



February 2022 Beacon

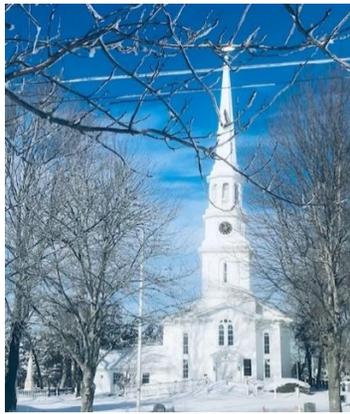


photo by Tom Jahnke

Dear Good & Loving People,

As I write this letter, it is two days after the *Big Blizzard-Snow Bomb-Nor'easter of 2022!* Whatever you want to call it- it was a Whopper! In the lead up to this big storm, I heard tales of other whopper storms-in 2005 and the legendary one in 1978; and I lived on the north shore through the winter of 2015 and navigating over 110+ inches of snow.

There's something to be said for all that snow coming at us so fast, those wind gusts of 70-80 m.p.h., the temperatures plummeting into the icy 20s, the power outages and downed trees and wires, the spilling over of the seas causing flooding and more ice. "Yes!" to the sheer power of nature in all her glory...and destructive capabilities. But the whopper "Yes!" to this whopper storm is to the sheer power of being there for one another, for neighborliness, for community, for a church family.

While I certainly and often bow to the beauty and power of nature, it is the beauty and power of our coming together that has me giving thanks to God and to you. From

the very rumor of the storm, John Leathers, our resident weatherman was there for me, sending me emails throughout the storm and following up with me by phone. From there, the staff and leadership team went into action to carry out the plans to cancel our weekend activities of the Art Show, Thrift Shop and Worship. The wonderful and dedicated Deacons made their calls to inform our members and friends and to check-in with everyone.

Tom Jahnke as our interim Administrative Assistant, took the extra time to make sure to include warming shelter information in the email sent from the office on Friday as well as a hundred other things to make sure our church campus was ready for the storm. And then on the Saturday of the *Big Blizzard-Snow Bomb-Nor'easter of 2022*, Tom could be found answering the fire alarm in the sanctuary basement along with the Harwich Fire Department. There's even a report that he slid down the stairwell along with them! (I wish I had a picture of that to share with you!) The thing is- he went all out for this church family and to make sure that all was as well as it

could be here even potentially putting his own life in danger by going out in that blizzard.

And throughout the storm and post-storm, Tom kept the staff and leadership team informed of all that was happening around our church campus. He and Jeep could be found hard at work shoveling in time for meetings this week and working with our plowing company.

As Dawn and I lost power in our Eastham home around noon on Saturday, Jeep consulted with us on the phone about our options and invited us over as did so many of you. Our neighbors here in Eastham, came through the snow & wind to invite us to their warm home to ride out the storm and power outage. And on Sunday, these same neighbors plowed our driveway. We are truly humbled by both our church family's offerings and help as well as that of our near neighbors.

To be sure, I don't want to leave anyone out- so a huge "THANK YOU!!" to all of you for your dedication and commitment, for all your efforts to help your family, neighbors and church family through this whopper storm!!

Jesus, who navigated his share of storms alone and with his disciples, had a thing or two to say about neighborliness. The Evangelist Matthew states that after a Pharisee asks Jesus which is the greatest commandment... Jesus answers, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."* This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:34-40)

Dear ones, time and again throughout this brief but genuinely harrowing 24-48 hours of the *Big Blizzard-Snow Bomb-Nor'easter of 2022*, you lived out the truth of Jesus's words- we live out our genuine love for God by showing genuine love for our neighbors. **THANK YOU ONE AND ALL!!**

As I recall this time, I will remember not only the snow, the power outages, the cold, the roar, the wind, but also the phone calls, the visits, the emails, the text messages, the labors of love from our church family and friends and neighbors.

We are truly blessed to have one another amidst the storms of life,

~Pastor Sue



National Seashore Sign - Eastham

SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10:30 am

God is Holding Your Life: A Journey of Assurance series continues through February 13th.
Watch the series trailer at this [link](#).



Life is a series of exclamations from "O No!" to "Help!" to "Oh Yeah!" We can swing between disappointment, helplessness, and gratitude on a daily basis.

As we sink into 2022, we hoped we would be past the "O No!" of the last couple of years. Instead, we find ourselves with ongoing prayers for "Help!"

The Book of Psalms knows all about this. Written over a span of time from exile and isolation to the rebuilding of community, the poetry of the Psalms in this series reminds us that through it all we can trust and even give

our thankful "Oh Yeah!" because God is, indeed, holding our lives.

