



THE SPIRIT

From Your Pastor:

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Always after spending several summer weeks in N.H., I become very aware of rocks; N.H., I remember again, is not called the "Granite State" for nothing! Thus, the fellow who cuts our field is constantly pointing out a new rock that has recently emerged and in danger of dinging his blade. Hikers of the Appalachian Trail who are making their way from Georgia to Maine remark that the trail through the White Mountains is the most difficult of the journey, not only because of its relative steepness, but also because it is loaded with rocks. I can attest from experience that it takes great concentration, especially when making one's way down a particularly rocky trail, not to stumble and fall. But, as my daughters can attest, I am usually good for at least one good spill a summer as I endeavor to keep pace with them.

So, as I was spending some time preparing for our mid-week study in 1 Peter (see elsewhere in this newsletter), I was particularly struck by Peter's identification of Jesus as "a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall" (1 Peter 2:8). At first blush, that hardly seems fair! What's up with that? Is Jesus trying to trip us up?

Well, it has to do with Jesus' identification as Messiah – the redeemer and restorer of God's good creation – and the way he is going to accomplish that task. Peter, you may remember, struggled with this. After Peter identified Jesus as the Messiah, and Jesus went on to say that as Messiah he must suffer and die, Peter essentially told Jesus to "get lost" (Mark 8:27-32). Understandably, allowing himself to be crucified is simply not what one expected the Messiah to do. Indeed, the death of Jesus can be a huge stumbling block to many, especially when we realize that he needed to die in our place to bear the penalty due us for our sin. But if we can come to the understanding of the necessity of Jesus' death to bring about new life, then that amazing act of love and justice on our behalf will not be a loose stone over which we stumble, but a solid and secure rock upon which our entire life can be secured.

Is Jesus the precious cornerstone who determines the design and orientation of your life? If you can receive the news of his death and resurrection as "good," if you can know that out of his death comes new life, then you will not stumble over him; instead, he will be for you a sure foundation.

Grace & Peace, Tim

St. Augustine's Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy; Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy; Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy; Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy; Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen.

Words from the Trustees

Summer has gone by too quickly.

The Trustees met in June and August taking July off. Other than trying to relax a little the summer focus has been to coordinate the painting and window project which has officially begun and should be complete before the end of September.

Moving into fall the trustees will once again start looking at the task list deciding what projects to complete around the Church and parsonage. One thing each of us can help with is catching up on any pledge amounts missed while away as the weekly offerings were light throughout the summer.

Other than that we are hoping for a quiet year on the repair and maintenance side so that we can focus on smaller projects.

In Christ, Fred Zwart & Craig Hammon (Trustees Co-Chairs)

Christian Ed News & Bible Study for All Ages Sundays @ 9:30 a.m.

Over the past year, the CE Committee has been praying over and planning the addition of an education hour on Sunday mornings... and it's finally here! Starting on September 7, children and adults of all ages have the weekly opportunity to gather together to learn about the Lord through the study of his Word. Here is a list of the teachers for each class and the curriculum they will be using:

The 9:30 Hour:

Nursery: DaNeil Sousa & helpers

PreK-K: Robin Lawrenz & Rachel Fondell (*Godly Play*)

1st-3rd: Peggy and Steve Brown (*Bible Studies for Life*)

4th-6th: Stephen & Carol Carlyle (*How Majestic Is Your Name*)

Middle/High School: Tom Griffith & Andy Sutton (*The Gospel Project*)

Adult: Jason Lawrenz (book of Daniel)

Come one, come all, and take advantage of this great opportunity to study the Scriptures this fall!

