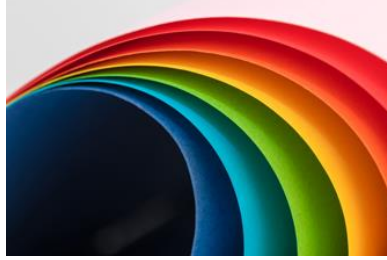


WEEKLY GOOD NEWS EMAIL
First Congregational Church of Hanover, Massachusetts
And Open and Affirming Church of the United Church of Christ



From Pastor Terry
johnterry@fcchanover.org

October 18, 2020

SUNDAY WORSHIP INFORMATION

Call to Worship (based on Psalm 65)

Praise is due to you, O God; and to you shall vows be performed, you who answer prayer! To you all flesh shall come. We all arrive at your doorstep sooner or later, loaded with guilt; our sins too much for us but you get rid of them once and for all.

Happy are those whom you choose and bring near to live in your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, your holy temple. By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation; you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.

By your strength you established the mountains; you are girded with might. You silence the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples. Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs; you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy.

You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide the people with grain, for so you have prepared it. You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth.

You crown the year with your bounty. The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy.

Invocation:

Almighty and everlasting God, in Christ you have revealed your glory among the nations. Preserve the works of your mercy, that your church throughout the world may persevere with steadfast faith in the confession of your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 22:15-22

15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. 16 So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, 'Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. 17 Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?' 18 But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, 'Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? 19 Show me the coin used for the tax.' And they brought him a denarius. 20 Then he said to them, 'Whose head is this, and whose title?' 21 They answered, 'The emperor's.' Then he said to

them, 'Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.' ²²When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

Hymn: *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*

Joyful, joyful, we adore You, God of glory, Lord of love; Hearts unfold like flow'rs before You, Op'ning to the sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the dark of doubt away; Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day!

All Your works with joy surround You, Earth and heav'n reflect Your rays, Stars and angels sing around You, Center of unbroken praise; Field and forest, vale and mountain, Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea, Chanting bird and flowing fountain Praising You eternally!

Always giving and forgiving, Ever blessing, ever blest, Well-spring of the joy of living, Ocean-depth of happy rest! Loving Father, Christ our Brother, Let Your light upon us shine; Teach us how to love each other, Lift us to the joy divine.



Sermon: *Taxing Question*

Hymn: *Rejoice, the Lord Is King*

Rejoice, the Lord is King: Your Lord and King adore!
Rejoice, give thanks and sing, And triumph evermore. Lift up your heart, Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

His kingdom cannot fail, He rules o'er earth and heav'n;
The keys of death and hell Are to our Jesus giv'n: Lift up your heart, Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

Rejoice in glorious hope! Our Lord and judge shall come
And take His servants up To their eternal home: Lift up your heart, Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

LOTS OF GOOD NEWS

THE SEARCH COMMITTEE got lots of great feedback in the recent congregational conversations. Thanks to all who took part. This is a real help in filling out the church profile necessary in the search for a new pastor.

THE THRIFT SHOP reopened on Saturday, October 17. Yea!

THE SOCIAL MATTERS COMMITTEE meets Thursday night. Let me know if you would like to join us.

THE OUTREACH AND SERVICE COMMITTEE gave \$500 to the Magical Moon Foundation in Marshfield. Their mission is to nurture and empower children with cancer and other life-threatening conditions. The Magical Moon Foundation supports children and their families by teaching healthy ways to deal with challenges and stress, that is, to make their

bodies strong, to keep their minds focused on the future, and to feed their spirits with fun and possibilities. Magical Moon Farm is a safe haven for children to recharge from the rigors of medical regimes related to the illnesses.

MAINSRING HOUSE: On the first Saturday of the month we have been bringing the makings of a meal to feed 150 at Father Bill's & MainSpring homeless shelter. We need volunteers to buy the preparations for a meal for November and December. Please contact Karen Tripp at trippklt@aol.com to make arrangements.

ALTAR FLOWERS: The basket of silk flowers is courtesy of the Thrift Shop. We are so very thankful that it has reopened through the efforts of many dedicated workers to assure a safe and pleasant shopping venue!

READ THE UPPER ROOM DEVOTIONAL on-line: <http://www.upperroom.org/standingorderchurches>

CHURCH CALENDAR

SUNDAY: The virtual coffee hour is at 11:30.

