

PURPOSE
STATEMENT

*"We are disciples of
Jesus Christ
committed to making a
difference in the
community and in the
world through service
and invitational
outreach."*

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Copies of the newsletter
are also available in
Fellowship Hall.

The Messenger

First United Methodist Church, Chatham

From the Pastor

February 2020

Volume 24, Issue 2

Dear FUMC family,

There has been some questions and concerns around a new protocol that was in the media early in January that is a possible solution to the decades of dispute over the human sexuality issue in the United Methodist Church.

I believe a lot of what you read in the media is oversimplified and hasty. If you are looking to read the authentic accurate copy of the new protocol, click [here](#).

Also, if you would like to know some of the principles, click [here](#) to read them yourself. I do encourage you to take the time to read it.

This can be a rough time for all of us. My office is open to everyone and I am here for you to help you understand, so we can get through this confusing time together.

One thing I can assure you is that the United Methodist Church has not split and nothing has been decided yet. The only body that speaks for the whole United Methodist Church is General Conference, which is a global legislative gathering that happens once every four years. In order to make changes of the Book of Discipline, which basically is the rules of our denomination, it has to be voted on at the General Conference. The next General Conference is scheduled for May this year in Minneapolis.

What really happened here is that, a group that was formed with representatives of UM advocacy groups from diverse perspectives and positions got together and agreed to create a protocol that could peacefully end the long-time conflict.

The reason that this protocol is meaningful is because every leader in the group agreed to support this protocol instead of their group's own plans. It means, although we still do not know what the result of the next General Conference will be, this plan has more of a chance to pass and is more likely to happen.

Then what are the principles of the protocol? Basically, it allows the Traditionalists to leave the UMC to form a new denomination. UMC is going to pay a total sum of \$25M for the new denomination. Each conference will have a chance to vote to stay or to leave. If any local church disagrees with their annual conference, they can vote themselves and leave for the new denomination or stay within the existing UMC.

Again, this needs to be voted on at the general conference along with other plans. Right now, a group of the leaders who created this protocol is working on a draft legislation. It will be reviewed by the Judicial Council to make sure it is constitutional, and then edited again and brought to General Conference to be voted on in May.

I hope this summarized explanation is helpful. Again, come and talk to me about any questions or concerns you may have.

As an effort to help the local congregations understand, the members of the New England UMC Open Spirit Task Force and Delegation will be hosting events to present options and to explain about the agreements and plans going before the General Conference in May. It is on:

April 4, 10:00 am to 12:00,
Wesley UMC,
55 Woodland Street,
Lincoln, RI.

I am going to this event and I invite you to come as well. Please contact me if you are interested in coming to this event.

Do not be afraid. Take courage. We will pray through this together.

Peace,
Pastor Soo

District Superintendent's February 2020 Devotional – “Beauty that Never Fades”

Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.
Proverbs 31:30

Agnes Bojaxhiu and Naside Saffet probably didn't know each other. They grew up in two different European countries. But in 1931 both young women took a decisive step. Naside entered a beauty contest sponsored by a Turkish newspaper and won the title of Miss Turkey. Agnes entered a convent and took the name Teresa.

Naside sought recognition but failed to win any international contests. Agnes wasn't concerned about fame or fortune, but she eventually received international acclaim for her humanitarian work. The Nobel Peace prize was among her many honors.

Little is known about Naside Saffet apart from her moment of fame as a beauty queen. Mother Teresa, however, has been elevated to sainthood in the eyes of many. Her ministry to the poorest of the poor in India and other countries has won her a place of respect and admiration. The work she began in the slums of Calcutta now reaches beyond that nation. The little woman in the white sari has become a symbol of compassion and humble service.

Mother Teresa's spiritual journey began when she was only twelve, when the call of God became real to her. Throughout her teen years, she was involved in a youth group at her church and became interested in foreign missions. She decided to join a convent and did so when she was eighteen.

Mother Teresa first taught at a high school in Calcutta. But the suffering and poverty she saw outside the confines of the convent affected her deeply. In 1948 she obtained permission to leave the convent school and start an open-air school for children from the slums. She depended on God to provide whatever funds she needed. In 1950 she was granted permission to start her own order, the Missionaries of Charity. The order's mission was to love and care for those whom everyone else rejected.

Mother Teresa stands out because of the choices she made. She allowed God to speak to her about the need of the poor; she committed herself to his desires for her; and she walked in obedience where he led. To those she comforted in their dying moments, she was like an angel—the most beautiful person in the world.