During Sunday worship starting at **10:30 a.m.**, the first Sunday of each month is communion Sunday and a great opportunity for children to sit with their families and worship together. The last Sunday of the month is Service Sunday, a program run by Lisa Clark and Robin Lawrenz to teach the kids about service to others in various forms, such as; dessert for Open Door, letters to kids in Kenya & Singapore, Christmas baskets for the ill, shut-ins, or those in need, and more. The remaining Sundays in the middle of the month we will offer Children's Church during the service to those 9 yrs. and younger. They will be learning about the *Fruit of the Spirit* through scripture, games and crafts

We welcome parents' thoughts, ideas, comments or suggestions. Don't hesitate to speak to any one of us on the CE Committee (Jason Lawrenz, Diane Naeger, Pam Cilluffo, Jenn Weston, Peggy Brown or Lisa Clark). If you are interested in assisting a teacher or teaching a lesson for Children's Church or if you can help out in the nursery, just talk to co-chairs Jason or Diane.



*"Let my **teaching** fall like rain and my words descend like dew, like showers on new grass, like abundant rain on tender plants."*

-Deuteronomy 32:2

Mid Week Bible Study: 1 Peter

How does a Christian live when surrounded by a world that doesn't understand who we are or why we believe what we believe and do what we do, and is even hostile in response? We're not alone in asking this question. In the first century, Christians were faced with similar challenges. So, Peter wrote to provide some answers: Make sure we identify and abandon our old pagan ways. Learn the new habit of love. Put on the mental armor that will make us strong to face the suffering that may come. Peter reminds us, in the midst of hardship, that God is still on the throne, and is the one who is able to help us not only persevere, but bring healing to our world.

We'll meet on **Wednesday evenings, from 7:00 – 8:15 ish, beginning October 1.** The time is open to all as we learn from God's word together and seek to encourage one another in our walk of faith. ~Pastor Tim

Youth Group Happenings

A New Season!

Unfortunately, summer break is over and another school year starts! But new seasons always bring new adventures and blessings! Speaking of a new season, the youth group celebrates with Brian, Marya, and Connor Marsh as they have settled in Corpus Christi, TX. We surely will miss having them around and enjoying their ministry to us here at FCCOE but we look forward to another season and eagerly anticipate what God has in store for us!

I am excited to step up as the new youth pastor and can't wait for another fun year of good food, good games, and fun outings! I also anticipate another great year of growing closer to the Lord and I desperately desire to be of service to you all in that as well.....Andy Sutton

The Gospel Project: God's Kingdom

On top of eating dinner together, playing games and enjoying each other's fellowship, our weekly youth gatherings will focus on prayer and bible study. I am excited to lead and interact with the youth through a bible study that answers the question: What is the main theme of the Bible? What is the chord that ties it all together?

Service Opportunities:

Walk to End Homelessness: Saturday October 18th - Family Promise North Shore is hosting the event. Let's get a team of youth to walk together for the cause. We can even plan on wearing matching outfits or crazy costumes! Start brainstorming...

Open Door ministry provides meals for the homeless in Cape Anne. On November 30, the youth group will be serving the meal. Let me know if you are interested in helping! Let's shoot for team of 4-5 volunteers!

Winter Retreat: Camp Berea

It's a long way off but winter is a coming! Start saving and getting pumped for Berea 2015! Shooting for the second weekend in February.

Youth Group 2014

Sept. 1– Parent & Youth Cookout to kick off our new school year!

Sept. 8– Red Sox Game \$10

Oct. 26– Annual Halloween Party; food, costume contest, games, prizes...more!

Nov. 16– Laser Tag, TBD

Nov. 30– Open Door 2-5pm

Dec. 14– Christmas Party for All! TBD

PAX : The Center for Christian Spiritual Formation

PEACE

"...the Lord turn his face to you and give you peace."

Numbers 6:26

PAX is a ministry of spiritual formation based in the life of the church. It offers individual and communal practices for men and women to spend time with God and connect with God's transforming love within us. These offerings are for FCCOE members, friends as well as north shore area churches (there is a nominal fee for each of these offerings for those outside the FCCOE).

