM Historical
<b>12</b> 8:30 AM Chancel Choir Rehearsal 11:15 AM Fellowship	<b>13</b> 6:30 PM Outreach	<b>14</b> 10:00 AM Walking Group (Riverside Park) 4:30 PM Food Pantry	<b>15 May BEACON Deadline</b> 1:00 PM Prayer Shaul	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> 8:30 AM Chancel Choir Rehearsal 11:15 AM Fellowship 11:30 AM Christian Education	<b>20 Patriots Day</b> Church Office Closed 1:00 PM Cook for Bread & Roses	<b>21</b> 10:00 AM Walking Group (Riverside Park) 4:30 PM Food Pantry	<b>22</b> Church Office Closed 12:00 PM PPRC 1:00 PM Prayer Shaul	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Church Office Closed	<b>25</b>
<b>Chapel School Closed - MA School Vacation Week</b>						
<b>26</b> 8:30 AM Chancel Choir Rehearsal 11:15 AM Fellowship 11:30 AM Trustees	<b>27</b> 2:00 PM Stewardship	<b>28</b> 10:00 AM Walking Group (Riverside Park) 4:30 PM Food Pantry	<b>29</b> 1:00 PM Prayer Shaul	<b>30</b>		

Dates and Times Subject to Change

*First Church Congregational*  
*United Church of Christ*  
*26 Pleasant Street*  
*Methuen, MA 01844-3199*

**Address Service Requested**