True beauty lies in a person's character—not in his or her appearance or wardrobe. It goes much deeper than outward appearances. It involves attitude, conviction, and commitment. A life lived for God and his design will be marked by an inner glow that cannot be duplicated. Such people will be remembered for what they did, not how they looked.

What influences in society create an overemphasis on appearance? What character traits make a person beautiful in spirit? Select one positive character trait that you want to develop in your life. Ask God to help you make it a reality through daily choices and actions.

Blessings Always, (Numbers 6:24-26)
Rev. Dr. Andrew L. Foster, III.

Serving In The Military

Please keep in your prayers all those serving in the military, especially the following members associated with our church.

- Capt. Robert Butt, U.S. Marines, Virginia, & Lt. Cmdr. Matthew Butt, U.S. Navy, Virginia, grandsons of Anna Buckley;
- Staff Sgt. Daniel E. Szarek, U.S. Army, Fort Campbell, Kentucky, & SPC Timothy J. Szarek, U.S. Army Reserves (recovering from head trauma), twin grandsons of Shirley James Freethy;
- Lt. Forrest A. Bogue, U.S. Navy, San Diego, CA, grandson of Olive Bogue;
- Pvt. Jacob Stewart, at Camp Casey, South Korea, grandson of Elaine & Roger Trexler.

YEAR END REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Our total income for 2019 was \$284,673, and our total expenses were \$249,022, giving us an unexpected net income surplus of \$35,650. This is wonderful, but before we get too excited, let me tell you how this happened, keeping in mind that the numbers are in relation to what we had budgeted for the year:

Income:	Pledge income	- \$13,420
	Collection Plate	+ \$13,940
	Outside income (cell tower, invested funds, etc.)	+ \$ 8,600
	<u>Restricted</u> donations (memorials, missions, etc.)	+ \$13,836 (<i>of which \$7,800 was given as memorials, and the remainder given to Missions and the Trustees</i>)
Expenses:	General expenses and programs	- \$ 6,200
	Property Improvement (Trustees)	- \$ 7,300

Good stewardship and generous giving have given us this surplus.

Looking ahead to 2020, we have tried to be realistic with our budget numbers. We know that the pledge income will be less, since the pledge total is down this year to \$91,500 (\$124,000 in 2019), and the income from the invested funds are expected to be \$3,000 less, while the cell tower lease will be the same or higher. The total income budgeted for 2020 is \$242,984 and the total expenses are estimated at \$255,894. This leaves us with a deficit budget of \$12,910. Certainly the surplus from 2019 will help us in 2020, but we are still reminded that God expects us to be good stewards of our prayers, our time, our expectations, and our finances.

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine Rounsley-Trexler, 2019 Finance Chairperson

THANK YOU FROM FIRST NIGHT CHATHAM

January 7, 2020

"On behalf of the First Night Chatham committee, we would like to sincerely thank you for the use of the First United Methodist Church for the 29th annual First Night Chatham celebration on New Year's Eve. We deeply appreciate your participation and generosity, without which First Night could not succeed. First Night Chatham is fortunate to be located in Chatham, where a deep community spirit provides the foundation for this event...for 30 years.

We also appreciate the effort of members of the congregation in supporting First Night beyond the use of your facilities for our performances - in providing all-day coverage representing the church, by providing a venue for food service for First Night guests and by hosting the Night Before concert.

We are enclosing a donation in the amount of \$400 to help defray our costs for the event.

Sincerely,
Sue Simpson, Venue Management Chair
Ginny Hamblet, Entertainment Chair
Sally Stratman, Chairman
Ron Clark, Treasurer "

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Leaning into an Unknown

“...John Mogabgab, Founding Editor of *Weavings, A Journal of the Christian Spiritual Life*,”...beautifully expressed very deep truths in very simple words: ‘...**there is no path to God that is not first God’s path to us.**’ In some ways it seems that the path *beckons us*, though we are mostly unaware, through all our life experiences. Through the ages, religious traditions developed processes and practices to guide people on the path: to initiate new generations into the rituals and meanings of tradition, and to invite maturing members into its inner depths and experiences.

Our spiritual journeys naturally take their shape in accordance with our unique, God-given characteristics and our life-experience—our gifts, our temperament, our natural interests. Inevitably, our life experience will modify and deepen our inner landscape as we mature psychologically and spiritually. Tracking our own unique path at various points – connecting the dots, as it were, - can awaken an amazing recognition of the often subtle guidance of the Spirit, taking trust to a deeper level. As we grow older the trajectory of our path becomes clearer.