PAX Offerings:

- **Book Series**– discussion and dessert, with reflections on what each novel can teach us about life with God. (9/27/14 Hansen's *Atticus*, 1/31/15 Hijuelos' *Mr. Ives's Christmas* & 5/9/15 Krivak's *The Sojourn*)
- **A Day Apart**– 9am-2pm, mini retreats, 4 days/year includes devotionals, reflection guide, joint prayer, personal time and Spiritual Direction (10/10/14 Ordinary Time, 1/9/15 Epiphany, 3/7/15 Lent & 5/29/15 Pentecost)
- **The Way of Christian Prayer**– 9am-11am, with a speaker introducing new forms of prayer (1/24/15 Visio Divina, 2/7/15 Praying with Icons, 4/ 11/15 The Jesus Prayer & 5/23/15 The Labyrinth Prayer)
- **At-Home Retreats**– 5 days to notice God in your daily routines (10/6-10/14 *God Waits for You*, 12/8-12/14 *Advent* and 3/16-20/15 *Spiritual Seasons*)
- **Movie Series**– viewing and discussing what each movie can teach us about life with God shown at the West Church in Haverhill (11/7/14 *Spitfire Grill*, 2/13/15 *The Secret Life of Bees*, 4/17/15 TBD)
- **Spiritual Direction**– once/month with a trained director focusing on your relationship with God

For more information contact: Rama Ziegenhals at ramapax@gmail.com and www.paxcenter.org

Family Promise

Words from our fearless leader and coordinator Susan Zwart;

We at the FCCOE have hosted for seven weeks since the launch of Family Promise North Shore Boston in May of 2013. Your dedication to the program and families is so appreciated. We have witnessed many families leaving the program and finding housing and jobs and we will continue to welcome those who come to us in need.

Of course a program like this could not be possible without the volunteers of our church and other Essex churches, so we would like to take this opportunity to give a big "Thank You" to all who have volunteered. We would also like to extend an invitation to those who would like to be a part of this wonderful ministry, our upcoming dates for the remainder of the year are **Oct. 26– Nov. 2**. Please contact Susan Zwart at susan@foodpantry.org. if you would like to help during that week with set-up, take-down, making or serving meals, socializing with families or sleeping over.



You can also help by taking part in the **1st Annual Walk to End Homelessness this October 18th**. Invite family, friends, neighbors, coworkers to join in the fun and donate to a great cause. You will walk around Lynch Park in Beverly, 3.1 miles. Register by going to www.familypromistsnb.com click on "Register Today" then "Registration" then "Team Walker" find "Team Timothy Z." & have FUN!

Open Door

God made loving people to show us day by day how far the wonders of His love can go. And all the good they do helps make a better world - a little bit of heaven below.

We serve the *Open Door* quarterly and monthly.

Quarterly opportunity; there is a very devoted group who has been helping to prepare the meal of American chop suey for a very long time. Then there are those who step up when we need fill-ins. We can always use more people to cook. We usually need 9 (9x13) pans of chop suey and 3-4 cakes of any flavor. If cooking is not your specialty there are simple donations of milk, bread, butter, coffee, and salad bar items you can provide. These items can be brought to the church on Sunday before we serve. I always have to go shopping the day of service to pick up anything we may still need, therefore donations of cash help out in this way. And don't forget you can volunteer to help serve from 4PM –6PM. **Our next opportunity to serve for 2014 is December 1st!**

Our church has been serving dinner at the *Open Door* for about 30 years. Our meal is one of their favorites. Our church is truly blessed to have a congregation that is so caring and generous. It always amazes me the amount of people who step up to the plate when a need arises. I want to say thank you to all the wonderful people who have helped to keep this mission going.

I can never thank you enough, Carolyn Knowlton

Monthly opportunity; I have committed the FCCOE committees and Youth Group to serve the last Sunday of every month. We meet at 2pm to prepare, make, serve, and clean-up after our meal and finish by 5pm. I ask Kenn, the manager, if he has anything he wants to use up and make into a meal. We then make a menu together and I buy any items we need to complete the meal. If he has nothing to use, I work out a menu with him and buy all the food needed. Both cases I ask for a cash donation from those helping that day. If you can not help by being there a cash donation is welcome to defer costs not covered. I occasionally ask the kids during Service Sunday to help me with a dessert, which is always enjoyed by the diners! **Our fall schedule is : September 28th– CE, October 26th– Missions, November 30th– Youth Group and December 28th– I need a group to help please!**

I really appreciate the support and help I have received over the past 2 yrs. It is a pleasure cooking and serving with all of you and helping our neighbors in need! Many thanks, peace.....Lisa Clark

Missions' Update

Over the summer the Missions Committee has been pleased to have Tim Wick from Pioneers come and visit with us and tell us what he and Rebecca and their three children are doing in the Lord. Tim has just completed his masters program in the field of English language and will be leaving for the Middle East to work for a University there. Please keep them in prayer that their visa's will be cleared and that they obtain a work permit and find appropriate housing.

