

TOWER TIMES JUNE 2019

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First
Congregational
Church
28 Green
Street
Gardner, MA



FAITH + HOLY SPIRIT = GOD'S NEWNESS

It is not easy to talk about Pentecost season— which we will officially enter into on June 9th. This, I believe, is because the work of God's Holy Spirit cannot be owned, cornered, boxed in, packaged and sold, or stuffed into us. The Spirit is indeed more like the wind, blowing where it will (Jn 3:8); meaning the Spirit surprises us, endlessly!...and is not easily restrained or put into neat categories of human choosing.

John Calvin, that one we associate so closely with the Protestant Reformation (after Martin Luther, of course), wrote that "faith is the principle work of the Holy Spirit." That means that faith wells up where it will. Faith does not come by coercion or by training or by sheer will-power.

We must marvel then at the long-running wonder that is the “church”! Because the church is, even when we forget, a partner of the Holy Spirit. Thus, dear reader, take a deep breath and marvel at our calling.

We worship in this long Pentecost season in the presence of the shattering, surprising work of our partner- the Holy Spirit- and what we can do together. We both asked to “test the spirits” (1 Jn 4:1) and not to “quench the Spirit” (1 Thess 5:10). Usually we are much better at “testing” than “not quenching”. We are in a moment, I suggest, when “no quenching” is our best witness, because we live, and breathe, and have our being in a moment when the Spirit is turning the old order upside down. If we look around, we see that the Spirit is indeed making all things new. That is work that scares the heck out of some of us, but as people of faith in partnership with the Holy Spirit- we are not the ones called to put the brakes on God’s newness. We are invited into that stream of surprise that disrupts our old certitudes and ways of living, our known beliefs about this or that, our settled comfort zones.

In the witness of the transformative and disruptive work of the Spirit that shows up as God chooses,
Pastor Sue



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

It has been a joy working with everyone this past year and truly amazing to have so many wonderful teachers sharing their time and talent through teaching. On behalf of the C.E. committee, thank you! It speaks very loudly to the whole church body to have so many committed to Christian education.

Upcoming summer events include during worship on **June 9th** we will be welcoming our youth Gabriella Henshaw, Joshua Mills, and Hannah Orwig into membership. Come share the joy as they make their **confirmation** statements of faith on Pentecost Sunday—**wear red!**

June 18th - **Summer Kick-off** 5:00-7:00 p.m. - Family night many community organizations, food, face painting, games and lots of fun!

June 21-23 **Camping at Lake Dennison** – we have the group site reserved. Please sign up, or contact April Saner, if you are planning to camp out. Otherwise just show up for fun and fellowship. Saturday dinner is potluck bring a dish to share.

August 5-9 **“Roar” Vacation Bible School** - “Where life is wild & God is Good ” 9am-12noon. Anyone willing to assist in this wonderful ministry please see Sue Rader. At the end of this newsletter is the Registration Form. Please share the good news of VBS with your friends and neighbors.

Back Pack project - Preparations are ongoing through the summer. Packing of back packs is Friday, August 9 at 5:00 p.m. and distribution is on Saturday, August 10th.

September 22 - 9:00 a.m. - Pancakes for **Rally Sunday!**

May this summer be blessed,

Sue Rader

An afternoon of music with friends of FCC

Organ Benefit Concert

June 9, 2:00 p.m. **First Congregational Church, Gardner**

Come enjoy an afternoon of beautiful music while helping to raise funds to restore FCC's organ.

Performers include:

- Roy Imperio, piano
- Kristjon Imperio, organ
- William Ness, organ
- Gavin Klein, organ
- Greater Gardner Community Chorus
- Melodious Flutes
- The Fine Arts Woodwind Quintet
- FCC Handbell Choir
- Robert Tuttle, vocalist

June 9, 2019, 2:00 p.m.
First Congregational Church
28 Green St., Gardner, MA

GOODWILL DONATION

All donations will help to pay for the restoration of FCC's organ so that the church and community can enjoy it for many more years to come!