Looking back now (to my early twenties), I seem to have taken seriously Jesus’ reference to himself in John’s gospel as ‘the gate’ allowing the sheep to move in and out freely, I have never relinquished my roots: I am ‘rooted and grounded in Christ,’ and my life’s dedication is to live into the reign of God as Jesus taught. But I have sought God both within and outside the boundaries of my [religion] and found—as Jesus promised—verdant pasture. I branched out and relished the growth...through encouragement from many [sources] including Bernard Lonergan, who said that ‘faith is falling in love without being sure of what one loves...to trust God requires that we don’t know what we’re trusting...’, and Dag Hammarskjöld, who said ‘Thou Whom I do not know, but Whose I am’. His words are a comfort to me. Still there is an insatiable thirst that requires me to keep seeking. I have not ‘found’ God, but God has found me and held my heart captive.

Increasingly, large numbers of churchgoers find themselves feeling like strangers, feeling abandoned, in a kind of *collective* ‘dark night.’ We search for meaning in a framework of dogma, ritual, and practice that once anchored us in a protective harbor through stormy times, but that now fetters and binds a ship whose urgent mission calls for courage to face into high seas.

Where do we look for God? Perhaps the answer is (as, in truth, it always has been), right here, right now. God—holding everything in being, hidden in and through everything that is. There is nowhere else to go! I changed my original [thinking]...If there is God nothing else matters, to if there is God, *everything* else matters.

We can and should *celebrate* this God and this creation in symbols, images, words, and rituals; to address this God in earth-bound names. They exemplify how we must speak, in paradox and contradictions, of a longing that suggests that *something* in us knows and cannot not feel drawn to this Unknown. We must lean into an Unknown that disappears into a nothingness—and this *we must learn to reverence*...opening our hearts wider and wider...nurtured by practices of attentiveness, generosity, prayer, meditation, and reading, that trust/love will keep stretching toward the grandeur of what we know we do not know.

This faith-filled love also encompasses a faith-full hope. We are perhaps too familiar with Jesus’ teaching about the ‘reign of God’ - how humans have the responsibility for ‘the least of these,’ feeding the hungry, caring for the marginal; how all life involves ‘dying to ourselves’...the ‘reign of God’ broadens and challenges our visions and our motivations for the humane development of our earthly cultures. It means re-thinking, re-formulating, speaking, praying, planning, and working together. It means finding our way *together*”.

Elaine M. Prevallet, SL

FEBRUARY 2020 CHURCH CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 11:30—2 Thrift Shop Open
2 10am Worship, Communion, and Sunday School—	3 9—11am : Congregational Church's Knitting Ministry— all knitters are welcome	4 9am Osteo Exercise 10:30—12:00 Faith Study	5 8am MLS 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	6 9am Osteo Exercise 11:30—2 Thrift Shop Open	7 11:30—2 Thrift Shop Open 5—6pm Cub Scouts setting up Derby track	8 11:30—2 Thrift Shop Open 1—4pm Cub Scouts Pinewood Derby
9 10am Worship, and Sunday School	10 9—11am : Congregational Church's Knitting Ministry— all knitters are welcome NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	11 9am Osteo Exercise 10:30-12:00 Faith Study	12 8am MLS 5pm Finance / Trustees 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	13 9am Osteo Exercise 11:30—2 Thrift Shop Open	14 11:30—2 Thrift Shop Open	15 11:30—2 Thrift Shop Open
16 10am Worship, Children's Sermon, and Sunday School	17 9—11am : Congregational Church's Knitting Ministry— all knitters are welcome	18 9am Osteo Exercise 10:30-12:00 Faith Study	19 8am MLS 5pm Church Council 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	20 9am Osteo Exercise 11:30—2 Thrift Shop Open	21 11:30—2 Thrift Shop Open	22 11:30—2 Thrift Shop Open
23 10am Worship and Sunday School	24 9—11am : Congregational Church's Knitting Ministry— all knitters are welcome	25 9am Osteo Exercise 10:30-12:00 Faith Study	26 8am MLS 6:00pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm Ash Wednesday Service	27 9am Osteo Exercise 11:30—2 Thrift Shop Open	28 11:30—2 Thrift Shop Open	29 11:30—2 Thrift Shop Open

Just Wing It

There have been times, several in fact, when life interrupted a plan and I was forced to “wing it”, to improvise and adlib on the run. It could be as simple as expecting 10 guests for a holiday party and the college kids show-up with their friends; fortunately, the pizza place delivers. Planning for contingencies can help avoid winging it at the last minute. And for life’s larger events, winging it can be foolish. A harsh statement, and often a harsher reality.