We also had a wonderful surprise visit at our shepherd's picnic from the Williams' family, Drake, Andrea and two of their three children. Drake teaches at Tyndale Theological Seminary in Amsterdam and Andrea is a part of a team that teach an intense English course to these students. There are 54 students from 22 different countries and each student is serving in a leadership position in their home country. Please keep them in prayer for they all are from persecuted countries.

The Committee is looking forward to having more local and International Ministries come and visit the church in the months ahead. Also we all are looking forward to volunteering to cook and serve dinner at the "Open Door" in the near future.

~ Jane Murphy, Missions Chairperson

VBS: Weird Animals Wrap-Up



We are all "weird animals", each one of us is different, but it's okay because God made us who we are; don't try to be someone you're not, because Jesus loves you just the way you are.

On July 20th the church was invaded by many "weird animals", who arrived to find a setting resembling something from Dr. Seuss (thanks to everyone who came out to help decorate). It was an amazing five days of singing, dancing, making crafts and doing experiments, playing games, listening to testimonials of other children, and watching bible stories come to life; all while praising God and learning His love for us. We had 62 enthusiastic children attend, and 30 phenomenal volunteers assist. (This was our third highest attendance in eleven years of VBS; and the highest attendance we have had in the over five years!)

The stories parents shared with me were so touching, and reassured me we were reaching these kids. One mother told me on the way home after the second night at VBS, her son said to her, "You know mom, I always knew I was different, but did you know God still loves me?" I had another mother tell me her daughter started crying on the way home after the first night. Worried, the mother asked what was wrong. Her daughter sobbing said, "There are only four days left of VBS!"

Added as a special surprise, the last evening after another delicious meal from Caroline Craig, we had some truly weird animals brought in. Curious Creatures paid a visit complete with a flying squirrel, a hedgehog, a chinchilla, a skunk, a corn snake, a boa constrictor named "Fluffy", and an alligator! (Thank you to the Steve & Peggy Brown for making this possible!) Children had the opportunity to hold them and ask questions and let snakes be draped over them. It was a wonderful ending to such a great week. If you have not checked it out yet, go to www.fcoe.org and view the updated imovie, complete with last day's events (under "Ministries," "VBS").

~Kathy Archer, VBS Director

Deacons' Update

The new group (since May) of Deacons are enjoying getting to know each other, and are currently finishing up a study of Generous Justice by Tim Keller.

The Deacon/Shepherd picnics in July were a big success again this year with attendance up from last year. We're considering the possibility of a Deacon's retreat and a whole church retreat. We hope to get a Pictorial Directory under way this fall. We plan to do this ourselves and would love to have some knowledgeable volunteers lead the way.

Speaking of volunteers ... it would be wonderful to have more people sign up on the clipboards in the vestry for greeting, ushering, and reading on Sunday mornings. It's a pleasant way to be involved in our congregation.

We're always available for ongoing Shepherd service, set us know if we can support you in some way.

~Margot Hammon and Steve Brown, Deacon co-chairs

The Women's Corner

Summer has flown by without much organized activity for women but I know we've all been busy with VBS, Family Promise and our ordinary responsibilities.

Now fall is almost here and that means our thoughts turn to the Women's Retreat. Thank you all so much for your cooperation when it came to early payments and sign-up. We have a full house (30) and a short waiting list. But the good news is this—we can accommodate more people if some are willing to share a room with a friend. Please contact me if you have a buddy to room with and we can then include all on the waiting list as well as others who might wish to go. The date is October 17-19, the total cost is \$150 (2nd payment due 9/30) @ the Marie Joseph Spiritual Center, Biddeford, ME.

