The Congregator

First Congregational Church of River Edge, New Jersey

a congregation of the United Church of Christ

March 2021

Volume 72, Issue 3



Happy to help

The International Day of Happiness is observed on March 20 (also the first day of spring this year; coincidence?). Jesus said we'll be happy (or "blessed") when we're meek, merciful, pure and so on (see his Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-12). In other words, happiness results from putting others' needs above our own.

Research confirms that helping others boosts people's self-esteem, forges strong friendships, offers a sense of belonging and purpose, decreases stress, increases gratitude and sparks others to "pay it forward." In fact, University of Texas researchers found that the "activism cure" is a great way to overcome bouts of sadness. So get helping — and get happy!

CHURCH OFFICE INFORMATION

Monday, Office is **closed**. Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 – 4:00 pm.

109 Continental Avenue, River Edge, NJ 07661
Phone (201) 261-1712 Website – www.fccriveredge.org
Church Office e-mail – office@fccriveredge.org
Please like and follow us on the First Congregational Church of River Edge
CHURCH STAFF

The Rev. Dennis TeBeest	dtebeest@fccriveredge.org		
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Nicole Babington	nbabington@fccriveredge.org		
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FIRST THINGS

Celebrating and Anticipating

At our February 21 Annual Congregational meeting, I ended my report with these words:

We have solid hope that the year 2021 will be a year of moving out of the wilderness of this pandemic into a new and unknown promised land; a new future for FCC and for the community we minister to. I pray for the congregation's readiness to worship in new, creative and meaningful ways; for us to renew an outreach that once again bolsters our membership...so that FCC/you can be a blessing beyond all our imagining. By the grace of God, the calling of Christ and the moving of the Spirit.

Words that I *didn't* share until later in the meeting were my news that I would not be able to go far into that "promised land" with you. I announced that I will be retiring in my call as pastor of First Congregational Church by the end of summer. That news was followed by Gloria's news of an impending new season for herself as well. So there were a lot of unspoken words packed into that final paragraph of my annual report.

The majority of the report documented the daunting losses, but also the surprising graces of God that we have known in the pandemic journey that began for us precisely one year ago. We have suffered quite a lot, but we have also worshiped, served and grown in remarkable ways. I do believe that we have been blessed...and have been a blessing.

I also believe that FCC can, must and will venture into a faithful future. For that to happen, our leadership will need to have a long vision, and leaders ready and able to equip us to be able to keep us agile, creative...and growing ever younger.

I know that I can't help us to "live on the stretch" for much longer. So this I believe, through prayer and counsel, is the right time for our transitions. I love First Congregational Church and I insist that you see the best future still ahead of you. And I beg you to dedicate yourselves to helping this body of Christ thrive.

I do hope that I have helped us to meaningfully worship and to successfully renew our facilities. But I have never believed that "if we build it, they will come." The truth to which I am committed is that, if we are involved in meaningful prayer, fellowship and mission, others will be attracted...compelled ...to come share with us. We—you—must keep being neighbors to the needs around and amongst us.

And when you are called to step up and serve in some new way in the coming months, *please* answer prayerfully... and affirmatively. We can't live without you.

The timing of my new chapter is still somewhat fluid. I do anticipate being together at least through mid-summer. Until then, I hope our world will continue to open up, so that we can celebrate the relationships God has blessed us with.

Thank you for discovering together that Christian faith is all about trust, creativity, courage, honesty, gratitude and faithfulness. Let's stay open to the Spirit. Hear God asking you, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And please keep on answering, "Here we are, send us."

Godspeed, Pastor Dennis

First Life in Lent

Last year most of our Lent plans were upended as we entered pandemic. This Lent, put these adaptive opportunities for prayer, worship, study, and fellowship on your calendar:

Tuesdays (six weeks), 4:00 - 5:00 pm: BIBLE

are taking a deeper and broader look at women of the Old Testament. Guided by Lynn Japinga's book, we will encounter a wealth of foremothers in the faith in all their messy, yet redeemable, humanity. A signup sheet and books are available in the Commons, or by calling the church office. At this time the class remains by Zoom only.