GET READY FOR “SERVICE SUNDAY”

JUNE 30

The Deacons are offering 4 projects for you to get involved with during Service Sunday on June 30th:

- Community Garden (Container) Planting
- Hygiene Kits for Vets, Homeless and Needy
- Animal Care Kits for Gardner Animal Shelter
- Contributions for the Supplies of the GVNA Diaper Pantry

Some require products either new or gathered.

Some require labor.

All require love and service as we reach out to our local community.

Pick one or more of the projects that you can shop/recycle for.

Drop off your contributions in the collection area at church beginning June 9th.

Shopping List-New Items: (select as you are able)

- Toothbrush with cover (Dollar Store)
- Small toothpaste tubes
- Dental floss picks (we will repackage)
- Band aides
- Deodorant (Gender Neutral)
- Chapstick type product
- Baby Shampoo
- Individually wrapped Wet Wipes
- Feminine Hygiene products
- Baby Wipes
- Disposable Diapers
- Gallon Ziploc bags (generic is FINE!)
- 2 ½ Gallon Ziploc Bags (generic at Big Lots)
- Washcloths
- Dawn Blue small dishwashing soap (Dollar Store)
- Cat and Dog Treats (Cat Fav-Temptations; NO DOG BONES)

Recycle/Repurpose (as much as you can!)

- Gently Used Washcloths/ Dishtowels
- Hotel Sample toiletries
- Gently Used baby receiving blankets
- Gently Used Towels to cut down to small
- Large Planting Containers-whiskey barrel size



Habitat for Humanity - on May 8th Pat Darby attended a Breakfast in Bolton put on by Habitat for Humanity. Two recent homeowners were there to express their gratitude for their new homes. Pat presented Habitat with a check for \$600.00 to go specifically toward two new houses in Ashburnham. The Mission Council is always pleased to support Habitat when it is in our Community. A wonderful thank you letter was received from Habitat thanking us for our generous donation. More information will be coming on how you can donate some time working on these houses for both women and men.

UCC - a check for \$1,200.00 was sent to the Main Office in Framingham in May to support our Church's Wider Mission. This was an increase over last year of \$200.00.

Hope House and Hope Summer Camp - please join us at our Service on June 23rd as we present a check for \$1,000.00 to Hope Summer Camp and a check for \$500.00 for Hope House. Christian Orobello, CEO of Hope House and the Hope Summer Camp Director will be here to tell us about their programs and activities.

Rev. Charles Mansfield Memorial Scholarship - Deadline is June 30th - the Mission Council is pleased to offer a \$500.00 Scholarship to "one of our own." This can be to a graduating Senior who will be starting their higher education, or a student that is currently in college or a university, or a student in Graduate School. **Please see the application and requirements that are located at the end of the Tower Times.** The deadline date for application is June 30, 2019. The application can be given to Pat Darby or put in her mailbox at the Church.

Wicker Food Baskets - please bring any donations and help fill the basket in the hall. When the basket is full, the food is taken to the CAC in Gardner. They are always grateful for any items that we give to help feed those in our Community.

Can Tabs - please help by bringing in your Can tabs and placing them in the container right inside the Parish Hall on the table. These are then given to help raise money for the Shriner's Hospitals in Springfield and Boston. They are melted down and this money is then used to give care free of charge at these Children's Hospitals.

Warmer Winters - while sitting around on a cool evening, how about knitting or crocheting for Warmer Winters? Last year they gave over 3,000 items to those in need who needed warmth. They are happy to accept scarves, hats, sweaters and mittens for all ages including for men and women. If you have items to donate, please see Pat Darby. You can also receive free yarn from them once a month.

These above donations are all possible through your support of the Mission Council Budget. Many thanks to all of you for helping so much within our Community!