We are hoping to schedule a church fair work day or two to make items for sale, I will keep you posted.

Our Christmas brunch and Yankee Swap is scheduled for December. Hope this is convenient for you. We eat well and have a great time.

Love to you all in his name, Caroline Craig

Holiday Fair: Saturday, November 22nd!

November seems so far away, but it's never too early to be thinking "fair". We will need items for:

White Elephant Room Baked goods for the food table

Silent Auction items Handcrafted items.

If you had a Chairperson role last year and are going to continue please let me know. It would be very helpful. At the Ladies Brunch, I also asked for help with co-chairing this event. No one has come forward, and I do need help. This is an all church fundraiser.

Most of us "fall clean", so keep the church in mind with all those items you no longer use or need. Handcrafted items are always welcome.....check out "Pinterest" for ideas in an area that interests you. Silent Auctions items that are popular: gift certificates for services from members, food (of any kind), or if you have an interesting talent and can create a unique item.

If you have ideas or questions, please contact: Pam Prichard at pfbac@aol.com or 978-546-1099



BellzUp!

North Shore Ringers and *Paul Revere Ringers* rehearsals begin Sunday October 5th!

Honoring God with excellence and fun in the world of music!

The **North Shore Ringers** are a **youth handbell choir** and ministry serving the North Shore of Massachusetts. We have made appearances all across the North Shore, including the Topsfield Fair and on radio station North Shore 104.9. Already we have been invited back for Massachusetts State Senator Bruce Tarr's annual toy drive this December, which is being broadcast all over the North Shore; and Gloucester's annual tree-lighting ceremony, where we perform before thousands!

The North Shore Ringers are recruiting new members. A background in music is not a requirement, this makes an ideal setting for beginning in music. Membership is open to all kids in grades 1-12, at no cost. We meet on Sunday afternoons **starting on October 5**. The **Jubilee Ringers** are our **beginning group**, generally for kids in grades 1-3. Rehearsal begins promptly at **3:00—4:15pm**. The **Concert Group** is our **advanced group**, generally in grades 4 through high school. Rehearsal begins promptly at **4:00—5:30pm**.

The **Paul Revere Ringers** are our **adult bell choir**. In addition to making regular appearances in Sunday services at the church, we also appear annually at the Town of Essex Memorial Tree Lighting ceremony in December. Starting October 5, we meet on Sunday afternoons immediately following Sunday service. We are looking for new members, you do not need to read music to join!

For more information contact: Greg Naeger @ (978)380-2250 or no.shoreyouthringers@comcast.net or porringers@comcast.net

Do You Know...

...Jess and David Webb??? So let me introduce you to them through some questions I threw at them.

Where did you grow up?

Jess grew up in Essex, MA. Jess was born in Pennsylvania then moved to California but moved to Essex at age 10.

David grew up in Leicester, England and moved to America in 2003. David is currently applying to become a US citizen.

How many siblings?

David has one older sister, Tracy. Jess has 2 older sisters, Brooke and Alyson

Pets?

Kia is our 9 year old lab dalmation mix who loves hiking.

Favorite vacations or fun trips or memories?

We spent 2 weeks in Italy for our honeymoon and had an amazing time. We can't wait to go back. Last summer we went to England for David's sister's wedding and then spent time in Amsterdam. If we were to ever live abroad we would love to live in Amsterdam.

College? major? jobs?

Jess went to Taylor University in Indiana and majored in social work. David went to Cambridge College and majored in psychology. We are both social workers. Jess works with elders and David works with adults with brain injuries. We met at a social service agency when we were both working with adults with developmental disabilities 5 years ago.

When did you get married?

We got married 2 years ago in the backyard of our good friends home in Essex. We were living in Gloucester but just bought a house in Essex 2 months ago.

When did you start attending FCCOE?

Jess started attending FCCOE about 10 years ago and Jess introduced David to FCCOE about 4 years ago.