The cupped hands image for this series symbolizes a place where we are held by God and one another and holds our concerns, our anxieties, and our insecurities. With cupped hands we are reminded to let go into the care of God those things we cannot control. Cupped hands also offer a wonderful prayer posture to use- wherever we are, just pause and cup your hands and pray.

Each Sunday also features "Testimonies of Being Held"—an opportunity for First Church-ers to share how they've felt the love and support of God, of others, of First Church during their various seasons of life.

Feb. 6: In God Alone – “God alone is my rock and salvation... I shall not be shaken.” - Psalm 62:5-12a. Testimony by Lynn Carver.

Feb. 13: We Wait, We Hope, We Stay – “God heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds” - Psalm 147:1-11, 20c. Testimony by Joe Boro.

Feb. 20: Pastor Sue is away. The Reverend Connie Bickford is leading worship and preaching.

Feb. 27: The Deacons and Music Director will have a Hymn Sing worship service. Stay tuned!

My prayers continue with you and for you. May this series, hymn sing and different voices help you and our congregation be sustained and assured as we prepare to enter the Lenten season,

~Pastor Sue

MISSED A SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE?

Sunday worship services and other videos are recorded and posted to First Church's YouTube channel (YouTube.com/search for "First Church Harwich") by Monday morning. Click this [link](#) to be taken to First Church's YouTube channel and watch a service as well as share it with your family and friends. You can also

click the "Subscribe" button as the more subscribers we have, the more attractive we become to visitors.

If you would like a copy of Pastor Sue's sermons, please email HopeAndTools@gmail.com and she will gladly email them to you.

MUSICAL NOTES

The choir is working hard on their music for our March Anniversary Musicale. We've been singing a couple gospel songs for it. We have sung an original piece by Marcia, and our Sunday anthems. Solos lately have been by Jeep Mashoke, Tom Jahnke, Marcia Hempel, and Emily Kosoff. Soon, Edie Ruggles and Marcia will sing a duet.

The plans for the Anniversary Musicale include Jade Burrowes-Rampasard, Dana Clark, Bob Buchanan, Mark Paradis, Marcia Hempel, Lynn Carver, Tom Jahnke, Emily Kosoff, Edie Ruggles, and others TBA. The Musicale will be on Saturday, March 26 at 3:00 PM. This

concert is one event this year for the anniversary of the church. The choir and others will also present a Music Sunday in June with very special music selections. And Marcia will play an organ concert in September.

Lynn Carver and Marcia Hempel are working on updating the history of the music at First Church. Marcia is working on composing music for the choir and also has written a piece for bassoon and baritone (for Lynn Carver and Tom Jahnke), for Good Friday.

~ Marcia Hempel, Music Director

SOUPER BOWL COLLECTION, FEB 13TH

The Souper Bowl of Caring empowers us to tackle hunger using the energy of the Big Game- the Super Bowl- on Sunday, February 13th. The Mission Board invites you to transform the Super Bowl into the Souper Bowl of Caring by collecting cans of soup for donation to the Food Pantry. Please bring in your donation of cans of soup on any Sunday, including the Sunday of the Big Game on February 13th when we will bless our offering. Place your donation in the Food Pantry collection bins in the church's narthex.

Here's a little message to get you "souped up" for the collection as we remember what our God can do...

God can do anything
God can make whole new worlds
God can give my life meaning
God can never let me go
God can move mountains
God can make seas split down the middle
God can walk on water
God can change people's heart
God can bring peace
God can love anybody
God can answer my prayers
God can pour out forgiveness for me and others
God can guide me the way you should go
God can build God's kingdom on earth through me

HEALTHCARE WORKER ENCOURAGEMENT – SHOW YOU CARE – GIVE & PRAY ON FEB. 13TH

First Church is a faith community that cares for its community. Let's rally together to support those who care for the rest of us in times of need. Join First Church in showing our healthcare workers and others facing the front lines during this pandemic that we notice them, we care about them, and we stand beside them.

Valentine's Day cards will be available during the next two Sundays (Jan. 30th and Feb. 6th) for anyone to take home and write a short note of encouragement to a healthcare worker. Return your card(s) on Sunday, February 13th, during worship.

Also, if you are able, please bring in gift cards with small amounts on them, like Dunkin' Donut cards, for coffee or treats. The Missions Board will deliver our offering to several of the healthcare offices and urgent care, etc. in our community.

On Sunday the 13th we will intentionally set aside time to bless our offering and pray for healthcare workers. Wherever you are, let's join together in praying this prayer on Feb. 13th:

Lord God,
With grateful hearts, we remember our healthcare workers. Please look upon them with Your mercy. Grant them strength and encouragement as they face the challenging tasks before them. Restore them with Your comfort and love. Allow them to know the gratitude of those they minister to and provide them with rest for their bodies and souls.
Amen.