MONDAY BIBLE STUDY AT 7 PM Join in at <https://zoom.us/j/93375349480pwd=OWlkcjRmV2llaEt0M202RUhKRTA4UT09>

Meeting ID: 933 7534 9480; **Password:** 006430

WEDNESDAY HOUR OF FELLOWSHIP AT 2 PM Join in at: <https://zoom.us/j/5848654652?pwd=WHIDSnlhWkIwc2FGS0c3VWgwNmMzZz09>; **Meeting ID:** 584 865 4652; **Password:** 531416

WEDNESDAY: Search Committee

THURSDAY AT 7 PM: Social Matters Committee on Zoom

EVERYDAY – if you miss seeing someone from church give them a call!

CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS

Please email your celebrations and concerns to John Terry or to the church office.

Please pray for:

- The family of Thomas Cadorette, father of Jayce Hall, who passed October 7
- The family of Nancy Bezanson, who passed September 29
- Terry Milley with eye issues
- Lincoln Demoura, Lynn White's brother in law, in hospice
- Bill O'Donnell, Susan Vetterlein's brother-in-law, chemo therapy
- Barbara Winsloe, mother of Deborah Springhetti, in failing health
- Jayce Hall, Ruth Hall's daughter-in-law, with remitting auto immune disease

ATTACHMENT OF THE WEEK

*This headline got my attention: **New survey: people are reading the Bible less during the pandemic.** How can that be? We are mostly stuck inside. Sports have been mostly shut down. Mall are closed. Restaurants are shuttered. The nation is in a desperate situation. Why are we reading the Bible less? Here is the article from Christian Century by Emily McFarlan Miller:*

People may be reading the news and “doomscrolling” through social media during the coronavirus pandemic. But what they don't appear to be reading is the Bible. That's according to the tenth annual State of the Bible survey, released July 22 by the American Bible Society.

The number of American adults the American Bible Society considers “Bible engaged,” based on how frequently they read scripture and its impact on their relationships and choices, dropped from 28 percent to 22.7 percent between January and June, according to additional data collected by the organization in June.

“What we saw between January and June was that 13 million people in America who were previously really engaging meaningfully with scripture no longer were and that was a serious drop-off,” said John Plake, director of ministry intelligence for the American Bible Society.

Frequency of Bible reading also dropped over the last year, with daily readers dropping from 14 percent to 9 percent and those who read the Bible several times a week from 14 percent to 12 percent, the lowest number on record, according to the survey, conducted in January with the Barna Group.

The decrease in Bible use tracks with what the American Bible Society has seen over the past decade of research, according to Plake. In 2011, about 64 million people said they never used the Bible, compared with 87 to 90 million today, he said. “Frankly, there’s just a much larger percentage of the American population over the last ten years that says they never use the Bible,” Plake said.

Most of that change has come in what the American Bible Society calls occasional Bible users or the “movable middle.” Those people are less likely than they were ten years ago to open a Bible in search of answers to their questions, according to the research.

The number of people who regularly use the Bible—at least once a week—had held “fairly steady right up to COVID-19, and then COVID-19 has messed everyone up,” Plake said. Women, who have led men in Bible engagement every year of the survey, now slightly trail behind men, he pointed out. He said that may be because of the extra demands that mothers in particular have faced during the pandemic, juggling working from home and helping children with virtual learning as workplaces and schools closed to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Many churches have also moved online, he said, and that means people “can’t get together with their friends and study the Bible” the way they have in the past.

Plake urged church leaders to focus on the women in their congregations and communities who are “struggling in ways that might not make the headlines.” He emphasized the importance of mentoring or meeting with church members in small groups to talk, pray, and study the Bible together.

“I think the first thing is be assured that your role is critical in helping people maintain their faith and their deep connection to God,” he said. “It’s easy to think, ‘Well, hey, they can stream a service anywhere,’ and many, many people have done that, but the reality is without our pastors helping us, without leaders in our churches helping us to stay connected, people struggle.”

- We send out Sunday’s scripture reading every week. I hope you read this in advance of worship. Or you can take it home from worship and reading it again sitting in your favorite chair.
- There is the Monday night Bible study church folks do on ZOOM (info up above).
- We make available the Upper Room with daily Bible readings (info up above).
- If you go to MaxLucado.com you can get a daily devotional sent to you.
- Another devotional I use are the Moravian Daily Texts available at dailytexts@mcnp.org.
- You can plan you own daily Bible readings, maybe read a chapter of a Gospel each day, or a chapter from one of Paul’s letters or one of the Psalms.

I will promise you this. Reading a chapter a day from the Bible each day is a lot better for your mental health than watching the news. The Gospel is called the “Good News” for a good reason.