~Pat Darby, Chair of the Missions Council



People's Service Auction - on April 28th we had the People's Service Auction with Ben Parker - Auctioneer who kept us all laughing and having a great time. Hats off to Ben!!! Money is still coming in as some people offered to give their service again at the final bid price. To date the amount raised is \$2,742.50 which will go to the deficit budget. This amount may still increase as the summer progresses. If you were the final bidder and received the item, please remember that it is up to you to make arrangements with the person giving the item to arrange for the service. Thank you to all who helped with the luncheon before the Auction who brought soup or sandwiches, and to all who offered services and to all who bid on items and received some wonderful items. There is still room in the following classes: Private Art Drawing Class, Learn to write Poetry Class, Coloring Workshop, Art Workshop of making a landscape, Need a ride even to Worcester, and Babysitting. For details contact Pat Darby.

Welcome Wagon - the Outreach Committee voted to continue our contract with Welcome Wagon for another 6 months. The cost is \$122.48 a month and our Church is the only one in the packet sent to 24 homes each month to new homeowners in Gardner, Westminster and Ashburnham.

There is still two more follow-up months that go to each person receiving the 1st packet.

If anyone would like to sponsor a month, or co-sponsor a month, please see Pat Darby. Many thanks to those who have paid for a month so there has been no cost to our Church. We hope to see some results from this endeavor.

Community Garden - we are hoping that we can get a Community Garden growing and going on the side of the Church. We would like to share our items we grow with others. If you are interested in helping with our Garden, please contact Pastor Sue.

We are still working on other ideas to retain our members and attract new members to our Church. One idea is a MOVIE NIGHT. If you have other ideas, please pass them along to any of the following:

~Pat Darby - Chair, Judie O'Donnell, Bill Clabaugh or Pastor Sue.



"Billy says he doesn't hafta go to church anymore 'cause his phone has an app for that!"



First Congregational Church of Gardner

August 5 – 9th 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

Registration forms receive by July 22 – \$20 per child

Parents, for registration info and ways you can help go to www.fccgardner.org or contact Sue Rader @ 978-630-1156

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Child's name: _____

Child's age: _____ Date of birth: _____ Last school grade completed: _____

Name of parent(s): _____

Street address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Home telephone: (_____) _____

Parent/caregiver's cell phone: _____

Home e-mail address: _____



Allergies or other medical conditions: _____

In case of emergency, contact: _____

Phone: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Home Church: _____

Crew number or name (for church use only): _____

Video / Photo Release: _____ Yes I give permission for FCC to take pictures during VBS, for in-house use only. _____ No I do not give permission for photos to be taken during VBS

Signature:

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GARDNER, MA
28 Green Street
Gardner, MA 01440
978-632-2142

THE REV. MANSFIELD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



**“The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out.”
(Proverbs 18:15) (NIV)**

APPLICATION FORM FOR SCHOLARSHIP OF \$500!

(FYI – This scholarship applies only to full time students, whether Undergraduate or Graduate School, regardless of field of study. Applicants must also be a member of this church and be willing to speak before the congregation in advance of approval. Scholarship will only be awarded after a transcript of grades achieved during the 1st semester have been sent to the Missions Council of this church. Please be aware that the deadline for applying for this scholarship is June 30th, 2019).

STUDENT’S FULL NAME:

FIRST	MI	LAST	
STREET ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
E-MAIL ADDRESS	TEL		

IN AUTUMN 2019, I WILL BE AN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AS A:
FRESHMAN SOPHOMORE JUNIOR SENIOR

I HAVE BEEN APPROVED FOR THE FALL SEMESTER AT: _____

IN AUTUMN 2019, I WILL BE A GRADUATE STUDENT AT: _____

PERSONAL STATEMENT:

Use the space below to give information about your career ambitions, goals, awards received, sports, clubs, organizations, high school grade average, or any other information that may be pertinent to your approval. Also, include information about the way faith has worked in your consideration and plans for the future. Some examples of points you might want to share are: how your faith has grown during your educational experience; what your experience in your church community has meant to your growth; what impact your faith has had on your plans and hopes for the future. Please limit your statements to no more than 600 words.

_____ SIGNATURE

_____ DATE