If you would like to donate flowers for a Sunday Service to help beautify the church sanctuary please consider "Chancel Flowers" in "Memory of" or "Honor of" or "Special Occasion" or "Thank you to friend(s) for a kind

ness" or "Just Because". Deacon Lynn Bitzer has graciously agreed to accept flower orders from January through March. Please speak to Lynn or call her at 508-237-2216 to order your flowers!

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS & ASSISTANTS NEEDED

First Church is taking baby steps towards offering Sunday School for our children again. The Christian Education Committee is now offering Sunday School in the Elliot Room whenever we have children in worship.

The curriculum is ready to go and does not require a lot of prep work. The Elliot Room has a speaker that can be turned on so you can also listen to the rest of the worship service.

Would you like to serve on a rotational (occasional) basis as either a teacher or assistant?

We are offering to compensate the teacher and assistant for their service at \$30.00 for each Sunday. You would need to pass a CORI background check (paid for by the church) and offer proof of vaccination from Covid-19.

Interested? Want more information? Please talk with Pastor Sue or contact her at HopeAndTools@gmail.com or call the church at 508-432-1053.

THE DEACONS' DOOR. . . is always open

“There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, ‘All right, then have it your way.’”

~C. S. Lewis

Did this bring a small smile to your face? The truth we see (or don't see) in different situations throughout our lives may say a lot about us...

~ Your Diaconate

Members & Friends Deacons' List July 2021 ~ June 2022

DeeDee Dyer: A ~ G

Edie Ruggles: H ~ Mar

Lynn Carver: Mas ~ Ram

Lynn Bitzer: Rin ~ W

Shirley Mashoke: New Members & Friends

To contact your Deacon please refer to our Church Directory for their contact information or talk to them at our Sunday Services.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Deacons are looking for volunteers to help out on Sunday mornings to bring members or friends, who have no transportation or are no longer able to drive, to get to church. These are parishioners who want and need to come to the worship service, to see and talk with friends.

If any member or friend of First Church is able and willing to help out on an occasional Sunday, please call the church office and leave your name and phone number with Tom, Office Administrator, at 508-432-1053 or speak with a Deacon.

Thank you,

~ DeeDee Dyer & Diaconate

JANUARY CABINET REPORT

CABINET REPORT – January 13, 2022

Attendance: Lynn Carver, Tom Jahnke, Emily Kosoff, Pastor Susan Thomas, Jeep Mashoke, Joyce Noyes, DeeDee Dyer, Betty Lou Hindle, Dawn Brooks

Visitors: Lorraine Frederickson, John Bitzer

275th Anniversary News – The Art Show in the Parish House was open Sundays in January after worship. Also, John Bitzer opened it to the public on two Saturdays. At the same time, Lorraine Frederickson offered an Open House/Tour in the Sanctuary.

Auxiliary Team Reports:

- **Historical Records Team** made two suggestions:
 1. To outsource the typing and printings of the Blue History book when it is updated. Cabinet requested two quotes.

2. To send the First Church deed we have to the Congregational Library and Archive in Boston. Cabinet requested the Team search for the original deed.

- **Multigenerational Stevens Fund:**

1. Purchase of a projector and two banners was approved.
2. Cabinet recommended a bylaw change that would require Cabinet approval only for expenditures over \$500.

After the visitors left, the Cabinet moved to Executive Session for the remainder of the meeting.

Pastor's Report - Pastor Sue reported on her work activities of the past month. She also requested that she be

allowed to vote at Cabinet meetings. Cabinet members agreed and will recommend a bylaw to this effect.

Treasurer's Report – Tom presented a simpler format of the report. He also reported that our income and expenses are tracking well.

Board Reports:

- **Deacons** – New prepared Communion cups will include Gluten Free bread. After paying for the Christmas poinsettias, the church was able to send a \$355 donation to A Baby Center.
- **Trustees** – Three projects are being worked on: new walkways, granite fence repair, and upgrade of the finance room. The Board recommended merging the Treasurer and Bookkeeper jobs to one paid employee position. The Cabinet approved. This will require a bylaw change.
- **Christian Ed** – Volunteers will be asked to help with starting a Sunday School program. An Easter Egg Hunt is planned.

- **Fellowship** – The kitchen and closet were organized recently. The Board wishes to have a BBQ or picnic for the community as part of the 275th Anniversary Celebration.
- **Mission** – December donations of food, gifts, knitted items, and money were given to local organizations. Christmas Fund donations were sent to the UCC. The Board is planning an outreach mission of “shoebox donations.”