Recently I was checking with my agent on the cost of a second-to-die life insurance policy for a gift plan that I’m working on. I was surprised to hear that life insurance sales nationwide are down, and that there are fewer trained agents selling life insurance. It troubles me to hear that a first responder has died in the line of duty, and that a fund has been set-up at the local credit union to support the family. The surviving spouse just can’t “wing it” after losing a soulmate, their best friend, partner and co-parent. And certainly not after losing half or more of their household’s income.

Stewardship begins at home and winging it is not good stewardship. The just wing it approach to financial planning usually produces more debt than assets. A recent study showed that the median retirement savings for people in their 50’s (\$117,000) is only 20% of what is needed to replace 80% of earned income in retirement. It seems to me that “winging it” has always been an issue. From the Book of Proverb’s to Aesop’s fables, warnings of the lack of preparation and poor work ethics have gone unheard for centuries. Having said that, it doesn’t surprise me that up to 60% of us do not have an up-to-date will.

That was a long introduction to set-up this spiritual – financial connection. I think there is a strong link of intentional living, giving, being, dying, loving, working, playing and praying and being a Christian steward. Stewardship is the practical way I live out being a follower of Jesus. If I believe to the core of my being that life is a gift, that my body is a temple, that Jesus dwells in that temple, that I’m here to serve Him with all that I am and all that I have, then how can I wing it when it comes to living my life? The disciplines that help me grow in faith, and which provide order in my spiritual life, are the same ones that provide structure in my practical life. For instance, learning patience translates to learning delayed gratification in my saving and spending habits. Just winging it reflects my immaturity and instills an attitude of entitlement and self-centeredness. With this mindset, when the offering basket is passed, I’ll just wing it, and put in a couple of bucks. My cavalier living leads to cavalier giving. Wouldn’t it be sad if after the end of my life Jesus asked me how I lived the life given to me and I respond – “I guess I just winged it.”

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Don't forget to bring in non-perishable food items for the Chatham Food Pantry.

In **February**, we will concentrate on **cereal and crackers**. There is a collection basket to the left of the stairs leading to the Sanctuary where you may leave your donations. No large size containers, please.

THANK YOU!

February Volunteer Schedule

(If you have a conflict with your assignment, please contact the Coordinator listed below.)

	LITURGISTS COORDINATOR Jay Thompson / Deb Cobb 508-430-0048 jaykt@hotmail.com carl.deb@verizon.net	COFFEE HOUR FELLOWSHIP Robin Rank 508.432.5308	USHERS COORDINATORS Ken Johnson 508-432-3247 Allan Brier 508-945-3729	COMMUNION PREPARERS	GREETERS
February 2 10 am Worship and Communion: Rev. Tom Leinbach preaching	Keith Bradley Co-celebrant	TBD	Ken Johnson Marilyn Johnson Mike Firmin	Bonnie Freitas	Fran & Bruce Wynn
February 9 10 am Worship	Pastor Deb Holt	TBD	John Natarelli Barbara Natarelli Al Brier		Mike Firmin and Laurel Tileston
February 16 10 am Worship, Children's Sermon	Elaine Trexler	TBD	David Mallowes Judy Catandella Diane Kennedy		Laura Holzrichter and Joan Kendall
February 23 10 am Worship	Alan Kuzirian	TBD	Tom Sharkey Toni Worcell Deb Smith		Ken & Marilyn Johnson

**IF ANYONE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A DONATION TO THE PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND,
WHICH HELPS THOSE IN NEED, IT HAS GOTTEN QUITE LOW.**

BIRTHDAYS

02-09 Grace Haskell
02-11 Peter Avellar
02-11 John Natarelli
02-17 Pastor Barbara
02-18 Suzannah Nickerson



ANNIVERSARIES

02-03 Claire & Jay Thompson
02-08 Jane & Allan Brier
02-14 Suzannah Nickerson &
Tom Sharkey

DURING A CHURCH COUNCIL DISCUSSION LATE LAST YEAR, it was decided to re-double our efforts to communicate more thoroughly within our congregation. We decided to encourage every board chair, and committee members when they can, to write a paragraph or two per month telling us all what they have done recently, what they are working on now and what they have potentially planned for the near future. This way when someone finds a project or discussion in which they wish to participate, they will know who, what, when, where, and how to get involved. We hope to become closer as a congregation with these updates and encourage more people to participate within our church.

So sharpen your pencils and get your articles in to the church office by the second Monday of each month!

First United Methodist Church
16 Cross Street
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