



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

from Pastor Terry
johnterry@fcchanover.org

May 2, 2021
Fifth Sunday of Easter
The Rev. Dr. Patty Kogut, guest preacher



Link to the church YouTube home page for the most recent Sunday service
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGOZdozbwMp1qbJeHbwAaA>

PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR this Sunday, at 10:30.
<https://zoom.us/j/94497541799?pwd=a2pSSjkxbUs2NIZ6RFZ0dG9XaU9FUT09>
Meeting ID: 944 9754 1799**Passcode:** 738510

CALENDAR

Sundays at 10:30: Virtual Coffee Hour
Next Sunday, May 9: Worship in Riley Hall at 9:30

Come worship with us!

Spring is here! Join us for in-person Church Service!!

Starting May 9th at 9:30 A.M.
In Riley Hall

Following CDC recommendations, seating will be social distanced and masks are required.

Our in-person service will be recorded and available on You-Tube. Follow the link at www.fcchanover.org



CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS

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

Dolly Johnson would appreciate light housekeeping help two days a week from 9-12. She pays \$20/hr. Please give her a call at (781) 871-6838.



Let's Celebrate:

- Dayna Scribi providing the May 2 meal for MainSpring
- Those who worked on April 24 to clean up the church properties

Please Pray for:

- Don White, recovering at home
- Luke Lukoski, recovering from surgery
- The family of Linda Peterson, Ginny Hunt's cousin, who passed April 28



Please continue praying for those with long-term needs:

- Bud Mosher in hospice
- Nancy Merrifield, daughter of Maddie Thomas, undergoing treatment for Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma.
- Sally Grey, neighbor of Ruth Hall, with lung cancer
- Susan Alexander
- Giana Conti
- Dave Durand, friend of Sandy and Dave Vaughn, with metastatic cancer

ANNOUNCEMENTS



WORSHIP SERVICE HELP REQUESTED:

- Anyone who would like to help **record the Sunday services**, please contact Pastor John Terry or the church office.
- **Liturgists** for the Sunday services – contact Pastor John Terry or the church office or sign up on Sundays beginning May 9th.

SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE SOCIAL MATTERS COMMITTEE!

We Are Collecting Toiletries for Carolina Hill House in Marshfield.

The Carolina Hill House provides a safe haven for women and children experiencing a family crisis. They are in need of all types of toiletries such as soaps, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc.

Make A difference! Make A Donation!

Drop off hours at Riley Hall: Tues, Wed, Thurs, and Sat from 10 - 2

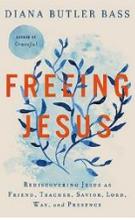
TIME TO APPLY FOR COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP



The First Congregational Church of Hanover will award a college scholarship to one or more high school graduating members of the church. This scholarship is awarded in recognition of a youth's involvement in church activities and is offered only to either a confirmed member of the church or to a student whose parents/guardians are covenant members. If you are eligible, please send in a completed application along with a letter of recommendation from a church committee member to the Christian Education (CE) Committee no later than May 30, 202. All submissions can be made via email to katgilligan@gmail.com.

Baccalaureate Sunday is on June 4, 2021. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the scholarship/completion of application, please don't hesitate to contact Kate Gilligan.

ATTACHMENT OF THE WEEK



Diana Butler Bass is one of my favorite authors. She is on a book tour promoting her new book *Freeing Jesus*. This is an article she wrote while on tour.

Religion After Pandemic

Lost means gone - it also means dislocated

During a *Freeing Jesus* event hosted by a Seattle church, a man asked: “What do you think is going to happen with churches after the pandemic? How is Christianity going to be changed by this?”

The question startled me. I was focused on my new book and not talking about the future of faith. I quickly pivoted back to Jesus. And the questioner just as quickly pivoted back to “What’s going to happen after the pandemic?” “I don’t know,” I replied. “Nobody knows.”

Since the publication of (her book *Christianity After Religion*) in 2012, people have asked me more questions about church, faith, and the future than I can possibly remember. I’ve learned a thing or two about conversations regarding the future.

1) No one knows what the future holds, not even the most intuitive historian, skilled trend spotter, or well-trained futurist.

2) Time is an odd thing. We experience it (mostly) in terms of change and chronology. But in sacred perspective, time exists differently. Indeed, theologically there is no past, present, or future. God holds time without reference to what has been and what will be.