Special Trustees Meeting – At an emergency meeting on January 12th, the Board met and accepted the resignation of Kimberly Perry, the Office Administrator. Tom Jahnke will fill the position temporarily.

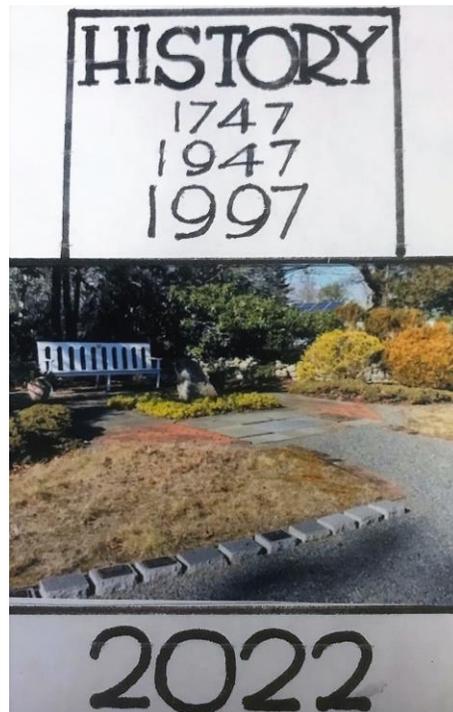
Other Business:

- The Cabinet voted to eliminate the Summer Fair for 2022 because of all the 275th activities planned.
- The UCC Annual Report will be prepared by the Pastor, the Treasurer, and the Moderator.

Libby Arnold Stevens' CORNER THRIFT SHOP

During the month of January, the Thrift Shop was closed two days due to the weather. Our recent contribution to the Church operating budget was \$2,800, making a total of \$32,700 for this fiscal year.

We are grateful to the Board of Trustees for replacing and updating the signs in front of the Thrift Shop and Broadbrooks.



The Memorial Garden

History of First Congregational Church of Harwich *The Memorial Garden*

This month's 275th Anniversary Celebration features FCCH Memorial Garden. First Church established its Memorial Garden in 1989 as an expression of a caring Christian Fellowship and to meet a specific need. Located in an unused area of the 1747 historic Cemetery, west of the Meetinghouse, the Memorial Garden was designed as a resting place of beauty and peace. The Memorial Garden is available to the members of First Church and their immediate families for the interment of the cremated remains of their loved ones.

Before building the Memorial Garden, the Church received written approval from the 1988 Cemetery Commission and the 1988 Historic District Commission. The design we see today consists of two stone walkways, running North and South with granite & bronze name markers placed along the outside edges. Construction was completed in the Spring of 1989. To provide families and others who visit a place that they can sit down and reflect, a large patio with a large white bench was added. In the center of the patio, a bronze plaque attached to a small boulder surrounded by perennial green plants, identifies the area as the *Memorial Garden, First Congregational Church, Dedicated May 28, 1989*.

The Memorial Garden Committee, now called Memorial Garden Team, was established to manage the Garden. Members are responsible for setting guidelines for the use and function of the Garden and maintaining it as a place for peace and repose.

Each year since 1989, arrangements for interments have been made between families, the Pastor, and the Memorial Garden Team. As of January 2022, two hundred twelve (212) plots have been reserved and one hundred fifty-six (156) interments have taken place.

In 2006, two plots were gifted to Rev. Charles (Terry) Newberry and his wife Barbara, on the occasion of his retirement. Likewise, in 2014, two plots were given to Rev. Thomas (Tom) Leinbach and his wife Linda as a retirement gift.

In 2013, the Harwich Cemetery Commission approached the church to question the existence of our Memorial Garden. At the time, there were one hundred and forty-one (141) cremains interred in the Memorial Garden, and another fifty (50) plots had been reserved.

Since the 2013 Cemetery Commissioners had no knowledge of the Memorial Garden, even though it had been in plain sight for 25 years, the Church presented the paperwork from 1988. The town objected to the approval letter that stated that the Memorial Garden was

allowed to be built over unmarked graves. Since the town believed that they owned the entire Cemetery, they declared that no activity would be allowed until further notice.

For the next two years, Mary Montgomery from the Memorial Garden Committee, Rev. Thomas Leinbach, and Moderator Lynn Carver represented the Church numerous times in meeting with the Cemetery Commission and other town leaders to try and resolve the issues. No progress was made.

In 2014, twenty-five church members attended a Cemetery Commission meeting, as well as Rev. Newberry who had been pastor in 1988 when the church gained approval to build the Memorial Garden. As the only person available from that time, Rev. Newberry testified to the good will of the Church and town parties involved in the approval process. Also, many of the members present asked questions, and asked the Commission not to disturb those buried in the Memorial Garden.

