

**The First Community Church of Southborough
137 Southville Road
Southborough, Massachusetts 01772-1937**

The Reverend Paul D. Sanderson, D.Min., Ph.D. – Pastor

www.firstcommunitychurch.com

Church: (508) 485-2607

Pastor: (508) 543-7160

Text: (508) 873-0534

Email: paulsandersonphd@gmail.com

February 21, 2021 – The First Sunday in Lent

Blessings, Everyone!

“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.” Jesus (Matthew 7:13-14)

“The true way goes over a rope which is not stretched at any great height but just above the ground. It seems more designed to make people stumble than to be walked upon.” Franz Kafka

Keeping in Touch

Concerns:

We hold in prayer:

- Our country. We stand in need of prayer for healing, for an end to the hatred that has led to the polarization of our people around political and social issues. Our tribalistic mentality needs to be replaced with a new, more inclusive, more enlightened vision of who we are as Americans, and we need the patience and dedication to make the true American way of life a reality for all people.
- Our world. We stand in need of a vision of world community, a world where people care about each other and where we know deep down that we are all in this together. Most of the problems that the peoples of the world face are solvable, if only we put our minds and our tremendous resources to work on them.
- Nature. Our environment. The world in which we live. Approximately 1,000,000 little and some big animals are in danger of extinction. This is not right! The melting ice cap. Our little planet is in need of healing and tender-loving care. Many people in the Midwest, Texas, and the Southeast in our country are feeling the effects of climate change in ways that are absolutely devastating.
- Those who are hungry or food insecure in our own country and even in our own state and town. Those in Texas who cannot obtain safe drinking water.
- The over 5,000,000 people in our country who, because of the pandemic, are newly unemployed, many of whom have lost their health insurance because it was tied to their employment (a good argument for at least having an option of obtaining health insurance that is not dependent upon one's employer).
- Those who have become seriously ill though having contracted COVID-19; families that have lost loved ones to this virus; and all those whose lives have been disrupted in serious ways because of the pandemic restrictions. BTW, being asked to wear a mask and socially distance does not qualify one to receive intercessory prayer.

- Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, our President and Vice President, and their new administration and cabinet. The rebuilding of our government so it can serve the function that is its charge: increasing the safety, security, and well-being of all our citizens, and being a shining light, a model of true functional democracy to the world.

- Sheila (a colleague of Dianne Simmons), her husband Danny, and their two sons. Danny, who contracted COVID-19 in December, remains in Hospice Care. This past Monday, Danny felt well enough to try walking. Unfortunately, he fell and injured a knee. Danny and Sheila decided not to follow the recommendation of the Hospice nurse to simply put him on a morphine pump; they took him by ambulance to the ER for evaluation and possible treatment.

The family thanks us for remembering them in our prayers.

- John, the husband of a friend of Marlene & Gil's daughter Cathy, who recently had a heart attack.

(If you are in need of prayer or if you know of someone who stands in need of prayer, and you would like to ask us to pray for them/you, please let me know.)

Thank you to:

o Jim Holmes for faithfully ringing the church bell at 11:00 a.m. every Sunday morning to remind our neighbors and the world that we are still here, for sending pictures of the church to our church mailing list, and for clearing the entrance to the church after each snowstorm.

o The people who keep our church going during this pandemic period:

o Jim Holmes, our Church Collector, who receives your pledges and gifts, records them for tax purposes (they *are* tax deductible, you know!), and gives those designated to the General Fund to our Church Treasurer and those designated to missions to our Mission Treasurer.

o Bob Farmer, our Church Treasurer, who deposits the checks and pays all our bills (when we have the money to pay them, which is not always the case and which is frustrating to Bob, who takes his job very seriously).

o Beverly Lees, our Mission Treasurer, who receives the mission offerings and, at the end of every month, sends a check from our church to the mission recipient.

o David Crane, our Webmaster, who posts my newsletter/reflection every week as well as a cleaned-up version of my Audio Worship Service.

o Those who have already turned in their 2021 pledges to the General Fund, and those Friends of the Church who have either already sent or pledged a special gift to support us financially in the year to come.

COVID-19 and Sunday Worship as the Gathered Church

We are in the process of compiling and publishing our Annual Report—2020. If you are (technically) serving on any board of committee, even if you are not the chair of the committee, would you please take the initiative to have your committee submit a report. Sandy McKeen has graciously offered to collate and prepare the reports for printing, so please email your report to her.

We hope that everyone who offered to serve on a board or committee but did not have the opportunity to do so this past year, will be willing to extend his/her term for the coming year as well.

Birthdays	
Bob Farmer	8 th
Evelyn Till	10 th
Joan Brunelle	10 th
Joyce Harrington	11 th
Thelma Oakes	11 th
Jim Holmes	13 th
Helen Varney	14 th
Jason Elias	19 th
Diane Sickles	22 nd
Cody Willman	24 th
Anniversaries	
Helen and Dick Varney	16 th
Marlene & Gil Joe	19 th

Audio Weekly Worship Service

We are offering an abbreviated weekly worship service on our “Pod Cast” site. There is a link to it on the Home page of our church website: www.firstcommunitychurch.com. It can also be accessed from a link at the top of the Sermons page. On the Pod site, each service is listed by date. The reflection/homily is the reflection that is sent to those on our expanded church contact list, a list that is comprised of church members, members of our larger church family, and friends of the church who have asked to be put on our contact list. The pastor’s reflection is also accessible in printed (PDF) form on our website on the Sermon page.

If you would like to have a copy of the audio service/reflection emailed directly to you when it is recorded (usually Saturday night or Sunday morning) rather than when it gets posted on our website (which can be several days later), please send an email to Reverend Sanderson.

Quote/Thought of the Day

“The key to everything is patience. You get the chicken by hatching the egg, not smashing it.”
Arnold H. Glasnow

Attention-Grabbling Church Signs

*We Are Not Dairy Queen
But We Have
Great Sundays!* (Get it?)

Kids Say the Darndest Things!

“The epistles were the wives of the apostles.”

Worship Service Music

The Prelude for today’s audio worship service is the beloved gospel hymn “Family Bible.” It is sung by the Blind Boys of Alabama, accompanied by Willie Nelson. It is taken from their cd *Take the High Road*.

Missions:

We have received the following Thank You from World Vision:

Dear Members of First Community Church of Southborough,

Thank you for your gift of \$225 to World Vision. Churches like yours enable World Vision to provide essential care, encouragement, and hope to hurting children and families.

As we continue to see God's miraculous hand transforming lives, please know that you are an essential part of this work. Your congregation is truly a champion on behalf of the children and families we serve. In the words of the apostle Paul, "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray for joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now" (Philippians 1:3-5).

World Vision is truly blessed to have you as a church partner—and a champion for kids. Thank you for your gift and your compassion for others.

*In His Name,
Edgar Sandoval, Sr., President*