Tuesdays, 6:00-6:20 pm: VESPERS

PRAYER & COMMUNION -- A simple and quiet *Zoom* service of scripture, Lord's Supper and guided prayer. Join in; make space for God!

And then comes . . .

Holy Week at FCCRE

March 28-April 4

Palm Sunday

March 28, 10:00 a.m.

Palm Sunday worship enacts the excitement of triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and leads into the sacrifice of Holy Week. *Weather-permitting, we will begin worship outdoors in a (distanced)* procession that will lead us into worship in the sanctuary.

▼ Maundy Thursday

April 1, 7:00 p.m.

Our classic service of remembrance of Jesus' Last Supper, unfolding into the Tenebrae service of the growing darkness of the Passion.

April 2, 2-6:00 p.m.

We hope to provide the Labyrinth in Fellowship Hall. The Labyrinth is a journey allowing for the many turns of our lives . . . but this journey has no wrong turns. Take your time for this quiet, reflective moving meditation, on this afternoon of remembrance of Christ's passion for life. Your visit will need to be scheduled, so that only one individual (or family pod) at a time will be on the labyrinth.

<u> Easter Sunday</u>

April 4

Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Celebrate the Joy of Resurrection and New Life in scripture, preaching, and music led by our choirs! It all culminates in life and hope.

LEGACY OF FAITH

A meaningful way to remember/honor loved ones and friends is to make contributions to the Memorial Fund, Building Renovation Fund, Kitchen Fund, Music & Arts Fund or the General Fund of the First Congregational Church of River Edge.

BUILDING RENOVATION FUND In Memory of

In Memory of Adria B. Brown

Frank and Carole Meeks Minda King

In Memory of Nancy E Chiang Minda King

In Memory of June Morris Minda King

MEMBERSHIP

The Care Ministry Team has been an active and vital ministry since its inception in 2018.

The Team stays connected with our members and friends in their care via calls, cards and outdoor openair visits when the weather permits.

Along with spiritual care and companionship, Care Ministry has provided hot meals for those who have needed short- term assistance as well as plants and or floral arrangements.

A new Care Ministry account has been established and seeded with donations from Care Ministry Team members.

It is hoped that this account will grow with future donations from our congregation so that Care Ministry can best take care of our members and friends with hot meals, shop rite gift cards or a plant to brighten their day.

Thank you, Russell Van Wetering

MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

As we enter the third month of 2021 and a full year of living in the pandemic, we have faced a multitude of challenges.

We now face a historical challenge in our life here at First Congregational Church of River Edge; the retirements of our beloved pastor, Dennis TeBeest and our beloved Minister of Music, Gloria Norton.

We all deeply feel the shock and sorrow of Dennis and Gloria leaving our family here at First Congregational but we will send them off with our love, gratitude, blessings and joy.

Until their new journeys begin, we will embrace and cherish Dennis and Gloria's remaining time with us just as we have embraced and cherished them the last six and thirty years respectively.

We have definite challenges to face in the coming months but please be assured that we, our members and friends, will meet these challenges through our spiritual gifts, talents, hard work and perseverance.

Respectfully, Russell Van Wetering

CAN YOU HELP?



Greeters are needed for upcoming weeks and months. Please contact Russell Van Wetering at 201-261-1795 or email aprilsky@optonline.net.

FOOD PANTRY SUNDAY

The first Sunday of each month is Food Pantry Sunday. We receive monetary donations to support the community food pantry through the Center for Food Action. Donation envelopes are in the pews each first Sunday of the month.

SHAWL MINISTRY



The next regular meetings of the Shawl Ministry will take place on:

Tuesday, March 9, at 7:30 pm Thursday, March 11, at 1:00 pm

All knitters and crocheters are welcome to join us in making shawls...or bring your current yarn project and spend a relaxing afternoon in The Commons with us. Everyone is welcome. For information, please contact Alice Rushforth at 201-265-1062.