In 2014, the Church hired Attorney Barbara Huggins Carboni who met with the Church Cabinet to discuss the church's options. When the town declared in 2015, that they wished to disinter all cremains from the Memorial Garden and move the entire garden to another area of the cemetery, a special congregation meeting was held. The membership voted to start litigation to prevent the town from disturbing the graves of our loved ones.

Right away, church members and friends of the Memorial Garden began to contribute to our legal defense fund to help pay the Church's legal fees. By 2017, we were blessed to have received \$38,000 in donations. Additionally, we used \$8,355 from unrestrictive money in the Memorial Garden Fund. The remainder of our legal fees were paid through an unrestrictive gift to the Church.

In November 2015, Church representatives attended a mediation session hoping to reach an agreement with the town. It failed and so Attorney Carboni proceeded with the lawsuit. Much research was done using church records, the Harwich Historical Society, the Barnstable County Courthouse, the Congregational Library of Boston, and town records. We hired the services of a title researcher, a land surveyor, and an early American history expert. The Church rejected the town's Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) report and required them to hire a GPR expert to identify any disturbances deep in the soil which might suggest an unmarked grave. Several were discovered.

Attorney Carboni filed for summary judgment in the Massachusetts Land Court seeking to prove that the Church owned the entire Cemetery and that we had done nothing improper in creating the Memorial Garden. On a snowy day, in March 2017, two carloads of interested church members attended the oral argument proceedings in Boston. Attorney Carboni did a superb job representing First Church.

Eight months later, in August 2017, First Church received notice of the Land Court decision. The judge ruled that First Congregational Church of Harwich owned the Cemetery and that we could continue to operate the Memorial Garden. No graves would be moved, but we had to avoid areas restricted by the findings of the Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR). Over those two spots, the Memorial Garden Team placed engraved granite blocks.

On December 3, 2017, the Memorial Garden was rededicated during worship. Participants included Rev. Newberry, Rev. Leinbach, and Attorney Carboni. Following the Church service, people were invited to walk out to the Memorial Garden to complete the rededication.

During the four plus years, 2013 - 2017, when the Memorial Garden could not be used, a number of plot owners had died, so families had to put off the burials of their loved ones. To address the issue, the Church, through the efforts of Trustees Phyllis Cushlanis, Robert Buchanan and John Bitzer, secured a wooden chest, decorated it, and added a plaque to temporarily hold cremains until interment. In July 2015, this "Resurrection Chest" was dedicated. It sits below the memorial stained glass window- "Jesus and the Children" to temporarily hold cremains until interment is scheduled. It remains

there as an option for families. Full activity in the Memorial Garden resumed in December 2017.

To commemorate those possible unmarked graves beneath the Memorial Garden, the Church placed a tread stone that is part of the Memorial Garden patio. It reads - *"To those unknown souls who lie beneath the Garden. We shall not all sleep but shall all be changed..."*

In 2020, a friend of the Church, Rick Whitehead, donated funds for construction and placement of a *Cemetery & Memorial Garden* sign located on Main Street. at the intersection of Route 39 and Sisson Road.

In 2021, the Memorial Garden white bench, with a plaque inscribed *"In Thankful Appreciation to Kathleen McKeen for twenty years of devotion to the care and beauty of The Memorial Garden, First Congregational Church 2013"* was replaced.

As the Church celebrates its 275th Anniversary, the Memorial Garden Team continues care for FCCH's Memorial Garden, providing seasonal plantings and grooming to keep this sacred area beautiful and peaceful for our First Church family and visitors.

If you haven't taken a few minutes to visit our lovely Memorial Garden, plan to do so on a sunny Spring day as part of your personal 275th Anniversary experience.

Attributions:

Richard (Dick) Siegel, FCCH Historian

Lynn Carver & Mary Montgomery

Memorial Garden Chairpersons

Phyllis Cushlanis, Robert Buchanan, John Bitzer,

Past Trustees

WHAT WILL BE YOUR LEGACY?

Have you thought about your legacy? When you include First Church in your will or estate plan, you leave a lasting legacy. It reflects your values and ensures the continued mission of First Church in the future.

To establish your legacy, please contact your attorney and Tom Jahnke, the Treasurer of First Church,

to discuss this matter. Before the end of a fiscal year, it is possible to establish this lasting gift, earn a full tax deduction on the bequest amount, as well as retain some income from the funds during your lifetime.