In other words, I’ve become more modest when speaking of the future of faith. Even though I am happy to engage these questions, I think a more fruitful course (at this moment) is to focus on *now*.

Truth is, we don’t even know where we are in the course of the pandemic. Perhaps the best way to understand this moment is that *we are nearing the end of the beginning*. Millions of Americans are vaccine-hesitant (or vaccine-denying), and billions of people around the planet are suffering from resurgent strains, lack of adequate medical intervention, and no vaccines. COVID isn’t through with us yet, even while here in the United States, we see a bit of light on the horizon.

Instead of navigating all those unknowns, it seems a wiser course to focus on what we do know. And what we know is what we’ve been through – and how we are continuing to struggle.

So, what have we been through?

It is quite striking how people use the word “lost” and “loss” to describe the last fourteen months: we’ve lost friends and relatives to death, we’ve lost a year of our lives, we’ve lost income, we’ve lost a sense of security, we’ve lost our ability to move freely through the world. We’ve lost a lot.

My clergy friends speak of grief and lament – perhaps the post-COVID church will be one marked by that sad journey. But I think that “grief and lament” lacks specificity. It is hard to grieve millions of people (even when necessary to do so), and it is hard to grieve the hundreds of millions of lost years of our lives (even when the sadness of that is weighty). We need to grieve what is gone, yes. But that is not the only task ahead.

Lost doesn’t just refer to what is *gone*. It also means that which is mislaid, out of place, dislocated. Sometimes lost just means that we’re lost. And that is the other task for the post-

pandemic world: to help others find what has been lost, to point the way beyond the thicket. We need to find ourselves again; we need to be relocated in the world.

We've been dislocated in four major ways:

1) Temporal dislocation - We've lost our sense of time as it existed before the pandemic. How often have you thought: What day is this? What time is it? Did I miss an event? What month is it? That's temporal dislocation.

2) Historical dislocation - We've lost our sense of where we are in the larger story of both our own lives and our communal stories. History has been disrupted. Where are we? Where are we going? The growth of conspiracy theories, the intensity of social media, political and religious "deconstructions" – these are signs of a culture seeking a meaningful story to frame their lives because older stories have failed. That's historical dislocation.

3) Physical dislocation - We've lost our sense of embodiment with others and geographical location. For millions, technology has moved "physicality" into cyber-space and most of us have no idea what to do with this virtual sense of location. Without our familiar sense of being bodily in specific spaces, things like gardening, baking, sewing, and painting have emerged as ways of feeling the ground and the work of our hands. We've striven to maintain some sort of embodiment even amid isolation. But the disconnection between our bodies, places, and other bodies has been profound. That's physical dislocation.

4) Relational dislocation - We've lost our daily habits of interactions with other humans, the expression of emotions together in community. Have you worried you won't know how to respond when you can be with your friends without distance, with no masks? How it will feel to be in large groups again? How will work or school feel back in person, with others at the next desk or waiting on customers face-to-face, or in the first in-person meeting? What happens when the plexiglass comes down, the mask is off? That's relational dislocation.

With these dislocations in mind, the task comes into focus. Surely, religious communities need to be about the work of *relocation* – finding what has been lost, repairing what has been broken, and re-grounding people into their own lives and communities.

The word *religion* is believed to have come from the Latin, *religare*, meaning to "bind" or "reconnect." *Religare* is about mending what has been broken, recovering what has been mislaid, and reconnecting that which is frayed.

What is the future of religion post-pandemic? Well, it depends. It depends if we continue to insist on the *other* definition of religion – as obligation to a particular order of things (like doctrine, polity, or moral action – a "bounden duty"). If nothing else, the pandemic has revealed that particular orders of things can be upset, overturned by the most unanticipated of things. If *religion* is about maintaining a certain order of liturgy, dogma, or practice, well, then, we can consider religion one more pandemic loss.

If we think of *religion* in terms of *religare*, however, the task of the post-pandemic church – the work of finding, repairing, and relocating – is clear. We must reconnect ourselves and others with time, history, physicality, and relationships. In this sense, the future of religion has never been brighter – our lost world needs finding. Pandemic dislocation calls for guides and weavers of wisdom. We don't need to return to the old ways, we need to be relocated. We need to find a new place, a new home in a disrupted world.

And at the very heart of finding our lost selves is relocating our hearts in and with God. There is a journey beyond the pandemic, and we will find the way a step at a time. We haven't been to this particular future before. And we will need one another to get there.