If you would like to donate altar flowers for one of our worship services, please contact our Flower Coordinator Joan Hammerle at 201-694-9055. The donation for flowers is \$25.00. Flowers can be taken home after the service or given to one of our shut-ins. The deadline for ordering altar flowers is the Sunday prior to their being placed on the Altar.

JOYS & CONCERNS LIST

Each Sunday, on the table to the right of the double doors to the Sanctuary, there is a place for you to write any prayers requests that you might want included during the service.

> Janet Arena Worship Team – Leader

VIRTUAL BINGO



Join in the Fun, Fellowship and a little Fundraising on March 4 and March

18 at 7:00 pm as we host more Virtual Bingo nights. Get your family and friends to sign up. We promise you will have fun and you can win Amazon gift cards.

Register for virtual Bingo similar or exactly as you donate to the church by **noon on game day**. Go to

www.fccriveredge.org/activitiescalendar and register. When you register, please denote that it is for virtual bingo, and how many cards.

> 1 card - \$10 2 cards - \$15 4 cards - \$20

Three games per night. Winners receive an Amazon gift card. All monies collected will be distributed - 50% to the church, 50% divided among the three winners. You must have a device to access ZOOM. You will be instructed, by email, how to retrieve your cards and an invite to the Zoom Virtual Bingo game.



The sympathy of our congregation is extended to John Maiola at the death of his daughter, Melissa Beth Maiola Betts, on Sunday, January 24, 2021.

COVID VACCINE REGISTRATION

If any River Edge resident has not yet registered and needs help to register for the Covid Vaccine, assistance to register is available. Please contact me at 201-261-1795 or the River Edge Library at 201-261—1663.

Thank you, Russell Van Wetering

WORSHIP TEAM



The beginning of Lent was. Ash Wednesday, February 17th. This season is a time of preparation and is symbolized by the color **violet**.

We celebrate Communion on the first Sunday of the month - March 7th at the 10:00 service.

We welcome Joan Hammerle as a member of the Worship Team. She has been working with us as a co-op. The team and the co-ops are great source of commitment and dedication to our church. Thank you, all.

The repair and upgrade of the carillon is in the process of taking place so that it can be easily programmed and will chime regularly. Thank you to that task team for their endeavors, also. Together we work to ready the sanctuary for Sunday services and special services and to share God's message of love.

Look for the Easter flower ordering information in this edition of the Congregator!

MUSIC

Though we still live cautiously, day by day, we are still finding music to be a beautiful gift to our services of worship.

I hope you have had an opportunity to join in the Ash Wednesday service of worship, which was greatly enhanced by the music of Joy Jacobs, and clarinetist, Miriam Lockhart.

After two months of hiatus, the Chancel Choir will meet twice in March to record music for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Easter Sunday. In the meantime, we will continue to include their prerecorded anthems in Sunday worship during Lent.

Thanks also to Bert, Joy, Nadia, Kathleen, Vic and Anabelle for sharing their gifts of music with us.

And our "small-but-mighty" band of bell ringers will continue to provide special music about once a month, and for special services.

My song is love unknown, my Savior's love to me, Love to the loveless shown that they might lovely be.

Samuel Crossman

FROM THE MINISTER OF MUSIC

In 1991 we had recently moved to River Edge from Rockland County where I had my last church job as church musician.

I was in the car with my daughter, Abby, who was at that time a junior at River Dell. We drove down Continental Avenue, past First Congregational Church, and Abby said, "Mom, you ought to work at this church. It's so close to our house!"

Well, just a couple of days later I got a call from Alice Rushforth, asking if I'd like to audition for the position, and I've been here ever since.

That was over 30 years ago, and now it's time to pack up my organ shoes and leave. Our children are grown, and live in the Albany region with families of their own. They've made it clear that if we want them to be able to look after Jon and me in our decrepitude, we need to move closer to them. So, it is with gratitude that I am submitting my resignation.