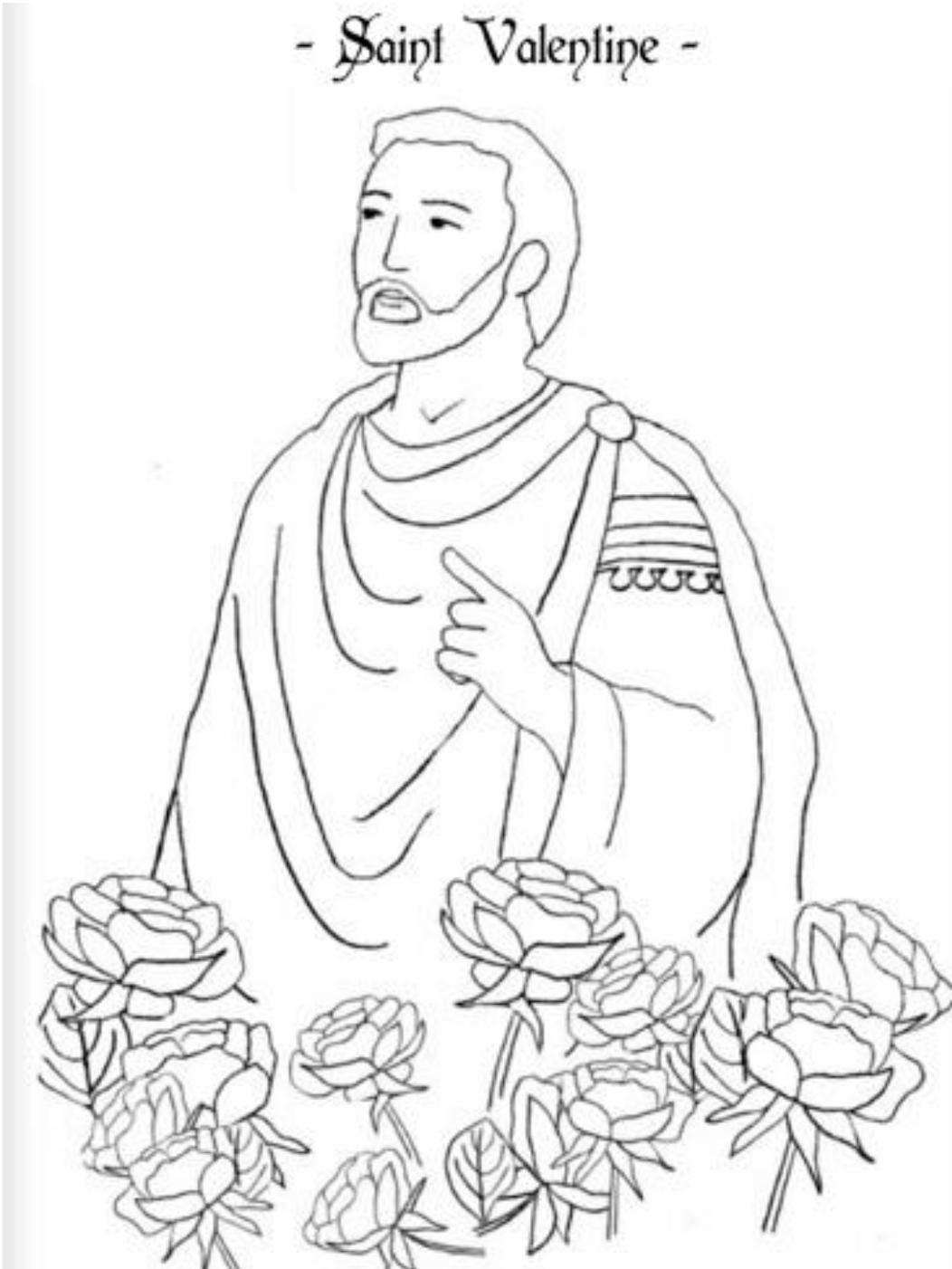
~ *Bob Buchanan, Trustee*

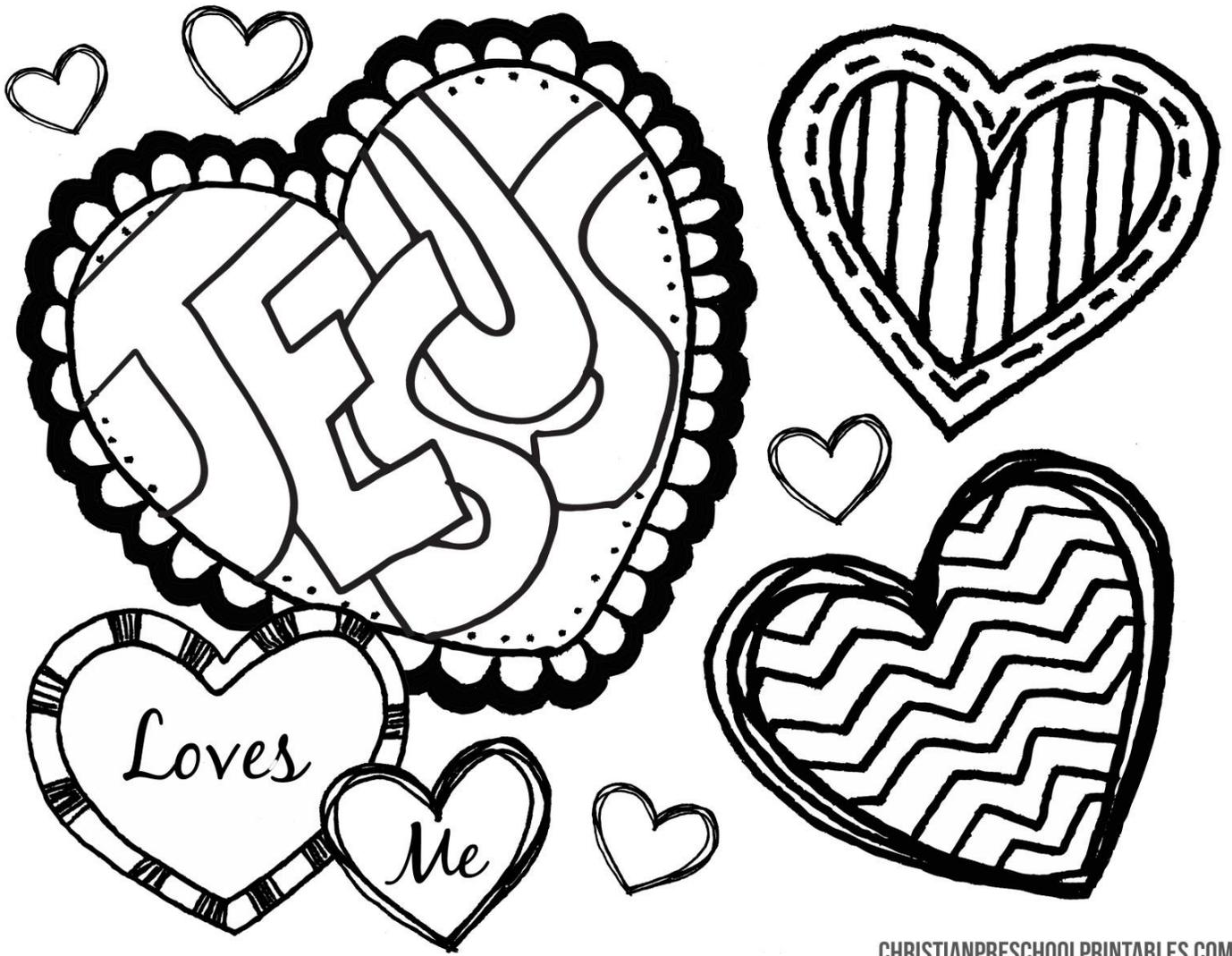
KIDS OF ALL AGES ACTIVITY PAGES

Enjoy these coloring pages for “kids” of all ages about the Christian origins of Valentine's Day...

Saint Valentine was a priest in Rome when Christians were picked on and mistreated because of their faith in Jesus. Valentine was put to death on February 14th. Legend tells us that while in jail, he healed the jailer's daughter and sent her a note that said, “From your Valentine.”