Funny stories associated with FCCOE experiences?

I don't think we have any funny experiences but we are very grateful for the FCCOE community. We have always felt very welcome by the community at FCCOE and we became members of the church last Spring.

Favorite comfort food?

I don't know if we have a favorite comfort food, but David is definitely the chef between us. He's an excellent cook and enjoys making different dishes. We've decided it's pancakes!

Favorite dessert?

Our favorite dessert is creme brulee. At our wedding everyone had their own creme brulee for dessert and it was delicious!

Passions, hobbies, interests?

We both enjoy walking, hiking, and being outside. Jess has always wanted goats and Jess and David went to a goat school in rural Maine to learn how to take care of goats... this is still in the works. We both love traveling and would love to travel more. David loves British football (soccer) and can usually be found watching the English Premier League on Saturday mornings.

Favorite song? movie? book?

Our favorite song is by Gomez - it's called *See the World*. For music Jess likes Ray LaMontagne, David Gray and Bob Dylan, and David likes *The Charlatans*. David is currently reading *The Game of Thrones* series.

So now you know...Jess & David Webb

First Congregational Church of Essex

PO Box 275
39 Main Street
Essex, Massachusetts
Phone: (978)768-7855
E-mail: tim@fccoe.org
lisa@fccoe.org



“Relying on the grace of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit we seek to bring people into a relationship with Jesus Christ, gathering them together to worship him, helping them to live like him, and equipping them to serve him.”

Mailing Address Line 1
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The First Congregational Church of Essex

Tim & Rama's 20th Anniversary Celebration

On June 21st the church commemorated the twentieth year of Pastor Tim's ministry to the Essex Congregational Church. Thanks to the generosity of the parishioners, the culinary and decorating skills of the women of the church, and the woodworking skills of Steve Brown the celebration was fun and memorable.

Thanks to the attentive organizing of Lisa Clark, invitations were sent to current members and also those whom Tim had mentored, influenced and guided over the years who had moved on. Those who could not attend were asked to send notes to be included in a memory book. The congregation responded generously toward the celebration and gifts to mark the occasion.

Saturday evening the large vestry was decorated like a gym on prom night. Little white lights were strung across the room, colorful flower arrangements by Debbie Griffith brightened the atmosphere, and settings of fine china (from many families) graced the tables. Over one hundred guests attended to honor Tim and Rama. Guests enjoyed a roast pork dinner with assorted cupcakes for dessert, organized and prepared by Caroline Craig, Carolyn Knowlton and Michelle Huth with the assistance of many others.

GV Weston, Jason Lawrenz, Susan Zwart, Lisa Clark and John Barber (a mentored seminary student during the 1990's) delivered testimonials to Tim and Rama. Their impact on individuals and families; the spiritual growth of individuals and the church as a body were identified with praise given to God. Tim also reflected on his time with us. He noted that, ironically, his first class in seminary, a history of Puritanism, included a visit to the very church he would come to serve for twenty years. Tim thanked the congregation for their gracious, support and caring for him and his family. Gifts of a new road bicycle for Tim (an avid cyclist), a trinity knot bracelet for Rama, and a gift of lodging and spending money for a future trip were presented to them.

To commemorate the occasion Steve Brown crafted a new communion table for the sanctuary. The beautiful walnut table is a simple trestle design with a northern cross inlaid on the top. Steve wanted the design to represent the spirit of the church in its humble, hospitable invitation to the table of the Lord to all believers. The recurrent theme of the evening was hospitality. Many of those who gave testimonials spoke of how warmly welcomed they were into Tim and Rama's home and friendship. So it was poignantly appropriate that Steve had also designed and built for them a walnut coffee table of similar design with the same inlaid northern cross as the communion table.

As one of the notes accompanying a contribution said, it is rare in these times for a Pastor to faithfully serve in one church for twenty years. We have been blessed through the many turns of the road we have travelled with Tim and Rama over these significant years in our church's storied history.

Thanks be to God.....Dick Cairns, Event Chair