I have loved being Minister of Music in this church. I served with John Danner, Paul Bryant-Smith, Chuck Holm, and now Dennis, the best pastor with whom I have ever worked (with the obvious exception of the twelve years I was able to serve with Jon in Rockland County); as well as with several notable interim pastors. I have learned from all of them, and am grateful for their guidance. I also am thankful for administrators Arlene, Theresa, and the amazing Anne Cooper, who have been so helpful to me.

If I start mentioning all the wonderful singers and ringers by name, I'll start to cry, so please accept my gratitude – you know who you are! You have blessed my life beyond belief.

The next person to be your musician will be fortunate indeed!

With love,

Gloria

BIRTHDAYS

- 6 Zachary Bolognese Chloe Heinzinger
- 7 Karl Hammerle Edward Lanni
- 8 Amy Caughlan Carrera Alison Donnelly
- 9 John Dewhurst
- 10 Annie Diana Stroh
- 13 Colin Hogan
- 14 Carole Meeks
 Dorothy Berthe
 Linda (Thomasian) Glagola
- 15 Evelyn Fialko
- 17 Nicole Bolognese
- 18 Maryanne Keehn
- 19 Barbara Schmidli Bryan Guerrieri
- 21 Nicole Lynn Cannizzaro-Garcia
- 24 Eugene Hammerle
- 26 Cole Heinzinger
- 26 Caleb Luise Asplint
- 29 Tom Rushforth Nicholas Orendain



18 - Bill & Nell Lent

Congregator deadline for April is Friday, March 19.



Mail

January 25, 2021

To Staff, Leadership Council and Members of the First Congregational Church of River Edge,

I was so surprised last week when called up to the front of the church to be presented with a beautiful plaque and gift from the congregation. I was even more surprised when I got home and opened the card containing such a generous present. This was over the top! (It's going towards a new computer.)

Not many church families would take the time and treasure to do something so thoughtful, and I was moved by your kindness. Such recognition is especially meaningful to me when it comes from friends many of whom I've known for a very long time.

I really enjoy contributing to the needs of our congregation. What I've done to facilitate our streaming Sunday Worship Service has been a challenge and a pleasure. I look forward to making necessary changes and improvements to our systems that give us spiritual fulfillment and enable all of us to share our wonderful mission in life.

Most sincerely, Gene Hammerle



Youth Consultation Service (YCS) – Excerpt from thank you letter.

"Dear Congregation – On behalf of the children in the care of YCS, we cannot thank you enough for your most generous 2020 donation of \$250. Every day during the Covid-19 crisis we have been faced with so much fear and uncertainty – for the children of YCS this has been no different. Your generosity ensured the YCS children experienced joy and celebration....in spite of the limitations of the Coronavirus pandemic....YOU provided them with the lifeline they so desperately needed to know they are special and loved". (Handwritten note: Thank you ALL for your continued belief & love for the YCS children')

EDUCATION



We were so happy to finally celebrate our Confirmation class at a special worship service on 2/7. This class has been through a lot, and I am so grateful for their patience and commitment to members the becoming newest of congregation. It was a joy to witness each of them reading a portion of their faith statements while affirming their faith to God. Welcome to Jack Silane, who was also Baptized, Rylie Kearns, Brooke Shirk and Chayse Van Wetering to the Congregation. You have been part of the FCC family since birth but are now "official," so I hope to see you all involved in the future. Thanks to their parents and Vic Babington and Bill Mars for their extended commitment to these youth. Like me, I hope you feel it was well worth it. The Education Team is hoping to organize an outdoor luncheon in May, so the whole congregation will have the opportunity to welcome and celebrate these wonderful youth.

A Successful Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday



Thanks to all who helped make Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday a great success. Our congregation collected 128 cans of soup and 28 other food items to be donated to the CFA and the St. Peter's food pantry. Caring for our neighbors is an important part of our faith and this is a wonderful way to teach our children what matters most.

Church School Happenings



We are very grateful to be able to teach all of our children in-person with all 11 attending each week. Our curriculum over the past month has been focusing on the life of Jesus and his teachings. The children have been learning what it means to be a disciple of Jesus and how they could use his lessons to "pay it forward" to family and friends. These lessons aren't just about faith, but about our ability to have compassion for others. Thanks to the parents for allowing us to share the bible with your children.