- Saint Valentine -





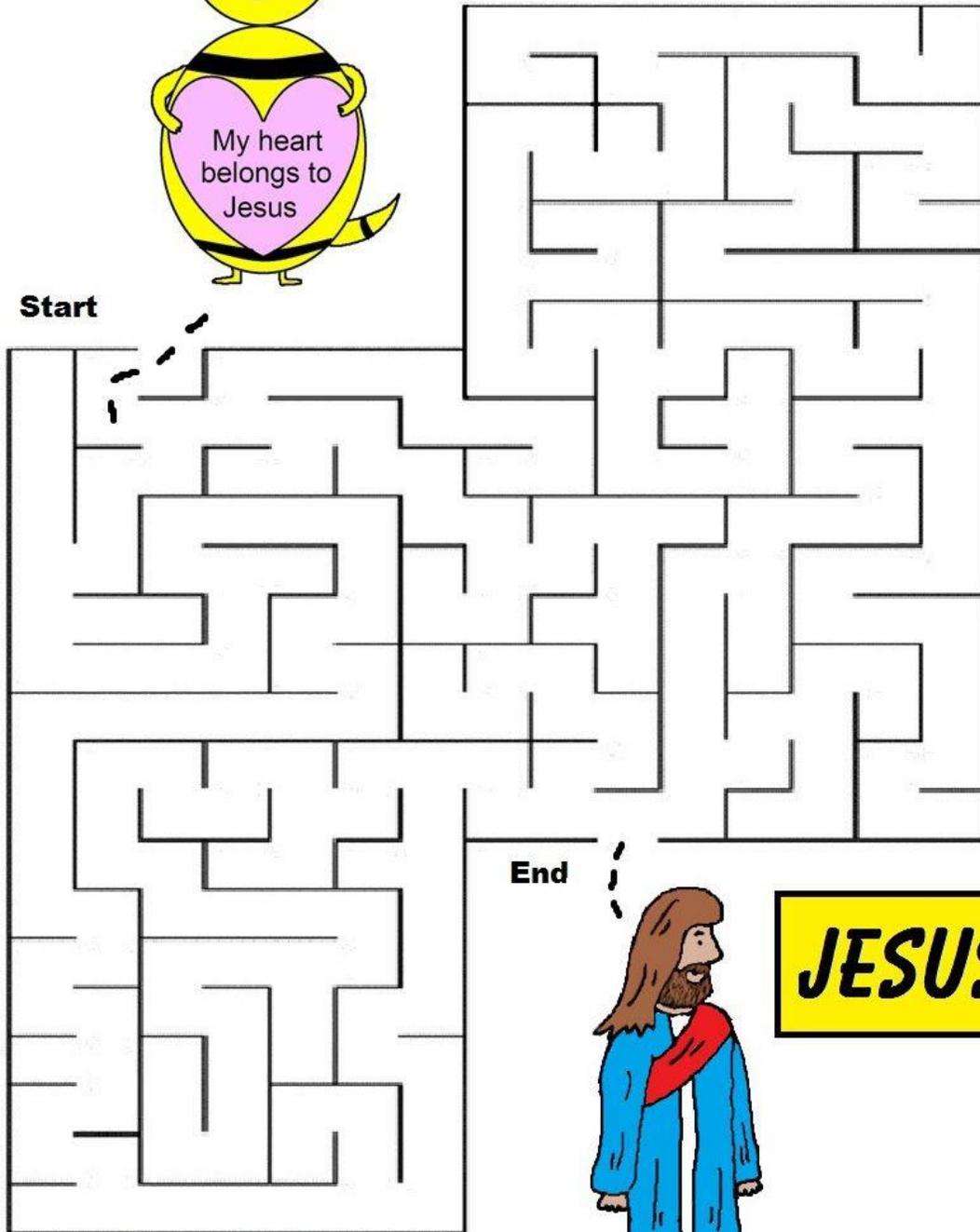
My Heart Belongs To Jesus Maze



Mar 12:30- And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment.

Mar 12:31- And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

Start



End

JESUS



BIRTHDAYS IN FEBRUARY

2 nd	Ann Ingalls
4 th	George Porter
15 th	Jade Burrowes-Rampasard
18 th	Nancy Smith
22 nd	Orin Segall
25 th	Lynn Johnson
25 th	Emily Smith
26 th	Rev. Thomas Leinbach

PRAYER LIST

We encourage parishioners to call or email our Pastor or Administrative Assistant in our office by midweek with any new prayers so these can be printed and lifted up at Sunday worship.

Solace & Peace: We bring before our Creator- loved ones, friends, neighbors- known and unknown to us- who have passed away. We also pray for God to comfort any who are in need and/or facing difficult trials. We pray and ask God to draw very close, and to raise up the right people to be ministers and to be a genuine comfort and support during times of trial and/or grief.

Healing & Comfort: Adelle; Shirley M; Mary Ann as she receives chemo for her blood disease; Edie's granddaughter, Heidi; Ben L. recovering from serious infection; Thomas L.; James S. bravely facing cancer treatment; someone who has a serious knee problem that is inoperable; Bianca's daughter Toni Lynn who has pancreatic cancer; Katie R. who has brain cancer; Kelly D.

healing from a kidney transplant; Jack; Noah & his family as he recovers; John L's friend Cynthia; Ava; Mary Ellen M.; Libby C.; Nancy's friend Sal; Julie's friend, Jack; DeeDee's relatives; Joe B.'s daughter, daughter-in-law and nephew.

Community & World: Living through Covid-19 and its variants; poverty; near homeless and homelessness; the hungry; ill; unemployed; school employees and students; those suffering with addictions; anxiety and depression; children & adults living with disabilities; all medical staff; first responders and caregivers; military personnel, victims of racism; immigrants and children; a sustainable earth; and peace and justice in our homes, our communities, this great nation and the world we share.

FIRST CHURCH COVENANT

Bound together as a Christian Church, and depending upon the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us, we covenant together to walk in all our ways, according to the rule of the Gospel, in mutual love and respect to one another, to strive to carry out the teachings of Jesus Christ, and to love the Lord our God with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves.

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