Childcare & Children's Message Volunteers

Currently, there will be no need for childcare or children's message volunteers. The Education team is looking forward to the time when these two priceless ministries can safely return.

Annual



Since our situation is a bit better than last year, I plan on doing some sort of egg hunt for our church school children on Palm Sunday 3/28. This will be done during class time in a safe clean environment. Sanitizer will be used before and after, so our children will not be sharing germs. Traditions, as simple as this one is, are important enough to modify if needed. I'd rather simplify then eliminate.

LILIES, HYDRANGEA OR TULIPS FOR EASTER

To enhance the beauty of our Sanctuary on Easter Sunday, April 4, the First Congregational Church of River Edge is offering members and friends, the opportunity to order Easter plants to help complete the décor. Your purchase will commemorate or honor loved ones.

Each contributor is given a choice to purchase a plant to be picked up after the Easter worship service or donate a plant for distribution to shut-ins. With either choice, the names of donors, and those in whose memory or honor the flowers are given, will be listed in the Church bulletin.

Checks should be payable to First Congregational Church of River Edge and designated for "Easter flowers," in the memo section of the check. Checks must be received by the Church Office no later than **Sunday**, **March 21**. Please fill in the order form below, and return it with your check to:

First Congregational Church of River Edge Attention – Carole Meeks, Flower Coordinator

109 Continental Avenue River Edge, NJ 07661 I am ordering: Lilies - \$19.00 Hydrangea - \$23.00 **Tulips - \$10.00** DONOR'S NAME PHONE # IN MEMORY OF IN HONOR OF INDICATE CHOICE: Take home after the Easter Service I will give for distribution to a shut-in I will help distribute to a shut-in

One Great Hour of Sharing – Sunday March 21st

Every year, our church family has given generously to the UCC's One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) initialitye. We often emphasize how our donations help in cases of disaster — in the immediate response and in the long-term recovery. And that area remains a focus for our gifts

But in this year, when the need for clean water - to sanitize homes, to wash hands - has been a recurring theme- the UCC reminds us that our donations to OGHS help provide flowing water in areas where it is a life-changing gift

~~~Water is life. Water is love. Let love flow~~

Joshua Mumbi used to spend much of his time collecting water. When it rained, he would collect water running in the streets. Often, he would spend much of the day walking to a local water source and carrying back buckets. Sometimes he would even travel to the water source with his family the night before, spending the night there so that they could bring back water in the morning. His mother, Josephine, did not like to make the journey alone - it was not safe.

There was not much time to go to school. And when he did go to school, Joshua Mumbi was very tired during the day. It was hard to focus; it was hard to learn.

For women and children around the world, it can be a 12 hour walk to the nearest water source to collect water to maintain basic needs and crucial hygiene practices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

But thanks to your gifts through One Great Hour of Sharing, Joshua Mumbi and his family - and all the other families in his village - have a safe, clean water source close to home. With a new solar-powered borehole well, they have water - for cooking, for drinking, for bathing, for washing. Now children like Joshua Mumbi can go to school every day, and a whole world of opportunity is open to them.

When you give to *One Great Hour of Sharing,* you invest in a better future for children around the world.



MARCH 2021 COMMITMENT REMINDERS

Sunday, March 7, 2021

COMMUNION TEAM/USHERS – Janet Arena, Frank Meeks, Alice Rushforth COUNTERS – Don Huggett, Jane Silane, Jeff Bernard GREETERS – Volunteers needed LAY READER – Richard Metz ALTAR GUILD – Carole Meeks, Jean Babington

Sunday, March 14, 2021

USHERS -

Bill Hamilton, Don Huggett, Diane Lento COUNTERS – Don Huggett, Jane Silane, Jeff Bernard GREETER – Noreen Van Wetering LAY READER – Laura Ferrentino ALTAR GUILD – Carole Meeks, Jean Babington

Sunday, March 21, 2021

USHERS - ♥ Janet Arena, Marvin Orendain, Janet Masiello COUNTERS - Don Huggett, Jane Silane, Jeff Bernard GREETER - Volunteers needed LAY READER - Nadia Orendain ALTAR GUILD - Carole Meeks, Jean Babington

Sunday, March 28, 2021

USHERS —

Wayne Placek, Tom Rushforth, Jeff Keehn COUNTERS — Don Huggett, Jane Silane, Jeff Bernard GREETERS — Volunteers needed LAY READER — Linda Stark ALTAR GUILD — Carole Meeks, Jean Babington

Team Leader



Greeters are needed for upcoming weeks and months. Please contact Russell Van Wetering at 201-261-1795 or email aprilsky@optonline.net.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	M	AR	O C	E .	1	
	1 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED 12:00 Noon Al-Anon 4:00 Worship Team 7:00 Education Team	4:00 Bible Study by Zoom 6:00 Lent Vespers Prayer & Communion	3	7:00 Virtual Bingo 7:30 Chancel Choir	5 World Day of Prayer	8:30 KWIS 7:00 AA
	7:30 Step by Step NA	9	10	11	12	13
0:00 Worship Service/ ne Rev. Dennis TeBeest hurch School	CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED 12:00 Noon Al-Anon 7:30 Step by Step NA	10:00 Funds Advisory 4:00 Bible Study by Zoom 6:00 Lent Vespers Prayer & Communion 7:30 Shawl		1:00 Shawl Ministry 7:30 Pilgrim Ringers		8:30 KWIS 7:00 AA
2:00 Worship Service/ ne Rev. Dennis TeBeest nurch School	15 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED 12:00 Noon Al-Anon 7:30 Step by Step NA	Ministry 16 4:00 Bible Study by Zoom 6:00 Lent Vespers Prayer & Communion 7:00 Leadership Council	17 St. Patrick's Day	7:00 Virtual Bingo 7:30 Chancel Choir	19 Congregator Deadline	20 8:30 KWIS 7:00 AA
GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OF SHARING OF SHARING OF SHURCH OF	22 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED 12:00 Noon Al-Anon 7:30 Step by Step NA	23 4:00 Bible Study by Zoom 6:00 Lent Vespers Prayer & Communion 7:00 Mission Team	24	7:30 Pilgrim Ringers	26	27 8:30 KWIS 7:00 AA
alm/Passion Sunday 0:00 Worship Service/ the Rev. Dennis TeBeest thurch School aster Egg Hunt	29 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED 12:00 Noon Al-Anon 7:30 Step by Step NA	30 4:00 Bible Study by Zoom 6:00 Lent Vespers Prayer & Communion	31			

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

GIFT OF THE HEART KITS INFO





Next month our Church will again serve as the depot for the collection of health and school kits from churches in Northern New Jersey. In anticipation of the truck coming, Women's Fellowship will be assembling kits. If you would like to participate in this effort which helps so many in the United States and abroad, here are the necessary components.

Your generosity will make a world of difference to a school age child or someone who has been affected by devastation in the area where they live. Women's Fellowship thanks you for your support!

To assemble a School Kit, you will need:

- · One pair of blunt metal scissors (rounded tip)
- Three 70-count spiral notebooks or notebooks totaling 200-210 pages
- (no loose-leaf or filler paper)
- One 30-centimeter ruler (12")
- One hand-held pencil sharpener
- One large eraser
- · Six new pencils with erasers
- One box of 24 crayons (only 24)
- One 12" x 14" to 14" x 17" finished size cotton or lightweight canvas bag with cloth handles.
 (Please, no reusable shopping bags or backpacks.)

To assemble a Health Kit, you will need:

- One hand towel measuring approximately 16" x 28" (no fingertip or bath towels)
- One washcloth
- One wide-tooth comb
- One nail clipper
- One bar of soap (bath size in wrapper)
- · One toothbrush (in original packaging)
- Ten standard size Band-Aids®
- Place all items in a one-gallon plastic bag with a zipper closure; remove excess air from bag and seal. Please do not add toothpaste – Church World Service will add this item just prior to shipment.